



# Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program (APIPP)

## Partnership Successfully Fights Invasive Species



**The Adirondack Park** is a landscape of statewide, national, and global significance. It sustains a wide array of native plants and animals, as well as more than 130,000 year-round residents and ten million annual visitors.

**Invasive plants** severely threaten the ecology and the economic vitality of the Adirondack Park. Invasive species can become widespread and put at risk the benefits, uses, and aesthetic value of our natural resources.

**Opportunity:** The Adirondack Park is arguably New York's best chance at preventing invasive plants from spreading before it is too late and intact ecosystems are irreversibly damaged. APIPP is a two-time national award-winning program formed in 2003 to protect the terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems of the Adirondack Park from the negative impacts of invasive plants. Successful strategies include prevention, education, early detection, rapid response, and best management practices.

### Program Concepts:

- ✓ Focus on large, intact natural areas.
- ✓ Prioritize species to inventory and control that pose the greatest threat.
- ✓ Build partnerships to collaborate on regional initiatives.

### Program Accomplishments:

- ✓ Reached more than 8,000 partner staff and citizens through presentations and workshops in two years.
- ✓ Coordinated 190 volunteers to monitor 161 waterways for aquatic invasive plants.
- ✓ Recruited more than 100 volunteers to assist terrestrial invasive plant inventory and control efforts.
- ✓ Managed hundreds of sites of terrestrial invasive plants along roadways and sensitive areas annually.
- ✓ Developed educational materials, newsletter, listserv and a website [www.adkinvasives.com](http://www.adkinvasives.com) to increase public awareness.

**APIPP Partners:** Organizations operating under a Memorandum of Understanding are the Adirondack Nature Conservancy, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, NYS Department of Transportation, Adirondack Park Agency, and Invasive Plant Council of NYS. Numerous local watershed, non-profit, and resident groups provide critical assistance to strengthen resource protection and stewardship initiatives.

### IMPACTS OF INVASIVE SPECIES ON THE ADIRONDACK PARK

**Ecological.** Invasive species rank as one of the top threats to biodiversity, second only to habitat loss. They displace native plants, including rare, threatened, and endangered species, and reduce available forage and habitat for fish and wildlife species.

**Economic.** Invasive species are costly to control and may weaken tourism by devastating the quality of hunting, fishing, and boating opportunities. In the U.S. the economic impact of invasives is estimated at \$142 billion per year. In the Adirondack Park, as of 2005, 49 lakes are reported with aquatic invasive plants and hundreds of terrestrial invasive plant infestations are reported.

**Health.** Invasive species can significantly threaten human health and safety by exacerbating allergies and introducing new diseases. Giant hogweed, an invasive plant, severely threatens human health with its caustic, potentially blinding, sap. In aquatic settings, hardened, sharp nutlets of water chestnuts can injure water recreationists.

**Funding Need:** \$250,000 in dedicated funding would not only keep the program going, but it would enable APIPP to reach its full potential. Bringing APIPP's work to scale means staffing two full-time coordinators and seasonal positions to continue to inventory, map, monitor, and eradicate infestations. It also means increased partnership building, public education and outreach, and community engagement, as well as database and web site maintenance.

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