

## Cayuga hydrilla herbicide treatments halt growth for season

Written by Andrew Casler  
5:36 PM, Nov 4, 2013 |

ithacajournal.com



Hydrilla Program Manager James Balyszak examines a piece of Hydrilla found in September in the Stewart Park pond near the pedestrian suspension bridge that carries the Cayuga Waterfront Trail over to the Fuertes Bird Sanctuary. Herbicide treatment has concluded for the season. / SIMON WHEELER/Staff Photo

### How to help

- Email [steward@cayugalake.org](mailto:steward@cayugalake.org) for hydrilla volunteering opportunities.
- Make sure to clean your boats and equipment of all plant fragments and debris before and after launching. This includes motorized watercraft, canoes, kayaks, paddleboards, etc.
- For more information about hydrilla and why it is a problem, visit [StopHydrilla.org](http://StopHydrilla.org) or [cayugalake.org/hydrilla-hunters.html](http://cayugalake.org/hydrilla-hunters.html).

**ITHACA** — Herbicide treatments targeting hydrilla have wrapped up for the year, and officials are now laying plans to battle the invasive aquatic plant in spring 2014.

Hydrilla is one of the most aggressive invasive species known in the United States. Left unchecked, the plant threatens the \$600 million recreational boating industry in the Great Lakes and Finger Lakes.

This year's herbicide treatments finished on Oct. 15, according to Hydrilla Program Manager James Balyszak, a City of Ithaca resident.

The progress made toward killing all of Ithaca's hydrilla will be covered during a public information meeting 7 p.m. Nov. 12 at the Tompkins County Public Library, 101 E. Green St.

It's now too late in the season for any hydrilla that grows to proliferate, Balyszak added. He said that monitoring at the end of October turned up no growing hydrilla patches.

Since hydrilla was first found in Cayuga Lake Inlet during August 2011, government officials have spent \$692,380 in a push to wipe out hydrilla, Balyszak said. About half of that money, \$336,000, was spent in 2013 alone.

"Securing funding is always a concern for the project, of course," Balyszak said. Part of the wintertime hydrilla eradication effort will be applying for grants and finding funding sources, he added.

Balyszak said the program still has about \$815,000 on hand for future hydrilla eradication efforts, and there's \$288,000 in new federal funding expected in 2014.

"We'll be planning from now to early spring, coming up with the real game plan and what we think is going to be feasible for next season," Balyszak said. The date when herbicide treatments will resume will be set during spring 2014.

Despite the herbicide eradication efforts, the plant was found in two new areas this summer. In August 2013, Hydrilla was found in Fall Creek and the southeastern corner of Cayuga Lake. The plant hasn't been discovered at any other Tompkins County sites.

"It was definitely a bit of a surprise and a setback," Balyszak said. "We were able to come together quickly and get a treatment out this season."

Herbicide treatments knocked back that growth in Fall Creek, and divers used special methods to safely remove the plants from Cayuga Lake.

"Moving forward, we do have a new area — the Fall Creek treatment area — which we'll incorporate into the overall management plan," Balyszak said

The Hydrilla Task Force will lay out its full treatment plan for 2014 by the late winter or early spring.

"At this time, I definitely feel that hydrilla eradication is a feasible goal to have," Balyszak said.