

EXOTIC TIMES

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Newsletter of the Invasive Species Team on Long Island

Summer 2004



Highlights of the Year Ahead

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We have 4 new Dell handheld computers with GPS for mapping weed-free areas.



The GPS units were purchased with a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Pulling Together Initiative.

The Invasive Species Team is planning an ambitious array of strategic actions for the new fiscal year 2005 that begins on July 1st. Actions will take place at a variety of landscape scales and policy levels. Our goals are to abate invasive species threats to conservation targets and protect our most pristine, weed-free areas. High-priority strategies for FY '05 include preventing new invasions, surveying and mapping, education, enhancing public policies, database management, training Weed Watchers volunteers, early detection and eradication of new invaders, and increasing funds for invasive species management and control.

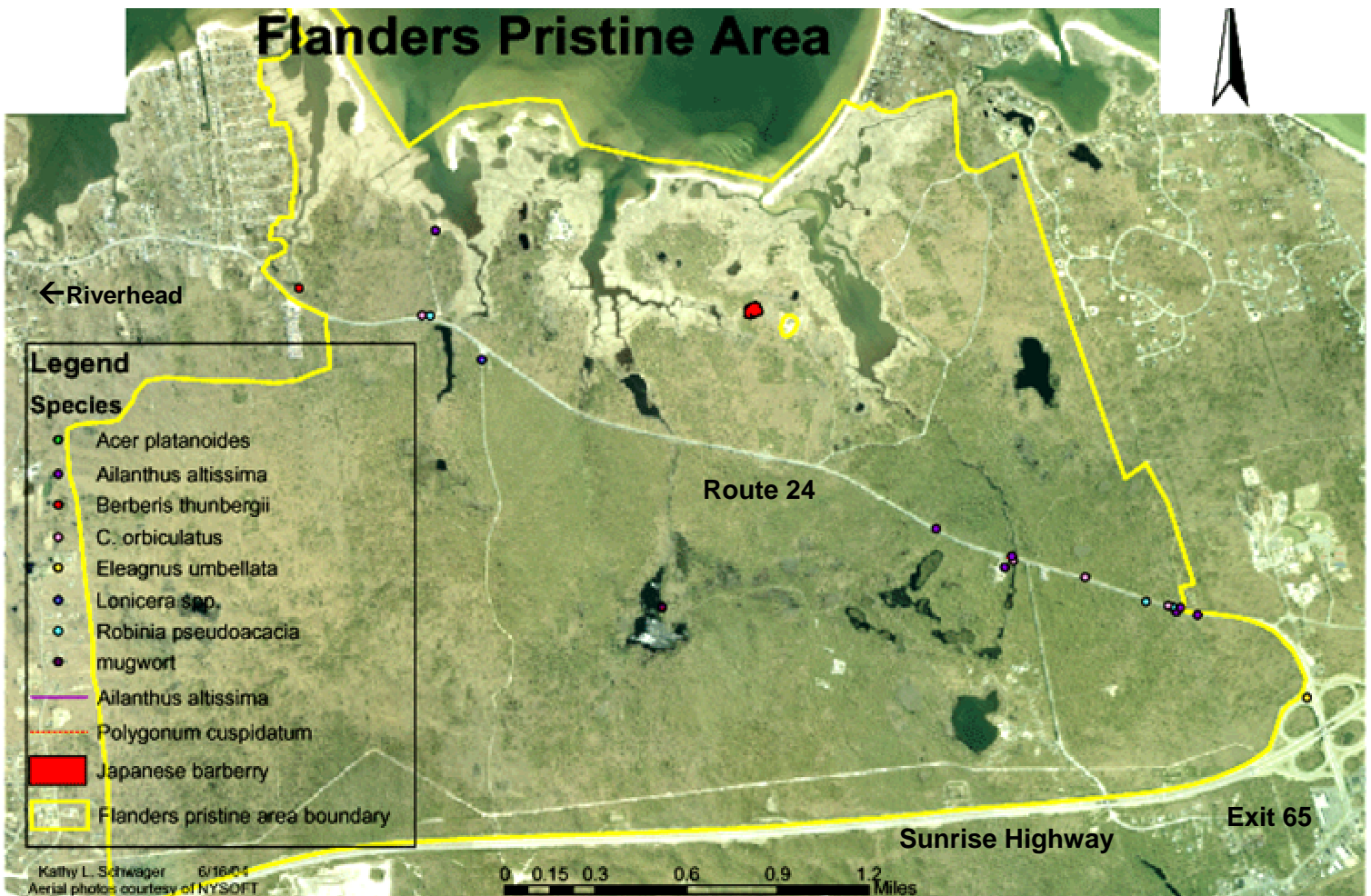
The team is sharing our LI Coordinated Weed Management Plan and fact sheets of best management practices with partners around the state and in other regions. The plan and fact sheets were developed jointly with associates of the Long Island Weed Management Area (LIWMA). The fact sheets include voluntary codes of conduct for a variety of audiences, including public officials, outdoor recreationists, and landscape and nursery professionals. In FY '05, the team will schedule meetings with town officials and others to implement best management practices to prevent the spread of invasive plants. Portions of the funding for the fact sheets was provided by the Long Island Community Foundation's Henry Phillip Kraft Family Memorial Fund

The team is working with the NYS Invasive Species Task Force and Conservancy staff around the state to assess the threat of invasive plants, animals, and pathogens and to develop a collective response. The task force has until November 31, 2005 to report to the governor and state legislature.

The team will continue to collaborate with more than 20 public and private agencies and organizations participating in LIWMA. Participation in LIWMA continues to increase. New associates include representatives from the fields of landscape architecture and marine biology, and representatives from NYC Parks.

The team has developed a weed ranking system that will be used in the Central Pine Barrens, Long Pond Greenbelt, Mashomack Preserve, and Montauk Peninsula in FY '05.

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This map shows nearly 5,000 acres of public land in the Central Pine Barrens that is dominated by native oaks, pitch pines, and other native plants and wildlife (area within the yellow boundary line). This is one of the few remaining places on Long Island that is relatively unpolluted by invasive exotic plants. Listed in the legend are some of the few invaders found here. Mapping assistance was provided by Weed Watchers volunteers.

With assistance from Weed Watchers, trails preservation groups, friends of the parks groups, and other volunteers and partners, the team will expand efforts to survey and map pristine, weed-free areas of the Montauk Peninsula, Long Pond Greenbelt, Mashomack Preserve, and other key areas of the Central Pine Barrens, including portions of the Carmens River. Several volunteers will be trained in the use of our new Dell PDA's (personal digital assistants) with GPS (global positioning system) to increase our mapping and monitoring capacities.

The team will expand efforts to control *Phragmites australis*, also known as common reed, around the rare coastal plain ponds of the Long Pond Greenbelt and Central Pine Barrens. Several of these ponds will be inventoried for invasive aquatic plants.

The team will intensify efforts to identify and control infestations of several high-risk invasive plant species, including mile-a-minute vine, black swallow-wort, purple loosestrife, and giant hogweed, all of which can cause serious ecological and economic damage. The team has a program underway at the Mashomack Preserve to control black swallow-wort and other serious invaders, such as Japanese barberry.

The team will continue to assist with the development of a statewide invasive plant database to collect, analyze, store, and share information related to invasive plant infestations, management, and control. Such a system is already being developed by the team for Long Island.

Last, but certainly not least, the team will assist the Protected Lands Council of the Central Pine Barrens to complete and begin to implement a regional invasive plant management plan for the Pine Barrens.