

Rainbow Lake Association Volunteer Watershed Stewards were particularly well-prepared for the 2017 battle to keep Rainbow Lake free of aquatic invasive species (AIS) as many of us actually studied the matter in college. Paul Smith's College to be precise. Eighteen Association members attended a customized training session led by Sue O'Reilly of the Adirondack Watershed Institute (AWI), which is located on the PSC campus. We learned to identify the various plants and animals - from the wince-inducing water chestnuts to the miniscule spiny water flea. And then learned how to best keep those nuisance creatures out of our virtually pristine Rainbow Lake waterway. How do we do that? By talking with boaters and inspecting their crafts.



AWI's Sue O'Reilly instructs RLA members on the proper way to inspect a watercraft for aquatic invasive species.

During the 2017 summer boating season, 26 members of the Rainbow Lake Association (RLA) volunteered to greet and educate recreational boaters at the NYS boat launch at the Buck Pond Campground on nine Fridays from July 3rd through September 1st. This supplemented the coverage of the professional stewards provided by the AWI. Typically, a single volunteer or pair of volunteers staffed a 3-hour shift, with three "teams" providing coverage for 9 hours, from 9am-6pm, while professional stewards covered those same hours on Saturdays, Sundays and whenever else their schedules, and our budget, permitted.

During the entire time the Buck Pond launch site was monitored - either by professionals or volunteers - 231 canoes, 400 kayaks, 326 motor boats, 4 personal watercrafts, 11 rowboats, 2 sailboats and 17 SUPs entered or exited the water. That's 991 boats containing 1,619 individuals. RLA volunteers greeted roughly 8% of that figure. Of all those boats, only 96 harbored any organisms, and those were non-invasive. There is little doubt that the watershed stewardship program has raised awareness as fully 73% of the boaters had taken steps to mitigate the threat of the Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) their watercraft may harbor. This season our volunteers had available for reference the 2016 list of Adirondack waters where AIS have been identified. It is our continuing goal to keep the Rainbow Lake waterway off that list!

Here's a link to AWI's compilation of all data collected:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1YR4YVIBlq27SO8vkAKXtzD42OgTjNuolXZleiblOVGM/edit?usp=sharing>

Once you pull up the spreadsheet, click on the tab you're interested in at the bottom - either professionals or volunteers. You'll notice the professionals' information is a bit more complete. Next year RLA volunteer-collected data will be just as thorough as we'll be entering it directly into an AWI-issued Kindle tablet at the launch site and then uploading the data daily via Buck Pond's office wifi.

The members of the RLA wish to express their gratitude to Professor Eric Holmlund and his staff at the AWI. This season marks the **thirteenth** consecutive year that their leadership has rallied a broad coalition of

