

NEWS RELEASE

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Corps of Engineers to reduce invasive Hydrilla plants in Cayuga Lake area

Buffalo, NY – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Buffalo District will be helping to reduce the invasive Hydrilla plant (*Hydrilla verticillata*) in Cayuga Lake near Aurora, and in nearby Paines and Little creeks.

"The newly discovered Hydrilla infestation in Cayuga Lake sounded the alarm for federal intervention, and I'm glad with this federal funding the Army Corps of Engineers can now mobilize to answer the call," said Senator Charles Schumer. I'll continue to push to preserve any and all federal resources to stop this threat before it spreads. The Army Corps' work over the next weeks is the vital first step in containing—and eventually eradicating this devastating invasive that threatens the Finger Lakes region's job creating, ecological and economic potential."

Funding for the project is available through the Corps of Engineers Aquatic Plant Control Research Program and Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

The Corps of Engineers will work closely with local partners including the Finger Lakes Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management, Cayuga Lake Watershed Network, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, and Cayuga County. Surveys of the project site to determine plant growth were conducted in late May 2017. The project will involve the application of a range of approved herbicides, with the possibility of physical removal. Herbicide treatments may begin in early to mid-July 2017 and the project will cover over 30 acres of lake bottom.

"We take pride in doing our part to help protect and restore the Great Lakes, and reducing Hydrilla will provide both an ecological and economic benefit to the area," said Lt. Col. Adam Czekanski, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Buffalo District commander. Representatives from the Corps of Engineers plan to attend the Village of Aurora Board Meeting on June 21, 2017 to answer questions about the project. The meeting will be held in the Village Fire Department at

7:00 pm. An environmental assessment document as per the National Environmental Policy Act will soon be available for public review and comment.

“We are fortunate that the Corps of Engineers, experts in aquatic plant control and research, are able to address one of the most aggressive aquatic invaders posing a significant risk to Cayuga Lake and the Great Lakes Basin”, said Hilary Mosher, Coordinator for the Finger Lakes-Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management based at the Finger Lakes Institute at Hobart and William Smith Colleges. “The Corps of Engineers, having managed Hydrilla populations across the Northeast, can utilize established best management practices to reduce the spread and impact of this highly invasive plant.”

The invasive Hydrilla has devastated a number of waterways and lakes in the Northeastern United States. The species depletes oxygen levels and crowds out native plant species that are important for fish and wildlife. The overgrowth of these plants negatively impacts other aquatic life and, if left unchecked, can also impact navigation and recreation.