

Minutes of the Community Meeting on Hydrilla
Co-sponsored by EMC, The Hydrilla Task Force, Cornell Plantations and
Cornell Cooperative Extension/Tompkins
April 12, 2012
Location: Cornell Plantations Welcome Center

EMC Voting Members Present (13): Spring Buck, Kenny Christianson, Brian Eden, Kate Engler, Martha Ferger, Bill Halton, Emily Hamilton, Katie Kelly, Jim McGarry, Steve Nicholson, Kristine Shaw, Gary Stewart, Lucia Tyler,

EMC Voting Members Excused (4): Poney Carpenter, Ed Wilson, Roger Yonkin

EMC Voting Member Absent (1): Dan Lamb

EMC Non-Voting Members Present (1): Dooley Kiefer

Staff Present: Kathy Wilsea

Call to Order – The meeting was convened by moderator Sharon Anderson at 4:30 p.m. She introduced Roxy Johnston, who gave a PowerPoint slide show reviewing the history from Hydrilla’s identification in Cayuga Inlet in 2011 to planned work for 2012. The slide show is available on the chart of agendas and minutes on the EMC webpage: www.tompkins-co.org/emc.

Questions & Answers – Members of the Task Force were available to answer questions from attendees. This panel included Julie Holcomb (City of Ithaca Clerk), Angel Dybas (Soil & Water Conservation District), Liz Cameron (Tompkins County Environmental Health), Roxy Johnston (City of Ithaca Watershed Coordinator), and Lynn Bogan and Josh Teeter (State Parks).

- Is the plant viable if dried and rehydrated? Yes, the tubers and turions are viable for years.
- Does incineration destroy viability? Yes, but can only be implemented on small scales. Gaps still exist in research, and it may be possible to destroy the pulled tubers through treatment at the Ithaca Area Wastewater Treatment Facility’s anaerobic process.
- How deep can the plant grow, and is that based on sunlight availability? 31 feet, and the plan needs very little light in clear water. Roxy Johnston noted the north and south ends of Cayuga Lake are very shallow, which leaves them vulnerable to dense infestation.
- Concerning funding, is the grant we have heard about recently “new” money? Craig Schutt (SWCD) said this is new grant money in the amount of \$800,000.
- Concern was voiced about impacts of herbicide treatment on the Inlet. Will non-targeted species be affected? What species are of most concern in the Inlet? Roxy referred people with interest about the impacts of chemicals to the CCE webpage. For plants, plans are to catalog all those found and assess impacts and changes. No other biota studies are planned at this point.
- Is the Inlet scheduled for dredging? Julie Holcomb said the City should know in the next 1 or 2 months, as the project partners are interacting more.
- Are results known of pesticide aftereffects from last year? Roxy said results were as expected, with 95% knock down of Hydrilla biomass. They were unable to do detailed monitoring in 2011, but hope to have enough funding to do it in 2012. Liz Cameron said drinking water supply tests were conducted. Near Bolton Point intake pipes, the highest readings (on two occasions) were 9 parts per billion, which is considered safe.
- Does the schedule for Endothall application take fish migration into account? Roxy said application is expected between mid-May and mid-June. Odd weather impacts the plan. Bob Johnson has been monitoring the Inlet all winter to help plan the best application time. There is no plan in place to monitor animal biota.

- Will dredging be supplementally effective? Would it mobilize plant fragments? Don't we need to be very thoughtful about dredging? Julie Holcomb said dredging *has* to happen due to flooding risk. The good news is that by combining projects, scientific studies can also be conducted.
- Is there any consideration of putting a screen in place downstream? Julie said this is being considered.
- Can the Canal Corporation lower the water level in the lake to help? Julie said this action can place drinking water wells at risk. The current low level is weather-related. All the partners are working together for best mitigation. Sharon Anderson said Canal Corp is part of the Task Force. They are cooperative, but their actions are tightly regulated by NYS.
- Has the Task Force checked the shelf of Cayuga Lake by Stewart Park? Roxy said yes, they keep checking that spot. The lake circulation pattern drives vegetation up on shore at Stewart Park, where it freezes.
- Eradication and control programs are very expensive in other states. Are they successful? Roxy suggested checking with Bob Johnson on this. Washington and California have successful eradication programs, and some other states have long-term control programs. Maine and Indiana are just starting to battle Hydrilla.
- Is there a water stewards program at State Parks? Lynn Bogan responded there is a water stewards program through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, with funds made available for this as a grant to the Finger Lakes Institute. Staff will work in area state parks to collect data on vegetation and invertebrates. One person will work full time at Allan Treman Marina, and others will work in a circuit.
- Boaters need education. Can Hydrilla education be combined with DEC's education campaign about not moving fire wood? Roxy said last year information went out on radio and other media. An outreach group is working with some Cornell students to develop a campaign. Josh Teeter is trying to find a writer for national media article.
- Can you use mass emails? Josh Teeter said State Parks has a distribution list for Treman Marina specifically, plus some other distribution lists. There will be signs at the Inlet and along the lake. Sharon Anderson stressed that word of mouth works.
- Will there be other meetings? What is needed? CCE and Cayuga Lake Watershed Network websites will have information on meetings planned for May 3 and May 6 at Merrill Sailing Center, where participants can learn to identify Hydrilla. Volunteers can help with the outreach booth at the Farmers Market.
- Hydrilla risks need to be mentioned to fishermen, too. Roxy agreed, saying fishermen need to take fragments to a safe disposal site.
- Are water monitoring groups helping? Yes, and their training will include Hydrilla identification.
- Can you provide a sample letter for citizens to send to elected officials? Roxy said they might work on that at the next Task Force meeting. Sharon Anderson pointed out CCE can't lobby, so needs to watch the balance of information they publish.
- Is there direct outreach to lakeshore property owners? Roxy said there is, and the Floating Classroom did a presentation to Ithaca Sail & Power Squadron, which included some members of the Yacht Club. The college crews went to the Yacht Club last year while the Inlet was closed, so Yacht Club was aware last year, too.
- Is this effort on FaceBook? Not yet, but Sharon Anderson said Cornell students working on outreach may address this. Someone else warned there is an I Love Hydrilla website, which is something to counteract. Roxy Johnston warned some people think Hydrilla is a health food, but it is too hard to control here. There is too little plant matter and too much water for use as biofuel. Also, some fishermen consider it beneficial in its early stages, but in the long run it is detrimental for fish.
- Are there any laws on Hydrilla? Roxy said the Assistant County Attorney is examining possibilities. In some states it is illegal to transport invasives, but there are no laws here. It would help if it were a ticketable violation. Some other waterbodies require inspections and provide stickers when boats/trailers are inspected. In NYS there are laws about aquatic invasive animals, terrestrial invasive plants and terrestrial invasive animals. But with no laws for aquatic invasive plants, rapid response, accelerated permitting for treatment, and shut down of navigation are not quick.

Adjournment – Sharon Anderson noted that the CCE website is kept up to date and will have a list of upcoming events. She thanked Cornell Plantations for co-hosting the event and providing meeting space. The meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
 Kathy Wilsea, Secretary
 Tompkins County Planning Department

Approved by Environmental Management Council on May 10, 2012