



CHRIS BERTELSEN PHOTO
Connecticut River Aquatic Invasive Plants Outreach and Survey Project member Jan Lambert (right) scans a bed of native plants for milfoil and other invasive plant species as Laurie Callahan (left), project coordinator with the Project, and Josh Cline (far left), executive director of New Hampshire Rivers Council examine an aquatic plant pulled from the shallow water by the east bank of the Connecticut River in Charlestown on Thursday.

Increasing awareness

Project hopes to prevent further spread of aquatic invasive plants

By ELIZABETH MARTIN
Staff Writer

Fishermen are informed when they get their license and those who have lake front property know about it, but the average person isn't aware of the risk involved with transporting invasive species from or in rivers.

"My guess would be that people have no idea that there's invasive species in the river," said Josh Cline, executive director of New Hampshire Rivers Council.

They are there, however. Cline is trying to get the word out that in New

Hampshire's 9,600 miles of river, invasive species like milfoil can exist.

Milfoil, which looks like a "bottle brush" in the water and falls apart outside of the water, is one of the invasive aquatic plants that projects such as the Connecticut River Aquatic Invasive Plants Outreach and Survey Project are monitoring and trying to prevent spreading.

Eurasian Milfoil was found a few years ago in Springfield, Vt., project coordinator Laurie Callahan said at the Connecticut River town landing Thursday.

Signs for Didymo are posted at the landing, informing boaters to wash off their vessels to prevent any spreading of the

algae. The invasive freshwater algae is not native and at this time it is not known how to get rid of it, Cline said. Didymo, also known as Rock Snot, can be spread in microscopic levels, he said.

The river's council was formed last year and did 21 site visits, Callahan said. The project, which is sponsored by Sullivan County Conservation District and funded by the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services Exotic Species Program and Wellborn Ecology Fund, also gives community presentations on aquatic invasive species.

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It was presentations like those that got volunteer Jan Lambert interested. There could be better early detection if everyone on the river was educated, she said.

"Sometimes it doesn't always turn into a tragedy, you just need to monitor it from year to year," Lambert said.

The crew, each on individual kayaks, was out Thursday afternoon to look into the water and rake up certain plants to take a closer look.

ing to the DES web site.

The invasive species are a problem because they can overpower a native species, if rare species are infested they can change the habitat enough so the habitat could be lost or they can become too dense and change the water flow, Callahan said.

"It can really effect a water body, whether it be a lake, pond or river," she said.

To get more information or become involved contact therivermist@hotmail.com.