USACE Lower Connecticut River Hydrilla Research & Demonstration Project Funding Information

Can the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) respond to requests by members of the public to control hydrilla in specific locations they are concerned about?

The USACE is currently conducting a Lower Connecticut River Hydrilla Research and Demonstration project. The goal of the USACE research and demonstration project is to develop a strategy and hydrilla treatment plan, based on research, that ensures public safety; is cost effective; and protects and restores the ecological and economic benefits of Connecticut River and its tributaries from the hydrilla invasion. Work to date has been within the state of Connecticut. In July and August of 2024, the USACE completed applications of aquatic herbicides at five demonstration project locations. The USACE is planning to expand the project and conduct research and field demonstrations in southern Massachusetts beginning 2025. The project is funded by Congress under federal authority that is limited to research and field demonstrations within the Connecticut River watershed, it does not include ongoing management. Because of the specific authority and funding limitations, the USACE is not able to respond to local requests for assistance to manage hydrilla. The inclusion of additional research and field demonstration sites is regularly evaluated in consultation with Federal, state, and local resource managers to achieve the goals of the project.

The USACE is currently organizing a federal cost share program with the State of Connecticut to help pay for aquatic invasive plant management. The USACE cost share program requires a 50% non-Federal match. When this program becomes established, a State of Connecticut lead agency or a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with an interest in the Connecticut River and/or controlling aquatic invasive plants, including hydrilla, could be reimbursed through the cost share program using federal funds. Details regarding the procedures of the cost share program will be available once a formal agreement has been signed.

Financial Grants Available

There are a number of financial resources available to help aid in the control or eradication hydrilla, and other aquatic invasives, in your waterway.

- The New England District website has a link for a Middlesex County grant that the RiverCOG identified this may be helpful as a funding resource: <u>https://mxcrc.org/business-operating-grants/</u>
- CT DEEP currently has a grant program available for managing aquatic invasive plants: <u>https://portal.ct.gov/deep/business-and-financial-assistance/grants-financial-assistance/grants-for-the-control-of-aquatic-invasive-species</u>
- The federal Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) Task Force has a rapid response fund available to help eradicate or contain newly identified ANS: <u>https://www.fws.gov/story/rapid-response-fund-aquatic-invasive-species</u>

Additional resources available:

The USACE New England District Lower Connecticut River Hydrilla Demonstration Project website contains additional information, resources, and fact sheets. <u>https://www.nae.usace.army.mil/Missions/Projects-Topics/Connecticut-River-Hydrilla/</u>

USACE New England District Lower Connecticut River Hydrilla Demonstration Project Storymap: <u>https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/ac89d2534fa0490db6c8718191411bd1</u>