



Connecticut River
Conservancy

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CONTACT:

Alicea Charamut, CRC River Steward (CT)
acharamut@ctriver.org, 860-704-0057

Volunteers Needed to Control Invasive Plant in Local Rivers

Middletown, CT – There is an emerging threat to the Connecticut River and the waters within its basin that any boater, paddler, angler or property manager can help control. European water chestnut (*Trapa natans*) is an aquatic invasive plant that spreads rapidly, covering bodies of water with dense foliage impeding recreational activities such as boating, fishing, and swimming. The Connecticut River Conservancy (CRC), formerly Connecticut River Watershed Council, is hosting a variety of opportunities this summer for residents to learn more and help be on the lookout for and remove this threat.

Quick and thorough action must be taken to prevent this plant from taking over because water chestnut reproduces exponentially. “The good news is that this plant is easy to identify, it reproduces only by seed, and pulls up easily,” notes Alicea Charamut, River Steward for the Connecticut River Conservancy. “It can be managed by trained volunteers. For small to moderate infestations, no chemicals or equipment are needed other than willing volunteers in canoes, kayaks, and shallow draft boats. This work offers an opportunity for those of us who love our rivers, lakes and ponds to give back to them in a fun and easy way!”

Three hand-pulling events are already scheduled for the next few weeks in the floating meadows of the Mattabesset River on Saturdays June 9th and 23rd in Middletown at 9:00 am along with the Jonah Center for Earth and Art and Keeney Cove in Glastonbury in Wednesday, June 13th at 5:00 pm. The work is fairly easy, a little dirty and very rewarding. Supplies and training are provided. Those who wish to attend need only bring their boat and PFD.

In addition, CRC is coordinating a River Sweep of the Connecticut River, its coves and ponds to scout for this invasive plant. “Because the seeds from these plants can last for up to twelve years, knowing where these plants have been found is crucial. In order to effectively control the spread of these plants we must monitor locations where they have been found each year and have as many eyes on the water as possible.” Paddling and boating groups can adopt a section of the river to scout for plants in July and August. Charamut is also available to give talks to groups within the Connecticut River watershed who want to bring this information to their

organization or club.

“It will take a community of those who care coming together to help control this plant,” says Charamut. The Connecticut River Conservancy joins many partners in the effort to control water chestnut in the Connecticut River watershed. The US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, Lower Connecticut River Council of Governments, Jonah Center for Earth and Art, Connecticut River Museum, and the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station are all active participants working to help control this aquatic invasive plant. More groups are encouraged to join the effort. Much of the work here in Connecticut is possible thanks to a generous grant from the Environmental Professionals of Connecticut.

For more information about volunteer opportunities and registration information, please visit www.criver.org/get-involved or contact Alicea Charamut at acharamut@ctriver.org.



Caption: Water chestnut is an invasive plant that is easy for volunteers to remove & keep under control. Join CRC for upcoming volunteer events to learn about & remove this invasive plant.

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