Lower Connecticut River Hydrilla Invasion - Potential Management Options and Considerations

May 2023

Building Strong

Mechanical Harvesting

- **Pros**: immediate results; clears specific areas to restore use (marinas, infrastructure, channels); removed plants do not decompose in the water; favorable public perception
- **Cons**: impacts both target and non-target species; by-catch concerns; waste disposal considerations; short-lived growing season control; promotes fragmentation which ultimately increases hydrilla proliferation

Physical Barriers and Benthic Mats

- **Pros**: clears specific areas to restore use (marinas, docks, channels)
- **Cons**: impacts both target and non-target species; not applicable for large areas; impacts to benthic habitats/organisms; gas evolution trapped beneath sheets; difficult to apply in flowing waters; temporary control measure;

Biological Control Agents

- **Pros**: Can be species-selective, such as hydrilla flies, or non-selective but effective, such as sterile grass carp; can decrease the amount of herbicide treatments needed
- **Cons**: non-selectivity (sterile grass carp), overwintering of control species in CT is unknown; most target one part of the plant (growing tips, leaves, etc.) rather than whole plant removal

Chemical Control

- **Pros**: can be species-selective; scalable; shown to be successful hydrilla treatment across multiple states and drinking water sources; low fragmentation risk
- **Cons**: Concerns for impacts to non-target species of concern (fish, mussels, birds, etc.); tests on CT River hydrilla strain needed; site-dependent success based on water exchange

How Can You Help?

- Prevent spread: **Clean ➔ Drain ➔ Dry** all boats at ramps and marinas
- Report infestations
- Engage in public meetings and become an active stakeholder

If you have further questions on this project please contact:
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District
By email at: CTRiver-Hydrilla@usace.army.mil

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Benthic blanket treatment in CT River, 2021 (CAES)

Hydrilla tip mining midge, Credit: Lyle J. Buss, UF/IFAS

Credit: UF/IFAS Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants

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