



NEWS RELEASE

**U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
Buffalo District**

Building Strong®

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Corps of Engineers awards hydrilla risk assessment contract to Ecology and Environment, Inc.

Buffalo, NY -- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Buffalo District awarded a two year, \$1.1 million contract, September 2014, to Ecology and Environment, Inc. (E&E) in support of the Great Lakes Hydrilla Risk Assessment using funds through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

Hydrilla is a highly invasive aquatic plant species that was first introduced to the southern United States in the 1960s from Asia. More recently there have been a noticeable number of infestations in the glacial lakes of the Northeast and Midwest. Hydrilla infestations have potential to cause significant ecological and economic losses.



An underwater view of dense hydrilla beds in the Erie Canal, NY

E&E, with assistance from Texas Tech University, University of Toledo, and North Carolina State University, will conduct a risk assessment in support of the demonstration project which will focus on the potential for the introduction and spread of hydrilla in the Great Lakes Basin including connecting channels and tributaries. The team of scientists will work to identify potential pathways, and will study the biological requirements that could result in the spread and expansion within the cooler climates of the Great Lakes. Work will include an assessment of the potential ecological and economic impacts of hydrilla in the Great Lakes while simultaneously recommending actions related to early detection, rapid response, and actions to reduce the spread of the invasive species.

The risk assessment will compliment ongoing efforts to control of the invasive plant in the Erie Canal and Tonawanda Creek, Tonawanda, NY. The USACE, Buffalo District, in cooperation with the U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center (ERDC), is serving as the lead agency for an eradication demonstration project at that site. Initial treatment of hydrilla was conducted July 22, 2014 using an aquatic herbicide along a 7-mile section of the Erie Canal followed by a spot treatment of a large bed and multiple smaller beds of hydrilla in September 2014. Plans for a treatment in 2015 are currently being developed.

For additional information about hydrilla in Western New York visit: <http://stophydrillawny.org>

For additional information about the Corps of Engineers aquatic plant control research program visit: <http://el.ercd.usace.army.mil/aqua/>

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