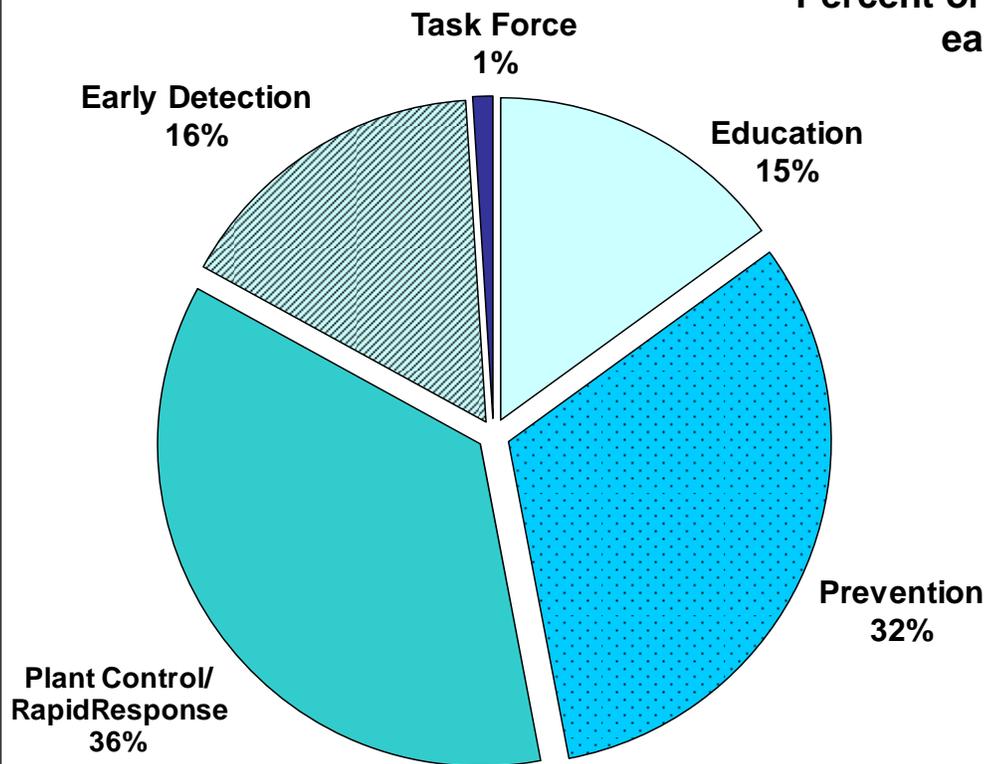


DEP Invasive Aquatic Species Program

Percent of Budget Allocated to
each Program Element
2016 Calendar Year



Funding

Funding for the Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Invasive Aquatic Species Program (IASP) comes from a fee on motorboats and seaplanes using inland waters. Boaters with Maine registrations pay \$10 and must display the "Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers – Preserve Maine Waters" sticker attached to the boat registration sticker. Boaters with out-of-state registration and all seaplane operators must purchase and display the \$20 Lake and River Protection Sticker.

Adoption of LD1626 by the Maine Legislature in April 2014 changed the revenue distribution of invasive species sticker fees. Formerly 60% went to DEP and 40% to Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (DIFW). The current distribution sends 80% to DEP and 20% to DIFW. The impetus for this change was to provide more funding to lake groups battling established infestations of invasive aquatic plants.

Following are brief descriptions of primary program elements for calendar year 2016. Budgeted salary/benefits for 3.5 DEP staff positions total \$307,500 in 2016. Each program element in the pie chart (above) includes an estimate of staff time devoted to each category. Overhead is approximately 16 percent on every dollar spent except for grant funds. The 2016 budget includes \$62,730 in overhead. Please email milfoil@maine.gov with questions regarding DEP funding and budget.

Early Detection

Over 3,500 “citizen scientists,” trained and supported by the Maine Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program through a grant with DEP, form the state’s early detection program. They provide a core force for surveying boat ramps, inlets, dock and swim areas and other areas for potential plant invasion.

Education

IASP staff engages in educational activities to inform residents and visitors of the invasive species threat, promotes behaviors that prevent the spread of new infestations and advises lake groups on plant control strategies and techniques. These activities include the following:

- assisting lake groups with spread prevention and plant control programs
- speaking about the invasive aquatic species threat to varied audiences and responding to requests for information from media outlets
- distribution of brochures and other collateral materials
- technical assistance to plant retailers and schools that use plants as classroom tools
- distribution of warning signs on infested and non-infested lakes and ponds

Prevention (Courtesy Boat Inspection Program)

One day, all boaters will inspect their watercraft and trailers for hitchhiking plants and other biological debris that migrate from lake to lake. Until then, posting inspectors at ramps is the most effective way to assure biological threats do not spread and provides an opportunity to show boaters the importance of inspecting and removing plants and debris. Boat inspectors are trained and grant funds are provided to support lake association and municipal boat inspection programs. Inspections have increased from 2,500 in 2001 to over 80,000 in each of the last four years (2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015). The 2016 Courtesy Boat Inspection Program budget includes a competitive grant program for un-infested waters and allocates specific funding to organizations on infested lakes to prevent spread from those waters.

Plant Control and Rapid Response

Local and regional lake groups work tirelessly to control established infestations. The IASP responds to newly-discovered infestations to limit spread both within the infested lakes and beyond. Efforts include manual removal of plants by trained volunteers and SCUBA divers, deployment of warning buoys to direct boat traffic away from infested areas, and—in worst-case situations—the application of herbicides. The 2016 budget includes funding for rapid response by the IASP to the newly-confirmed European naiad (*Najas minor*) infestation in Northeast Pond (Maine/NH border lake).

Task Force/Interstate efforts

Collaboration, both with neighboring states that have more extensive invasive plant problems and with Maine stakeholders, is essential to set priorities and find efficiencies. Not only do nearby states have a greater variety of invasive species able to migrate into Maine, they also have more experience in curbing or controlling plant infestations. Communication and the free exchange of experience are essential.

Within Maine, a Governor-appointed panel of stakeholders, the Interagency Task Force on Invasive Aquatic Plants and Nuisance Species, overviews and advises how revenues coming to the IASP best serve the state.