



HOBART AND WILLIAM SMITH



PARTNERSHIP FOR REGIONAL
INVASIVE SPECIES
MANAGEMENT
FINGER LAKES

2025 Finger Lakes PRISM Spring Partner Meeting - Minutes

Wednesday, May 7th, 12:30pm-3:00pm,

Hobart and William Smith Colleges
Sanford Room – Warren Hunting Smith Library
334 Pulteney Street, Geneva, NY

Zoom Meeting ID: 921 6786 9180

Passcode: 041795

Link: <https://hws.zoom.us/j/92167869180?pwd=B1ioa1PbWGaPHgMSPlxJ59OMI6Clc5.1>

Agenda

12:30 - 12:40	<i>Introductions and Welcome</i> Sam Beck-Andersen, Finger Lakes Institute
12:40 – 1:10	<i>Finger Lakes PRISM Updates</i> Finger Lakes PRISM Staff
1:10 – 1:30	<i>USDA Forest Service Project Overview – Surveying Ponds in the Finger Lakes National Forest</i> Josh Neff – AIS Field Coordinator
1:30 – 2:00	<i>Partner Updates and Discussion</i> Finger Lakes PRISM Partners
2:00 – 3:00	<i>Finger Lakes Macrophyte Survey Program Training</i> Amy Slentz – AIS Coordinator



Host: Sam Beck-Andersen, Associate Director, Finger Lakes Institute; Coordinator, Finger Lakes PRISM

In Attendance: Amy Slentz, Nadia Harvieux, Josh Neff, Kevin Killigrew, Regina Hashim, Maura Slocum, Stacy Furgal, Linda Sampson, Ethan Hall, Emily Timke-Benzinger, Jayla White, Mary Arnold, Gabriel Yerdon, Bruce Gilman, Thom Allgaier, Michele Wunderlich, Melissa Green, Mark Matthews, Emily Fell, Emma Gutierrez, Elizabeth Dicesare, Adelia Baker, Brendan Aschmutat, Jennifer, Rich Kiley, Sarah Kiley, Rachel Porter, J. McKnight, Stu Messur, Jennifer Griffin, Sarah Caldwell, Megan Daly, Debbie Lyon, Ethan Terchowicz, and Julie Brooks.

Welcome and Introductions

- Sam Beck-Andersen opened the meeting, welcomed attendees both virtual and in-person.
- Meeting began with an overview of the agenda: program updates, a project report from Josh Neff, and partner updates. A larger group was expected for the Macrophyte Survey Program Training later in the day.

Program Updates

Aquatic Strike Team (2025 Field Season)

- Reduced number of monitored sites to focus on monthly revisits at high-priority locations (Cayuga and Seneca Lakes).
- Three Cayuga Lake sites support Hydrilla monitoring in partnership with DEC and the Hydrilla Task Force.
- A new Field Coordinator role has been added to support AIS and Watercraft Steward programs.
- Enhanced data collection includes plant volume estimates and percent composition by species for more nuanced community analysis.

Water Chestnut Management

- Continuing water chestnut pulls in Finger Lakes National Forest as part of a USFS GLRI grant.
- 12 infested ponds identified (up from 5 in past surveys).
- Collaboration with volunteers and FLNF staff emphasized.

Watercraft Steward Program

- ~20 stewards to be placed across Finger Lakes, Monroe County, and out-of-watershed sites like Whitney Point and Lamoka Lake.
- Ongoing partnerships with Monroe County SWCD and Canandaigua Lake Watershed Council.
- Continuing use of a decontamination unit at Canandaigua Lake.
- Promising early results from a new floating macrophyte skimming project at launches to reduce hitchhiking invasives.

Terrestrial Program Updates

- Transitional staffing year; project leads TBD.
- Wild Parsnip Management & Restoration project on the Keuka Outlet Trail to test treatment and restoration methods.
- DEC wetland permitting delays have slowed field deployment.
- Spotted Lanternfly (SLF) updates:
 - FL PRISM staff first detected SLF in Ontario County (on campus).

- Efforts to expand regional SLF monitoring include GIS-based risk mapping, vineyard collaboration, and trap deployment.
- DEC funding reductions are prompting PRISM to fill gaps.
- Biocontrol: *Hypena opulenta* release for pale swallowwort control
 - Established caged plot at Mendon Ponds Park in 2024.
 - Complete skeletonization observed; overwintering success pending.
 - Expansion planned for 2025 with additional sites and cages

Volunteer Program Highlights

- Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Survey: 23 detections, 63 non-detections; volunteer-led.
- Macrophyte Survey Program: Training today; limited direct oversight until new terrestrial coordinator hired.
- HWA treatment continues in four state parks with expansion planned for 2025 in Watkins Glen Gorge.

Outreach and Education

- FL PRISM presented at NE Aquatic Plant Management Society & Finger Lakes Research Conference.
- Steward data manuscript in review; highlights long-term data value.
- Field and management guides updated with new species and maps.

New FL PRISM Logo and Contract Update

- Logo integrates NYS branding; colors reflect regional agriculture and natural landscapes.
- New 4-year contract (2025–2028) pending execution.
- Upcoming changes include strategic planning, website updates, and hiring for 3 Program Manager roles (AIS, TIS, Education and Outreach).
- Farewells to Amy Slentz (AIS PM) and Bill Brown (Program Analyst), both moving to new professional roles.

Finger Lakes National Forest Project Report

Presenter: Josh Neff, AIS Field Work Coordinator

- Survey of all 83 ponds in FLNF: 72 sampled.
- 12 ponds found with water chestnut; 4 treated in 2024 (Teeter, Ballard, Bumpus, Burdick Stock).
- Rake tosses and volume estimates used to assess aquatic vegetation.
- Preliminary analysis:
 - Eurasian Watermilfoil and native elodea most common.
 - Coontail less common in ponds with water chestnut.
 - No strong predictors of AIS based on water quality, but some patterns in TP and DO.
- Pasture ponds more likely to contain Eurasian Watermilfoil and Curly Leaf Pondweed.
- Cows likely play a role in spread due to pond access.
- Terrestrial surveys showed widespread multiflora rose and buckthorn.
- Outreach: 1,300+ youth engaged through conservation field days.
- 2025: Complete water chestnut removal at remaining 8 ponds and finalize report.

Partner Updates

NYS Dept. of Ag & Markets (Thom Allgaier)

- Budget cuts impacted SLF programming; limited outreach materials and staff.
- Older traps and PDFs still usable; updated Survey123 form available.
- Management resources concentrated on viticulture regions.

Genesee Valley Conservancy (Maura Slocum)

- Launching invasive strike team on preserves.
- Seeking advice on biomass disposal; options include landfilling, chipping, or controlled burning.

DEC Region 7 (Emily Timkey-Benzinger)

- Continued hydrilla monitoring and management in Cayuga Lake.
- Partnership with Army Corps and others for submerged aquatic vegetation monitoring and EDNA work.
- Water chestnut work in Montezuma NWR and Seneca River.

DEC Region 6 (Jayla White)

- Co-PRISM launch delayed due to lack of bids.
- Planning AIS management (egg oiling, macrophyte survey at Utica Marsh), and SLF dispersal research.
- Hosting water chestnut pull events in Region 6 and assisting Region 7.

Others

- Mary Underhill (Canadice Lake): Updating watershed management plan; requesting input on future invasive threats.
- Stacey Furgal (NYS SeaGrant): NY iMapInvasives site update and press release forthcoming.
- Michele Wunderlich: New watershed specialist introduction.

Announcements

- NYS Invasive Species Expo: September 14, 2025, Saratoga Spa State Park. Includes workshops, demos, student posters. Travel stipends available.
- Public Watercraft Steward Training: May 19–21, in-person at FLI. Open to partners.

Closing

- Meeting concluded with a transition to the Macrophyte Survey Program Training, led by Amy Slentz.
- Minutes and recording to be shared with attendees.