

State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources



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Invasive Elodea found at Potter Marsh in Anchorage Coastal Wildlife Refuge

(Anchorage, AK) – The aquatic invasive plant Elodea was discovered recently in the Anchorage Coastal Wildlife Refuge at Potter Marsh. State, federal and local agencies are developing a management plan for the infestation, drawing on successful elodea eradications elsewhere in Southcentral Alaska. Agencies hope to put a proposed plan out for public review in January and implement the plan in spring 2017.

A U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service employee discovered the Potter Marsh infestation in early October. A survey by invasive plant specialists with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the Alaska Department of Natural Resources determined that the infestation is less than 1 acre in size and generally confined to the southeastern area of the marsh in a roadside ditch.

Elodea eradication has been successful at Anchorage's Lake Hood and the DeLong, Little Campbell and Sand Lakes, as well as three lakes on the Kenai Peninsula. Elodea was not found in any of these lakes during 2016 surveys.

Controlling Elodea is critical because it can displace native vegetation, degrade water quality, impede recreation, and alter resident fish habitat. It only takes a small fragment to start a new infestation.

A common aquarium plant, Elodea is quarantined by the State of Alaska, meaning it is illegal to import, transport, buy, sell or distribute it in Alaska. Please help stop the spread of this invasive plant by properly disposing of all aquatic plants, sealing them in a plastic bag and placing the bag in the trash. Avoid areas heavily infested with Elodea and report possible sightings to 1-877-INVASIV or directly to DNR's Invasive Plant and Agricultural Pest Coordinator Heather Stewart at heather.stewart@alaska.gov. Learn more at <http://plants.alaska.gov/invasives/elodea.htm> and <https://www.fws.gov/alaska/fisheries/invasive/index.htm>

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