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Volunteer groups can earn money and help prevent the spread of invasive species by hosting a boat wash.

Boat washes can serve as group fundraisers

BY ANNA MCCARTNEY
Contributing writer

You can help prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species and raise money for your fishing club, Scout troop, sports team or other group at the same time.

Boat-wash stations at fishing tournaments are one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species. Learn how you can partner with Pennsylvania Sea Grant to conduct a watercraft inspection and boat-wash station at a fishing tournament in your

community. This workshop is free but registration is required by Wednesday. Contact Sara Stahlman at sng121@psu.edu or (814) 217-9011 for more information or to register.

What: PA Sea Grant Boat Wash Training
When: Thursday, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Where: Tom Ridge Environmental Center, Room 112, 301 Peninsula Drive

ANNA MCCARTNEY, a communications and education specialist for Pennsylvania Sea Grant, can be reached by e-mail at axm40@psu.edu.



fsusda.gov

Boats of all sizes and types and anything that comes in contact with the water must be thoroughly cleaned and dried after exiting any water to avoid spreading aquatic invasive species to other lakes, rivers and streams.



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Fairview High School collect trash along Trout Run near their school campus.

Fairview students clean campus, neighborhood

BY ANNA MCCARTNEY
Contributing writer

Fairview High School students and their teacher, Rebecca Turner, are Great Lakes Great Stewards. They are one of eight Erie County groups participating in Pennsylvania Sea Grant's Center for Great Lakes Literacy project that involves students in service learning.

Each group is required to conduct a cleanup and data collection around their school and neighborhood.

Their data will be added to the PA Lake Erie International Coastal Cleanup data and sent to the Ocean Conservancy, where it will be added to the worldwide totals.

Fairview students collected more than 22 pounds of trash, including lots of food wrappers, plastic bags, throwaway

cups and plates and strapping bands, near Trout Run, the stream near the school campus.

Below are some of the students' comments:

My ICC experience was fun and if I had the opportunity to do it again, I would. It's nice helping the environment with my class."— Ericka McHenry

There was a lot of garbage around the fence that separates the softball field from the stream. — Makayla Wood

My ICC experience was dirty and cold, but helpful because if I wouldn't have cleaned up the garbage, it would still be pollution in Fairview. — Jordan Edwards

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In hot water

How to rid your boat of aquatic invasive species

BY ANNA MCCARTNEY
Contributing writer

Scores of lakes, rivers and streams are under attack by aquatic invaders, which are causing environmental and economic harm.

Are you unknowingly helping them?

These non-native aquatic plants and animals (some are microscopic) have no predators to keep them in check so they cause havoc. They compete with native and game species for space and food. They pose public health risks and also burden municipal water plants, agriculture, tourism, fisheries and outdoor recreation industries. In many states and provinces, it is illegal to transport aquatic invasive species (AIS) because once established, they are impossible to eliminate.

AIS are spreading at a fast rate across the United States. Many are transported to new areas attached to boats or harbored in tiny amounts of water. Anytime your activities come in contact with any body of water, you are likely to be helping invasive species spread if you don't take the right precautions.

Before your next fishing or boating trip, become familiar with AIS so you can identify them by visiting www.paseagrant.org/topics/invasive-species. Then always follow the steps below. Preventing their introduction is the best line of defense and the most cost-effective.

Before leaving any body of water:

- Check everything that came into contact with the water, including every inch of your boat, trailer, canoe, fishing gear, life jackets, etc. Remove and leave behind plants, mud and aquatic life. And because many AIS are microscopic and some species may live for months in water that has not been removed, it's important to also do the following:

- Drain all standing water from your boat and from all equipment.

- Wash all boat parts and equipment with hot water (140 degrees Fahrenheit) or with a high-pressure spray or use a commercial hot-water carwash.

- Don't dump leftover bait into the water, unless you collected the bait there.

- Dispose unwanted bait and other animals or aquatic plants in the trash.

- After cleaning, allow equipment to dry for at least five days before entering another waterway.

- Report sightings to a local natural resource agency or Sea Grant office if you suspect a new infestation.

For more information, attend the PA Sea Grant boat-wash training or visit the websites listed on this page.

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Inspect your boat, trailer, and equipment and remove visible aquatic plants, animals and mud before leaving the water access area.



NPS.GOV

AIS like these quagga mussels are transported to new areas when they become attached to boats or are harbored in tiny amounts of water.



PASEAGRANT

Drain all water from motor, bilges, bladder tanks, live bait wells and any other wet compartments and portable bait containers. Dispose bait in the trash.

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<http://www.fishandboat.com/AIS.htm>
<http://www.paseagrant.org/topics/invasive-species>
<http://www.protectyourwaters.net/>

Spreading invasive species is another example of how people often unknowingly change the environment. Look for articles about the environment. How many are about human impact? Share your ideas of what people should do to stop transporting invasive species and why? Send them to axm40@psu.edu for possible publication in the "your space" feature.

