



PUBLIC NOTICE

In Reply Refer to: Keith Hannon
Email: CTRiver-Hydrilla@usace.army.mil
Planning Division
Date: April 4, 2024
Comment Period Closes: May 4, 2024

696 Virginia Rd.
Concord, MA 01742-2751

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

CONNECTICUT RIVER HYDRILLA CONTROL RESEARCH AND DEMONSTRATION PROJECT Lower Connecticut River, Connecticut

Interested parties are hereby notified that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), New England District, plans to perform work in the navigable waters of this District, subject to the provisions of Section 402 of the Clean Water Act of 1977 (Public Law (P.L.) 95-217); Executive Order 11988 – Floodplain Management; and subject to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (P.L. 91-190). The work involves the application of herbicide to the waters of the Connecticut River watershed for the control of the invasive aquatic plant, hydrilla (*Hydrilla verticillata*), at five sites and is authorized by Section 104 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1958, as amended. This Notice is being issued pursuant to Executive Order 11988 – Floodplain Management, Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1500-1508) for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (42 U.S.C. 4321 et. seq.), and the USACE Procedures for Implementing NEPA (33 CFR 230). Attachment 1 lists pertinent laws, regulations, and directives.

Project Description: The proposed action consists of the application of herbicide to the waters of the Connecticut (CT) River watershed for the control of hydrilla. This action is being analyzed under an Environmental Assessment (EA) that includes an analysis for five (5) sites currently proposed for treatment within the Connecticut River system. The current sites are Chapman Pond (East Haddam, CT); Chester Boat Basin (Chester, CT); Keeney Cove (Glastonbury, CT); Selden Cove (Lyme, CT); and Portland Boat Works (Portland, CT). USACE's Engineer Research and Development Center (ERDC) developed site-specific treatments, taking into account environmental characteristics of the site (e.g., water movement and retention, and native species presence) and chemical properties of the herbicides (e.g., target plants and concentrations) needed for control. The herbicides proposed for use include diquat dibromide, dipotassium salt of endothall, and florpyrauxifen-benzyl, either individually or in combination. The treatment plans are specific to each site. Work is proposed to be performed after July 4, 2024, to protect the anadromous fish spawning season.

Purpose of Work: The purpose of the proposed project is to provide a field demonstration of technology developed under ERDC's Aquatic Plant Control Research Program (APCRP). The project will evaluate the effectiveness of an aquatic herbicide to manage monoecious hydrilla in high water exchange environments. This field demonstration will provide valuable information for developing future guidance on how to manage this invasive aquatic plant, which is expanding throughout the northeastern U.S. In addition, this field demonstration will evaluate herbicide efficacy where monoecious hydrilla is most problematic, optimal timing of treatment, and length of exposure required for effective control of hydrilla.

Proposed Treatment Sites: The following sites are proposed for hydrilla management in the summer of 2024. The application concentrations at all the sites will not exceed the approved U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's safe and permissible levels, per the product's label, and herbicides will be applied by licensed herbicide applicators. An aquatic pesticide permit for each site will be acquired from Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's (CTDEEP) Pesticide Management Program.

Chapman Pond is a large tidal pond that is connected to the Connecticut River by two creeks. It is located in East Haddam, Middlesex County, CT and is centered at 41.439° N, 72.446° W. The treatment area is approximately 47.2 acres. The pond is surrounded by land designated for recreation and conservation as part of Chapman Pond Preserve, managed by The Nature Conservancy and East Haddam Land Trust. The treatment plan for Chapman Pond is a single treatment of florpyrauxifen-benzyl at 48 parts per billion (ppb).

Chester Boat Basin is a man-made boat basin located in Chester, Middlesex County, CT and centered at 41.424° N, 72.439° W. The treatment area is 4.1 acres. The boat basin is located off of the mainstem of the Connecticut River and is surrounded by rural residential area and open space that includes wetlands to the south. The treatment plan for Chester Boat Basin is a single treatment of dipotassium salt of endothall and diquat dibromide at 1.8 parts per million (ppm) and 0.36 ppm, respectively.

Keeney Cove is a cove off the mainstem of the Connecticut River connected by a narrow channel and located in Glastonbury and East Hartford, Hartford County, CT and centered at 41.721° N, 72.629° W. The treatment area is 95.3 acres. The cove is located in commercial and residential area and open space that includes farmland and floodplain to the west. The treatment plan for Keeney Cove is a single treatment of florpyrauxifen-benzyl at 48 ppb.

Selden Cove is a cove off the Connecticut River located in Lyme, Middlesex County, CT and centered at 41.411° N, 72.417° W. The treatment area is 16.2 acres. The cove is connected to the mainstem of the Connecticut River by Selden Creek to the west and south and is approximately 0.25 miles from the river. It is abutted by rural residential area as well as recreation and conservation land that is part of Selden Neck State Park, managed by the CTDEEP. The treatment plan for Selden Cove is a single treatment of dipotassium salt of endothall at 5 parts ppm.

Portland Boat Works is a marina located in Portland, Middlesex County, CT and centered at 41.562° N, 72.624° W. The treatment area is 0.5 acres. The marina is located along the shore of the mainstem of the Connecticut River and is adjacent to the commercial area for the marina with residential area surrounding that. The treatment plan for Portland Boat Works is two treatments of diquat dibromide at 370 ppb each, 14 days apart.

Additional Information: Additional information may be obtained from the Planning Division of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: Mr. Keith Hannon, the project manager, and/or Ms. Hannah Doherty, the project biologist, at the address shown above. These individuals may also be reached by email at CTRiver-Hydrilla@usace.army.mil.

Coordination: The proposed work has, or will be coordinated with the following agencies and organizations:

Federal

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
National Marine Fisheries Service

State of Connecticut

Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station
Connecticut Office of Aquatic Invasive Species
Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP)
Connecticut Natural Diversity DataBase
Connecticut Pesticide Management Program
Connecticut Fisheries Division
Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office

Tribal Nations

Mohegan
Mashantucket Pequot
Narragansett Indian Tribe
Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah)

Regional

Northeast Aquatic Nuisance Species Panel
Connecticut River Conservancy

Local

Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments
Capitol Region Council of Governments

Environmental Impacts: A draft EA and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) has been prepared for this project. The documents are available for public review on the

project website: <https://www.nae.usace.army.mil/Missions/Projects-Topics/Connecticut-River-Hydrilla/>. The EA and FONSI will be finalized after consideration of public and agency comments. A preliminary determination has been made that an Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed project is not required under the provisions of NEPA. This determination will be reviewed in light of facts submitted in response to this notice.

Other Information:

a. Local Sponsor: Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments

b. Floodplain Management: In accordance with Executive Order 11988, USACE has determined that the proposed work will not contribute to negative impacts or damages caused by floods.

c. Endangered Species: It is our preliminary determination that the project is not likely to adversely affect threatened or endangered species. USACE is in consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure that the proposed activity will not significantly affect any species or critical habitat designated as endangered or threatened pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

d. Cultural Resources: USACE is coordinating the project with the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office, and the Mohegan Tribe, Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation, Narragansett Indian Tribe, and Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended.

e. Essential Fish Habitat Assessment: USACE has determined that the project may have a temporary adverse effect on Essential Fish Habitat (EFH). The project sites are contained within areas designated as EFH as defined by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act and amended by the Sustainable Fisheries Act of 1996 for federally managed fish species. USACE assessed the effects that the project is likely to have on EFH and determined that they will be short-term and localized and that there will be no significant impacts on the designated fisheries resources. USACE is in consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service to ensure that any potential impacts will be minimized.


f. Additional Requirements: USACE has requested aquatic pesticide permits from the Connecticut Pesticide Management Program and Coastal Zone Management Consistency Determination Concurrence from the Connecticut Land and Water Resource Division.

Please bring this notice to the attention of anyone you know to be interested in this project. Comments are invited from all interested parties and should be directed to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District, 696 Virginia Road, Concord, MA

01742-2751, ATTN: Planning Division; or emailed to CTRiver-Hydrilla@usace.army.mil within 30 days of this notice.

02 APR 2024

Date


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Wendy C. Gendron
Chief, Planning Division

Attachments

Attachment 1

PERTINENT LAWS, REGULATIONS, AND DIRECTIVES

Clean Water Act, as amended (33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.)

National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.)

Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 U.S.C. 661 et seq)

Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 (16 U.S.C. 742a et seq.)

Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1451 et seq)

National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (54 U.S.C. 300101 et seq.)

Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.)

Clean Air Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 7401 et seq.)

Estuary Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 1221 et seq.)

Federal Water Project Recreation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460I-12 et seq.)

Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, as amended (54 U.S.C. 200302 et seq.)

Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, as amended by the Sustainable Fisheries Act of 1996 (16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.)

Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management, 24 May 1977

Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands, 24 May 1977

Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low Income Populations, 11 February 1994

Executive Order 13045, Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks, 21 April 1997

Attachment 2

Connecticut River Hydrilla Project Potential Control Sites

