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Oswego County plans ahead to alleviate water chestnuts this summer

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By Debra J. Groom / The Post-Standard

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The Jan van der Heide family helped to pull water chestnuts from the lower Salmon River at Port Ontario last summer. Oswego County River Guides, New York Sea Grant, and other volunteers will hold a water chestnut pull July 14. Volunteers will meet at the Pine Grove

Oswego County, NY -- Water chestnuts have plagued Oswego County for the past few years, clogging waterways and making it difficult for boaters and anglers to enjoy the water.

This year Oswego County residents are getting a jump on the water chestnuts by conducting a water chestnut pull at Port Ontario July 14.

Pulling the plants helps slow their spread. Officials say water chestnuts have become established in section of the Oswego River and have been found in the Salmon and Oneida rivers.

"It is difficult to slow the spread of

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Boat Launch at Port Ontario.

water chestnut once it becomes established in a shallow water area," said John DeHollander, district

manager of the Oswego County Soil and Water Conservation District.

]

"The non-native aquatic plant produces a large number of seeds, called nutlets, helping it to grow in colonies that rapidly multiply. The lower Salmon River area at Port Ontario is one of the areas targeted for hand pulling because the plant has not become fully established there."

Each water chestnut plant can produce as many as up to 300 nuts per year.

Several acres of plants were pulled last summer by volunteers on the Oswego and Oneida rivers and the Salmon River Estuary. In addition, the Oswego County Soil and Water Conservation District applied a chemical treatment to more than 200 acres of plant cover on the Oswego River.

State Sen. Patricia Ritchie, R-Oswegatchie, obtained some state money this year for help with the water chestnuts.

The Oswego County Legislature allocated funds to pay for chemical treatment of the Oswego River last year. The funds were reimbursed through a state grant.

For more information or to sign up for the July 14 pull at Port Ontario, contact the Oswego County Soil and Water Conservation District at 592-9663. For more information about water chestnuts and other invasive species [in New York state go to this](#) website link.

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