



2023

AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES REPORT

Aquatic invasive species (AIS) are non-native plants, animals, and other organisms that live primarily in water (aquatic habitats) rather than on land (terrestrial habitats). Some of these species can harm the environment, economy, and/or human health. Once AIS finds their way into a waterbody, they are virtually impossible to eliminate and extremely expensive to manage. If current populations of AIS go unchecked and new species are introduced, the negative impacts on Skaneateles Lake will increase dramatically.

AIS found in Skaneateles Lake include:



Over 180 other AIS can be found in the Great Lakes just 40 miles away, and new AIS have made their way into neighboring finger lakes. One aggressive plant, hydrilla, has found its way into Cayuga Lake. Cayuga is currently managing the overwhelming and costly impact of hydrilla, and as of 2020, their costs exceeded \$3 million, with annual operations/maintenance costs over \$350,000.

The highest number of boats entering Skaneateles Lake from another water body come from Cayuga Lake (195) followed by Owasco (182), Oneida (158) and Otisco (148).

So far, Skaneateles Lake has remained clear of hydrilla, but if it finds its way here and adds to the existing milfoil and pondweed "biomass," an increase in water turbidity and phosphorus release might occur, contributing to increased HAB activity. Our **Boat Launch Steward Program** is dedicated to monitoring boats coming in and out of Skaneateles Lake and eliminating the introduction of new AIS like hydrilla. **SLA's 2023 program cost totaled \$69,717.04.** The majority of 2023 program support came from SLA membership dues with additional support of \$25,000.00 from the City of Syracuse and \$5,000 from NYSDEC.

AIS Control and Prevention

Boat Launch Steward Program

In August 2012, SLA instituted the Boat Launch Steward program to help combat AIS introduction to Skaneateles Lake. Boat Launch Stewards are hired, trained and positioned at the (A) New York State DEC Boat Launch, the (B) Skaneateles Town Boat Launch in Mandana and (C) Andrew R. Fuller Park Launch in Scott.

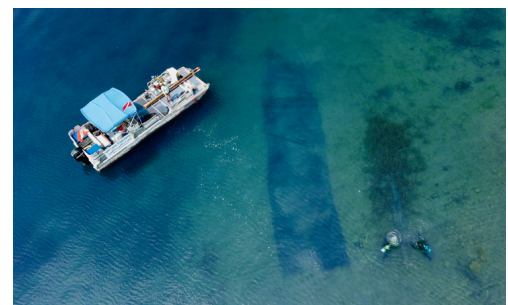
Boat Launch stewards receive training each season on invasive species found in Skaneateles Lake and potential invaders from other water bodies. Their duties include asking permission to conduct a visual inspection of water crafts / trailers for attached marine life, and then removing any vegetation that is found. The stewards record data on each inspection as part of the New York State Watercraft Inspection Steward Program Application (WISPA). The stewards also educate visitors on the value of launching a clean, drained, and dry boat.



SLA Boat Launch Steward locations

Milfoil Control Program

The SLA Milfoil Control program has reduced milfoil coverage on Skaneateles Lake to a level now requiring "maintenance" control. The SLA Milfoil Control program consists of a lake survey each fall to locate milfoil, and then the following spring those patches are covered with mats. Each mat is left on a milfoil patch for a minimum of eight weeks to insure complete elimination, and then the mats are rotated. The Milfoil Control Program costs ~\$200K annually and is funded by SLA Memberships and other sources, including \$30K in Finger Lakes-Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance (FLLOWPA) funds administered by Onondaga County.



Aquatic Invasives, Inc. divers placing mats on milfoil growth patches in Skaneateles Lake.



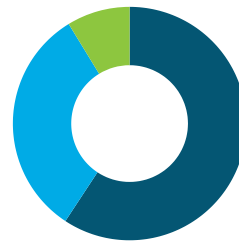
[Read the
2023 Milfoil Report](#)

2023 Boat Launch Inspections Quick Summary

May to October 2023

6629
TOTAL SURVEYS

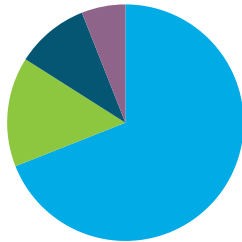
Surveys from each boat launch location:



The DEC (59.3%)
Scott (32%)
Mandana (8.7%)

Type of watercraft:

Motorboats (69.4%)
Kayaks (15.3%)
PWC (Jet Skis) (9.8%)
Other (3.1%)



7159
WATERCRAFT INSPECTED

467
NUMBER OF REPORTED INVASIVE
SPECIES DETECTIONS

Primary Lake Activity:



Recreation (62.3%)
Fishing (35.2%)
Other (2.5%)