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Hydrilla in Cayuga Lake

In September 2016, Hydrilla a highly invasive aquatic weed, was confirmed in Cayuga Lake south of the Wells College dock in the Village of Aurora. Hydrilla spreads rapidly and, if left unchecked, will form into a thick mat of vegetation, making swimming and boating impossible and reducing fish populations. The impact to the local economy can be significant.

Following the confirmation of hydrilla in this area of Cayuga Lake, efforts were made by the Finger Lakes Institute at Hobart and William Smith Colleges (FLI) to determine the extent of the growth. Hydrilla was found to be wide spread over 27 acres including the bay area, from the Wells College dock to just north of Little Creek, extending out about 250 feet from shore. In addition, hydrilla was also found upstream in Paines Creek.

A Cayuga County Aurora Hydrilla Task Force consisting of state and local representatives and experts in aquatic invasive species has been convened to develop a plan to address the significant risk and impact of an infestation of Hydrilla in Cayuga Lake, Aurora.

Members of the task force include representatives from Finger Lakes Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM), Wells College, Village of Aurora, Inns of Aurora, the Cayuga County Health and Planning Departments, the County Legislature, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), the Cayuga Lake Floating Classroom and the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network.

The Task Force will develop a Hydrilla Management Plan in Cayuga County, Aurora, NY with input from stakeholders and experts regarding recommended strategies to manage the infestation. There will be an opportunity for the public to provide comments on proposed strategies in late spring. This public forum (date to be determined) will be advertised extensively. The Task Force is confident that a mutually-agreed upon strategy for managing Hydrilla in Aurora, NY, will be developed.

For more information regarding Hydrilla please refer to the following websites: www.NYIS.info; www.fingerlakesinvasives.org; www.ccetompkins.org; www.erie.cce.cornell.edu/invasive-species/wny-hydrilla-project
