

Adirondack PRISM – The Nature Conservancy

An Unwelcome Neighbor – Eurasian watermilfoil in Moody Pond

For many people their local environment matters most to them. That's why when an aquatic invasive species first appeared in a small pond in Saranac Lake the local residents sprung to action to work with the [Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program](#) (APIPP) to protect their pond.

Since 2002 APIPP has trained partners and members of the public to identify and report aquatic invasive species. One such volunteer was Margaret Worden, who monitors the small pond in front of her house in Saranac Lake. In 2018 when Margaret was monitoring on Moody Pond she made a surprising discovery.

"Moody Pond is small, and you don't expect you're ever going to find anything, but my husband and I dutifully went out and looked. He pulled up this piece of plant, and we said, 'Oh my gosh.'" We knew what it was." – Margaret Worden

Margaret had reported the first know observation of the invasive Eurasian water-milfoil on Moody Pond. This is the most common aquatic invasive species in the Adirondacks and can have negative impacts on the environment and recreational use of waterbodies if unmanaged. APIPP followed up with more detailed surveys and found that the plant was present in approximately 15% of the pond at low to moderate densities. Fearful of what could happen if the invasive milfoil was left to grow unchecked in the neighborhood community formed [Friends of Moody Pond](#) (FMP).



Eurasian water-milfoil

After preventing invasive species, the next best thing is early detection and rapid response. The first challenge was learning more about this invasive species and how they could manage it. FMP realized that the regional expertise was a great resource and began consulting with local environmental organizations like APIPP.



Friends of Moody Pond at event

"With the help of APIPP, the Adirondack Watershed Institute and Upper Saranac Foundation, we didn't have to reinvent the wheel. All these people weighed in and they were very generous with their time and knowledge." – Jay Federman, Vice President of FMP

After consulting with these trusted partners FMP decided that hand harvesting would be the best course of action. That meant FMP had to raise thousands of dollars to hire a professional dive team to remove the invasive plant from the bottom of the lake. FMP held fundraisers, asked for donations to auction, and wrote grants to supplement private donations to raise the needed funds.

Visit our interactive story map to see more photos and maps of this project.

Also visit www.adkinvasives.com for more information about APIPP.



PRISM SUCCESS STORIES

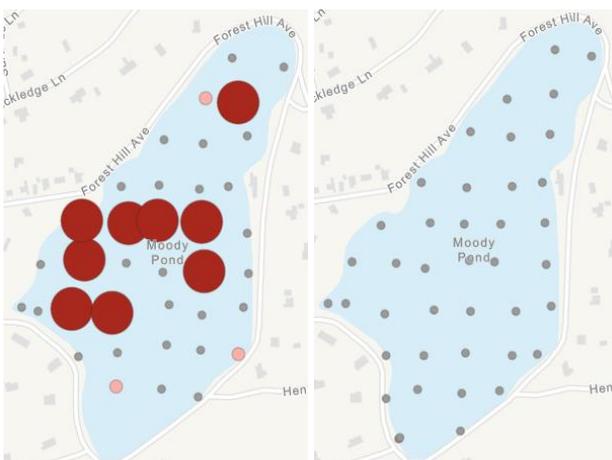
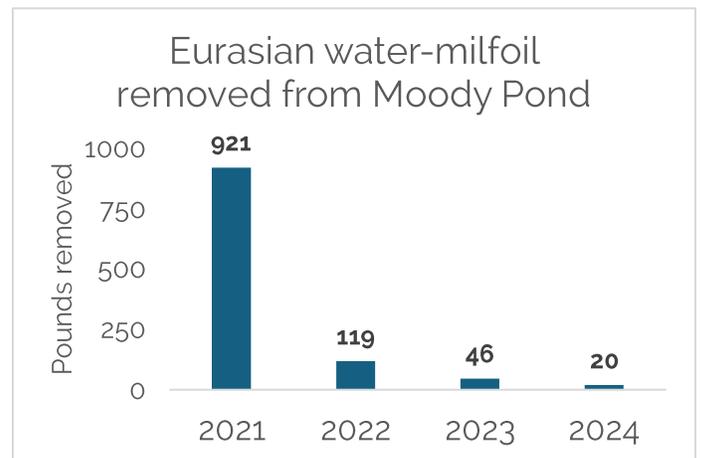


FMP Learning how to monitor with APIPP

In 2021 with the funds raised FMP was ready to spring into action and start removing the invasive milfoil. They also knew that monitoring would be a critical part of their success. They enrolled in APIPP's Lake Management Tracker program. This program helps communities that are managing invasive plants track their results by creating an annual census of invasive plant locations and abundance. APIPP provides the technology and training, the local communities supply the people power to monitor the waterbody each year after the management occurs.

This allows the local communities and lake managers to assess the progress towards their goals and objectives. Moody Pond established 41 monitoring points and went out and monitored the preconditions to get a baseline (Map 1 below). Then every year after the dive team hand harvested the Eurasian water-milfoil they collected additional data to track their success.

Another important monitoring statistic was the annual measurement of the amount of Eurasian water-milfoil removed from the lake. Each year the divers removing the plants would weigh what they removed. The results over the past four years show that they are ahead of the growth curve and are able to reduce the amount of the invasive plant each year. After three years of monitoring with the Lake Management Tracker Program, the volunteers could no longer see the milfoil from their monitoring (Map 2 below).



Map 1 (left) -Pre-management EWM in 2021
Map 2 (right) -Post-management EWM in 2023

These two maps show the results of volunteers monitoring the Eurasian water-milfoil. The larger and darker red the circle the more abundant the invasive plants were at this location. Grey circles indicate areas where Eurasian water-milfoil is not visible from the surface or able to be collected on a rake toss. After four years of management and more than 1100 lbs removed, Eurasian water-milfoil, though still present, is having no impact on the ecology or recreational use of Moody Pond. This is a huge success and points to the great efforts when communities work together to manage invasive species using early detection, rapid response management, and monitoring.

The Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program (APIPP) coordinates the Adirondack Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM), one of eight partnerships across New York. APIPP is hosted by The Nature Conservancy and receives financial support from the Environmental Protection Fund administered by the NY Department of Environmental Conservation.