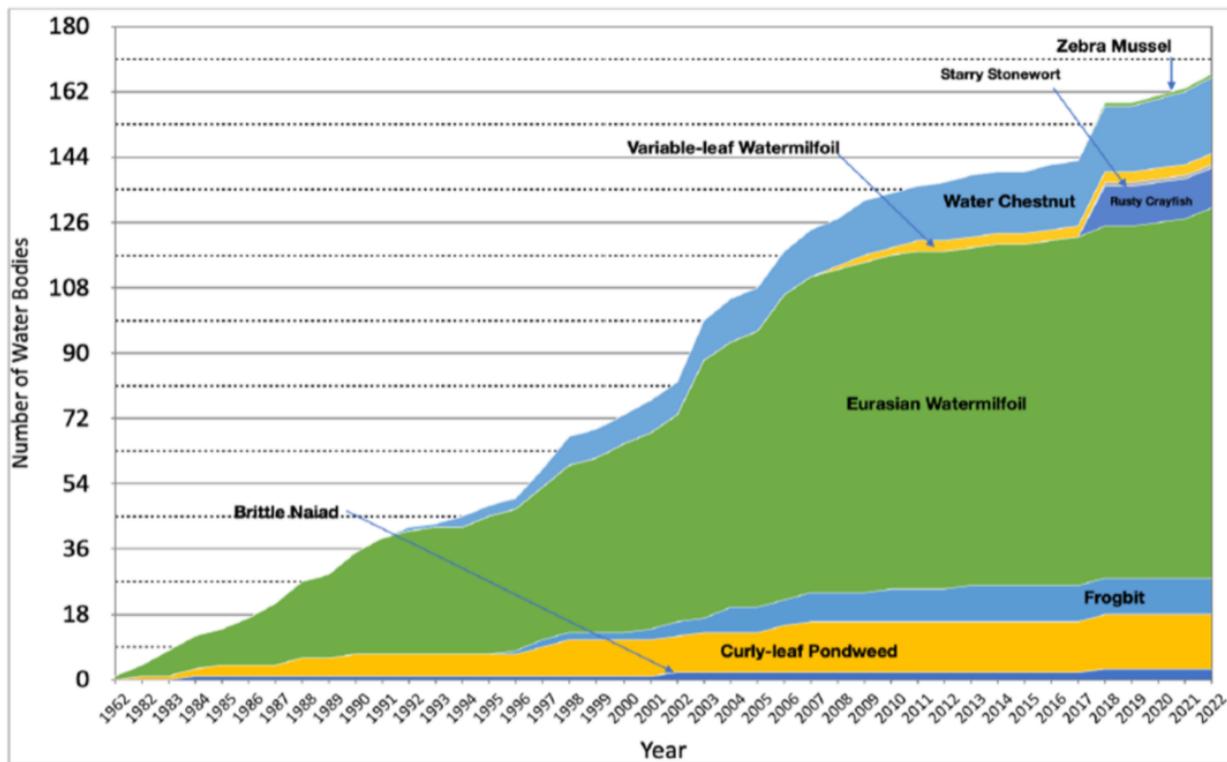


Aquatic Invasive Species Management in Vermont: What to Know
Federation of Vermont Lakes and Ponds
February 2023

- **Vermont law requires AIS prevention:** In 1978, Vermont lawmakers recognized the critical threat posed by aquatic invasive species and passed Vermont’s Aquatic Nuisance Control law ([10 V.S.A. Chapter 50](#)). This law states:“ *It is the policy of the state of Vermont to prevent the infestation and proliferation of invasive species in the state that result in negative environmental impacts, including habitat loss and a reduction in native biodiversity along with adverse social and economic impacts and impacts to the public health and safety.*” ([10 V.S.A, Chapter 50. §1451](#))
- **How many lakes in Vermont?** There are approximately 800 lakes and ponds in the state.
- **What is AIS?** Aquatic invasive species are a form of biological pollution. Extremely difficult if not impossible to contain, control, or eradicate, they are a serious environmental threat to our surface waters as well as interfering with our ability to enjoy lakes, ponds, and rivers. As defined by the 1999 Presidential Executive Order 13112, invasive species are “non-native (or alien) to the ecosystem under consideration and whose introduction causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health.”
- Invasive species are considered **one of the ten major stressors on Vermont’s surface waters** as identified under the [Vermont Surface Water Management Strategy](#).
- **Aquatic invasive species are one of the top risks to natural resources globally**, and few places are spared the impact of these species. This makes having a dedicated state-level program, with adequate staff and resources even more critical.
- **What AIS are known in Vermont?** Both invasive plants and animals have been confirmed in Vermont. In addition to the AIS depicted in the following graph, European frog bit, Asian clams, spiny and fish hook water fleas, alewives as well as others (click [here](#)) are known from some of Vermont’s waters. Vermont’s most problematic aquatic invasive species is the invasive aquatic plant, [Eurasian watermilfoil](#).

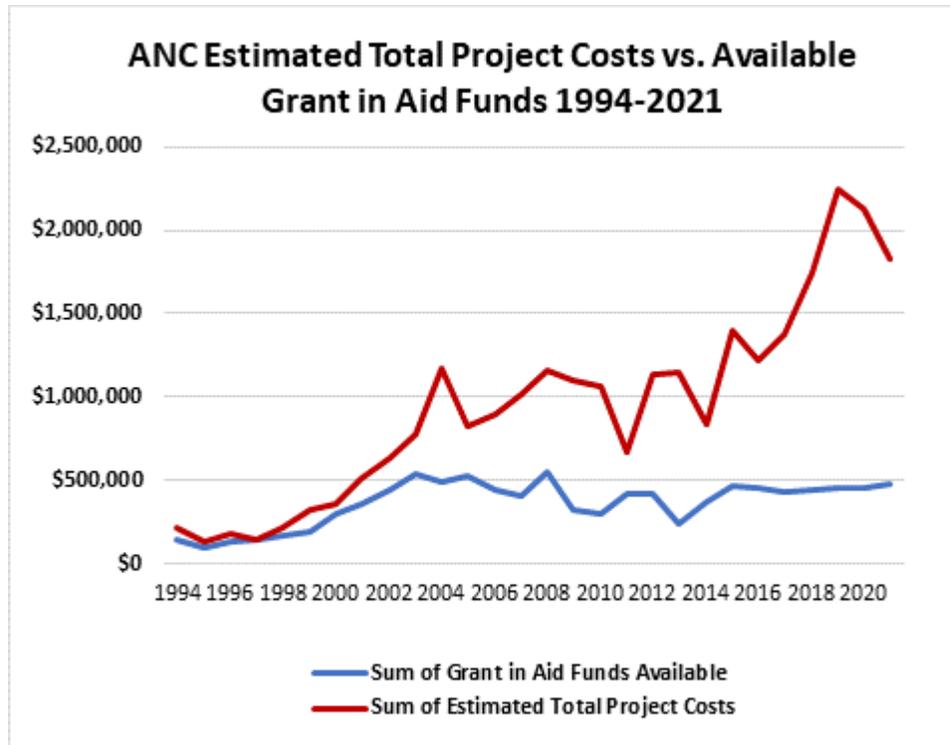


Historical Infestation of Vermont Water Bodies Based on DEC Data Set

- **How does AIS spread?** The spread of AIS is caused primarily by humans. AIS “hitchhike” on (and in) boats and other aquatic gear that are moved from waterbody to waterbody.
- **How many public boat and fishing accesses are in the state:** According to the Vermont Fish and Wildlife website, there are **196 public accesses** on Vermont waterbodies.
- **What is the best way to prevent the spread of AIS?** All boats and gear should be inspected and properly cleaned before moving to another waterbody. This is what greeters do and why greeter programs are so important. By inspecting boats entering and leaving lakes, greeters ensure that AIS is not carried into and out of lakes.
- **How many Greeter programs do we have?** There are currently 30 active greeter programs on inland lakes with three covering more than one access point. Many are not able to operate seven days per week. Only four have hot water, high pressure boat washers (the best way to ensure AIS is not carried in or out of a waterbody). Compare this to the number of public accesses in the state.
- **The state’s General Fund provides only \$25,000 for AIS prevention and control.**
- **Source of ANC Funds:** By statute, DEC is allocated 37% of the Motorboat Registration fees (MBR). 17% of this is used for staff salaries for AIS prevention and permitting (due

to lack of general fund support as noted in #2 above) with the remainder, 20%, funding the Aquatic Nuisance Control (ANC) grant-in-aid program. For at least a decade, this program has been level funded and has consisted of \$250,000 from the MBR fees, \$100,000 from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (for projects in the Lake Champlain Basin only), and \$100,000/year from a one-time surplus.

- **2023 Reduction:** The one-time surplus is now depleted reducing the funds to \$350,000. This represents a 22% decrease while the need continues to increase.



- **The need:** In 2022 the ANC program received \$1.2 million in requests for AIS prevention and control projects.
- **The cost of prevention vs. remediation:** Estimated costs for a greeter program operating 7 days per week throughout the summer is approximately \$30,000 (example from the Harvey’s Lake program). While to clear one acre of Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM) using diver-assisted suction harvesting costs approximately \$10,000. A small lake may have a littoral zone (the area where aquatic plants can grow) of perhaps 100 acres. If it becomes infested with EWM, remediation of even 10% (10 acres) would cost \$100,000 – far more than running a greeter program. And once infected, EWM will spread in that lake and can be carried from infected lakes to uninfected lakes unless prevention programs are in place.
- **What about the \$50 million in the Clean Water Budget?** According to DEC policy, AIS prevention and control is NOT eligible for any of these funds.



got control Vermont?

Can Vermont afford continued spread of aquatic invasive species in its lakes, ponds, rivers, streams and wetlands?

(Photo: Eurasian watermilfoil bed in Lake Iroquois, Pogo Senior)