

## Training the Trainers: AIS Watercraft Inspection

Watercraft inspection provides a mechanism for public outreach and education about the threats of ecologically harmful aquatic invasive species (AIS), the importance of watercraft inspection, AIS/natural resource-related topics, and information on local attractions, particularly those in waterfront areas.

As existing waterfront inspection steward programs (WISP) expand coverage to more launches and new programs become established, increasing numbers of waterfront inspection stewards trained in watercraft inspection are needed. Additionally, more communities and organizations are initiating conversations about starting new programs with involvement by a wide variety of agencies, associations and partners across New York State, creating the need for standardized training and protocol.

### NYSG Responds

New York Sea Grant (NYSG) serves as a critical resource assisting watercraft inspection steward programs (WISP) to become standardized across New York State. The standardization helps increase public awareness of AIS and the need for watercraft inspection by the public, and public compliance with improving efforts to slow or stop the introduction and transport of invasive species via recreational boating equipment.

In 2016, NYSG conducted a needs assessment to identify and respond to the training needs of WISP leaders. A spring workshop at the NYS Federation of Lake Associations Conference drew more than 50 attendees. A focus group of WISP coordinators evaluated program development tools and standardized steward training protocol related to watercraft inspection process at a fall workshop. The final tools and protocol will be available at [nyseagrant.org](http://nyseagrant.org) in 2017.

The project work also included development of a “History of New York State Watercraft Inspection Locations” map of launch sites with WISP coverage through 2015 statewide.

NYSG’s ongoing WISP training/standardization efforts empower smaller and community-based organizations



Stewards use standardized protocols to inspect boats. Photos: NYSG, Lake George Association

to develop effective WISPs across New York State and beyond, Standardized programs help in the effort to mitigate the impact of aquatic invasive species.

### Partners:

- Cornell University/Cooperative Extension
- Lake George Park Commission
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
- New York State Parks
- Paul Smith’s College

### The Sea Grant Focus Area for this project is Healthy New York Ecosystems & Habitats

New York Sea Grant is a joint program of Cornell University, the State University of New York, and NOAA.

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