

Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers!

A National Public Awareness and Partnership Campaign Addressing Aquatic Invasive Species

What is Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers!?

- This is a national public awareness and partnership campaign designed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on behalf of the national Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force and its partner organizations. The campaign consists of various communications elements designed for any organizations interested in aquatic resource conservation to use, which promotes environmentally-responsible behaviors.
- The campaign simplifies the aquatic invasive species issue, makes it relevant to aquatic recreational users and empowers them to become part of the solution in preventing the spread of these harmful species.

What the campaign goals?

- As a multi-faceted campaign designed to do many things, the primary intent is to raise aquatic recreational users' awareness of this issue and to promote environmentally-friendly recreational behaviors. Secondary goals are to unite the conservation community to speak with one voice about this complex issue and to demonstrate the critical role that outreach, education, communications and marketing plays in dealing with challenging resource management issues.

Why target recreational users?

- Americans love to spend time on the water. Millions annually participate in boating, fishing, jet-skiing or sailing and travel extensively in pursuit of new opportunities. When viewed separately, these activities contribute positively to our society, but when combined with lack of issue awareness and knowledge of the prevention steps, the impacts of these species can become quite expensive.

What is the basis for Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers!?

- Research shows water-based recreation is a potential pathway that could spread these nuisance species. Other studies show that participants in these activities will take preventive action to avoid invasive species introductions, if they know what to do. Conversely, without proper information, they will do nothing. Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers! promotes proactive prevention behaviors that limit the spread of aquatic invasive species like zebra mussels or hydrilla.



**STOP AQUATIC
HITCHHIKERS!™**

Prevent the transport of nuisance species.
Clean all recreational equipment.
www.ProtectYourWaters.net

When you leave a body of water:

- Remove any visible mud, plants, fish or animals before transporting equipment.
- Eliminate water from equipment before transporting.
- Clean and dry anything that comes into contact with water (boats, trailers, equipment, clothing, dogs, etc.).
- Never release plants, fish or animals into a body of water unless they came out of that body of water.

What do you get by becoming a partner?

- By formalizing your partnership, you will receive cooperative marketing materials that allow you to take credit for the prevention message while benefiting from an information-packed web site maintained by the Fish and Wildlife Service.

What are the benefits?

- Access to a professionally designed national marketing campaign.
- Synergistic promotions amongst the 431 current partners including national media outlets (ESPN Outdoors), state and federal agencies, conservation organizations and others.
- Maximization of your organization's limited resources, and an understanding about and accountability for your ANS outreach activities.

How can my organization become a partner?

- Go to the campaign web site and sign up to become a partner. Once you do this, you will get a campaign partnership packet in the mail.

For more information, go to the campaign website:

www.ProtectYourWaters.net