

Formal Announcement of Hydrilla Discovery in Aurora, NY (Wells College Bay)

* Please distribute to any stakeholders or interested parties you see fit *

On September 13, 2016, the Cayuga Lake Floating Classroom (with assistance from Wells College Campus Greens) headed out onto Cayuga Lake from the Wells College dock to conduct a series of aquatic plant survey samples off the shore of Aurora, NY. The group collected its first sample just a few hundred meters south of the dock, off the mouth of Little Creek (as labeled on Google Maps).



As passengers aboard the Floating Classroom practiced identification of the collected plants, it became evident that some of the elodea in the sample exhibited the characteristics of Hydrilla – whorls of five leaves instead of three, and fine serrations visible along the edges of the leaves themselves. The Floating Classroom decided to bag the sample for storage and more thorough examination, and moved ahead with the preplanned sampling route along the shore to the north. No secondary samples were collected on September 13, 2016. **See samples, below.**





The specimen collected on 9/13/16 was later confirmed to be hydrilla (*Hydrilla verticillata*) by Bob Johnson (of Racine-Johnson Aquatic Ecologists). These samples were collected from 3.4 meters of water at the location marked on the map **above** (42 deg. 44' 32.5"N by 76 deg. 42' 05.9" W). Several Hydrilla stems ranging from 5" to 8" (approx.) were separated from a moderately dense plant sample that included *Elodea canadensis*, *Nitellopsis obtusa*, *Myriophyllum spicatum* and *Vallisneria americana*.

Over the weekend of September 17th, Bob Johnson visited the Wells College bay in Aurora, NY. An additional sprig of hydrilla (approx. 5" in length) was found washed up along the shoreline.

Prior to this discovery, the only known population of hydrilla within the Cayuga Lake Watershed was at the southern end of Cayuga Lake (Ithaca, NY), where the ongoing Cayuga Lake Watershed Hydrilla Project (overseen by the HTF) has been underway since 2011 to address and eradicate the infestation.

Since this is a brand new discovery of hydrilla within the waters of Cayuga Lake, a full delineation of the infestation has yet to be made. As primary stakeholders focused on protecting the freshwater resources of the Finger Lakes region, the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network and Finger Lakes PRISM must be made aware of this newly discovered infestation. We must coordinate and work proactively to assess and delineate the extent of the infestation in the waters adjacent to Wells College and conduct further monitoring/sampling efforts in areas of northern Cayuga Lake.

Additional resources are needed on the water to determine if hydrilla has spread beyond the areas adjacent to Wells College. Since the first observation of hydrilla was made in Cayuga Inlet in 2011, the Cayuga Lake

Floating Classroom has been working to train volunteers around the lake to identify and report aquatic plant observations. The Floating Classroom hopes to continue its training efforts, and to assist with delineation of the newly discovered infestation.

In addition, we must coordinate to notify the community and spread awareness regarding this particular discovery, especially with regards to the threats that hydrilla poses to the environmental/economic viability of not just Cayuga Lake, but the entire Finger Lakes region and waters of New York State.

It is quite unfortunate that hydrilla has made its way into a new area of Cayuga Lake. While alarming, the fact that it was discovered is the first important step in developing a response. The HTF and its stakeholders are happy to coordinate and provide technical support and input. Let's work together and pool our collective resources and expertise, and take the next steps in addressing this infestation!

Thank you.

Sincerely,

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(PS – Big thanks to the Floating Classroom for making the discovery, and to Bob Johnson and Bill Foster for following up on confirmation and identification).