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CONTACT: Erin Mastine, Outreach Program Coordinator, NH LAKES
603-226-0299, emastine@nhlakes.org
nhlakes.org

Our Lakes are Cleaner Thanks to Lake Hosts!

At least nine invasive species 'saves' have been made at lakes throughout the state this summer

Concord, N.H., August 9, 2021: Thanks to the efforts of NH LAKES' Lake Hosts, many of New Hampshire's most popular lakes continue to be protected from the spread of invasive species this summer. The main way invasive species—plants like milfoil, and animals like the Asian clam—spread from waterbody to waterbody, is by hitching rides on boats that have not been properly cleaned, drained, and dried between waterbodies.

Water chestnut, curly leaf pondweed, and variable milfoil are among the invasive species that have been stopped from hitching a ride into our lakes so far this summer. Water chestnut can completely cover the surface of a waterbody in a dense mat of floating vegetation but seeing the seedpods hitchhiking on a boat trailer can be difficult.

Deb Williams, a Lake Host at Lake Winnisquam, found a water chestnut seed on the carpeted bunk of a trailer parked near the lake earlier this summer. "This is the third seed I have found in my ten years of Lake Hosting, so I must have a nose for them. I feel like most boaters know about clean, drain, and dry for their boats, but they don't always check their trailers closely," Williams explained. "I make sure to check the parked trailers during the day. We have seen more boats this summer than ever before, so I'm glad we're there to help keep our lakes safe."

Invasive species not only degrade the health of lakes, they can make wading, swimming, and boating unpleasant, and even dangerous. Invasive species infestations are also difficult and expensive to control, and are nearly impossible to get rid of once they are well-established in a lake.

"Simply by being at the lake at the right time to catch these small fragments of vegetation, Lake Hosts stop invasive species from getting into our lakes. Saying 'congratulations' or 'wonderful job' doesn't even begin to cut it," commented Krystal Costa Balanoff, NH LAKES Conservation Program Manager. "Lake Hosts truly save the lake each time they remove an invasive species, not to mention the countless times they save our lakes as a result of teaching boaters to inspect their own boats when a Lake Host isn't on duty. They should be extremely proud of the important work they do."

Since 2002, thousands of individuals trained by NH LAKES as Lake Hosts have helped stop the spread of invasive species by teaching boaters to always clean, drain, and dry their boat, trailer, and gear between waterbodies. During the program's 19-year history, Lake Hosts have inspected over 1.2 million boats and have found and removed nearly 1,600 specimens of invasive species that were hitchhiking on a boat or trailer that was about to enter or had just been taken out of a lake.

To see when and where Lake Hosts have made 'saves' of invasive species this summer, visit nhlakes.org/lake-host.

Established in 1992, the mission of NH LAKES, a statewide, publicly supported nonprofit organization, is to ensure that New Hampshire's 1,000 lakes are clean and healthy, now and in the future. To achieve its mission, NH LAKES works with partners, promotes clean water policies and responsible use, and inspires the public to care for our lakes. For more information, visit nhlakes.org, email info@nhlakes.org, or call 603.226.0299

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Photo 1: Water Chestnut Seed

Photo 2: Lake Host Nancy Conlan on Duty at Lake Waukewan.