

Welcome to the Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Patrol of Conway Lake

“New Hampshire now has a total of 76 infested lakes and 11 infested rivers, most containing variable water-milfoil as the primary invasive plant, while others have fanwort, Eurasian water-milfoil and water chestnut. A new infestation is quite literally a boat ride away.” 2020 - Amy Smagula, Coord. NHDES Exotic Species Program

Our patrols are so critical. Thank you for joining!

Here is a brief introduction to getting started as a volunteer patroller:

Our goal is to patrol the entire shoreline of Conway lake twice a month for the duration of the growing season, usually June through early October. In order to track whether this shoreline is efficiently covered we have divided the lake into 17 zones. Understanding that more eyes covering any one area is always better, you will be asked to cover one or more connected zones of your choice. In addition, you will be encouraged to cover some of the more sparsely populated areas of the shoreline and/or those areas of heavy boat traffic. We hold a kickoff meeting in the spring and a wrap-up meeting in the fall. This is a great way to review our goals, share new concerns, problem-solve, and work out new goals. You are encouraged to attend these meetings and the annual CLCA meeting held each August.

We want everyone to feel comfortable in knowing how to patrol and identify native plants and animals in the lake. To do this we offer **training sessions** to get you started. With trainings + practicing on your own you will learn to identify them and how to distinguish them from the invasive species. You may request as many training sessions as you need.

Initial orientation will be on land with either Maria Gross or Don Yurewicz, AIS Patrol coordinators. This will entail:

- Distribution of a variety of printed materials and detailed pictures about the lake's native plants and animals.
- Presentation of the tools used during the patrols.
- Presentation on the AIS Patrol's blog and its important role for patrol documentation (coverage, findings, photos) and how it functions as a critical site for continual AIS education.

Second orientation will be in your chosen zone(s), in kayaks, canoes or paddleboards with the materials that you received in the initial orientation. You will practice ways to:

- Begin to recognize some native plants in your zone. Use the printed references handed out in the initial orientation.
- Learn how to take samples of these plants for identification.
- Learn how to set location buoys and practice the GPS system to be used by all patrollers when any questionable plants are found. This allows someone else in the organization to take another look. Any questionable plants will be sent to NH DES to verify.

Invasive species have not yet been found in Conway lake. But invasive species have contaminated nearby lakes in both NH and Maine. Many boaters can unwittingly carry tiny plant fragments or larvae of the undesirable species into the lake which are very well adapted to propagating even with that small amount of genetic material. The invasive plants can grow at unprecedented rates, forming huge weeds that spread quickly. They can choke out the native plants, become entangled in boat propellers, anchors, fishing gear, and make the lake unsuitable for any recreational water sports. It has been found to be near impossible to eradicate these weeds once they have a widespread presence. In turn, this can affect our property values.