

For Immediate Release:

Mexico, NY, and surrounding areas

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Attention: keep an eye out for fanwort, an invasive aquatic plant found in Black Creek, in Mexico, NY.

With salmon fishing season coming up, many anglers will be traveling to enjoy fishing along popular streams and rivers in Oswego County, including Black Creek, in Mexico, NY. Recently, an invasive aquatic plant, fanwort (*Cabomba caroliniana*), was found to be established in Black Creek above the Youngs Mill Dam in the Village of Mexico. Fanwort is not currently known to be established in nearshore habitats of the Great Lakes and has potential to be impactful and rapidly spread if introduced. This invasive plant is known for outcompeting native vegetation, reducing light availability for benthic organisms and native plants, and reducing dissolved oxygen levels, all of which can impact populations of native aquatic species. This species also easily spreads via fragments carried by water flow or recreational movements, which is why discovery of fanwort close to Lake Ontario immediately raised concerns from invasive species managers.

The Youngs Mill Dam currently controls water levels on Black Creek and is scheduled to be reconstructed early this fall to enhance fish and wildlife habitat. With the planned reconstruction activities, there was a heightened risk that fanwort fragments could further spread down Black Creek, which joins the Little Salmon River and drains into Lake Ontario. To help reduce the spread potential of fanwort into these waterbodies, on August 29th, staff members from the St. Lawrence Eastern Lake Ontario Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (SLELO PRISM), Cornell University's Water Resources Institute, Village of Mexico Department of Public Works, and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation joined efforts to remove the fanwort surrounding the reconstruction zone and the sparse populations of the plant downstream.

Community members and anglers who visit Black Creek and Little Salmon River can help stop the spread of fanwort by looking for and reporting observations, and always practicing Clean-Drain-Dry protocols with all boating and fishing equipment. Fanwort can be identified by its submerged stems with leaves connected by a long stalk (petiole) and fan-like leaves that have split tips forming a Y-shape. The plant also grows small white flowers that can be seen above the water during the summer (see image). If you think you've found fanwort, please take a clear close-up photo, note the location (GPS coordinates are best) and report observations to iMapInvasives or directly to the SLELO PRISM's Aquatic Restoration and Resiliency Coordinator, Brittney Rogers at Brittney.rogers@tnc.org.

SLELO PRISM also encourages community members to commit to monitoring Black Creek and the Little Salmon River for fanwort and other aquatic invasive species annually throughout the spring and summer. Those interested in assisting this effort, can sign up to join SLELO PRISM's Water Protectors Program at www.sleloinvasives.org/water. Currently, fanwort is not considered to be widespread in the region, and by aiding early detection efforts, you're helping to keep it that way.

