

## Volunteers pull invasive plants out of Peconic River

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The Peconic Estuary Program coordinated volunteers Friday morning for a semi-annual *Ludwigia* Eradication event, to remove and haul off the non-native invasive aquatic plant *Ludwigia peploides*, or water primrose. About 25 people converged on the Peconic to hand-pull the invasive perennial, first discovered in the Peconic in 2003.

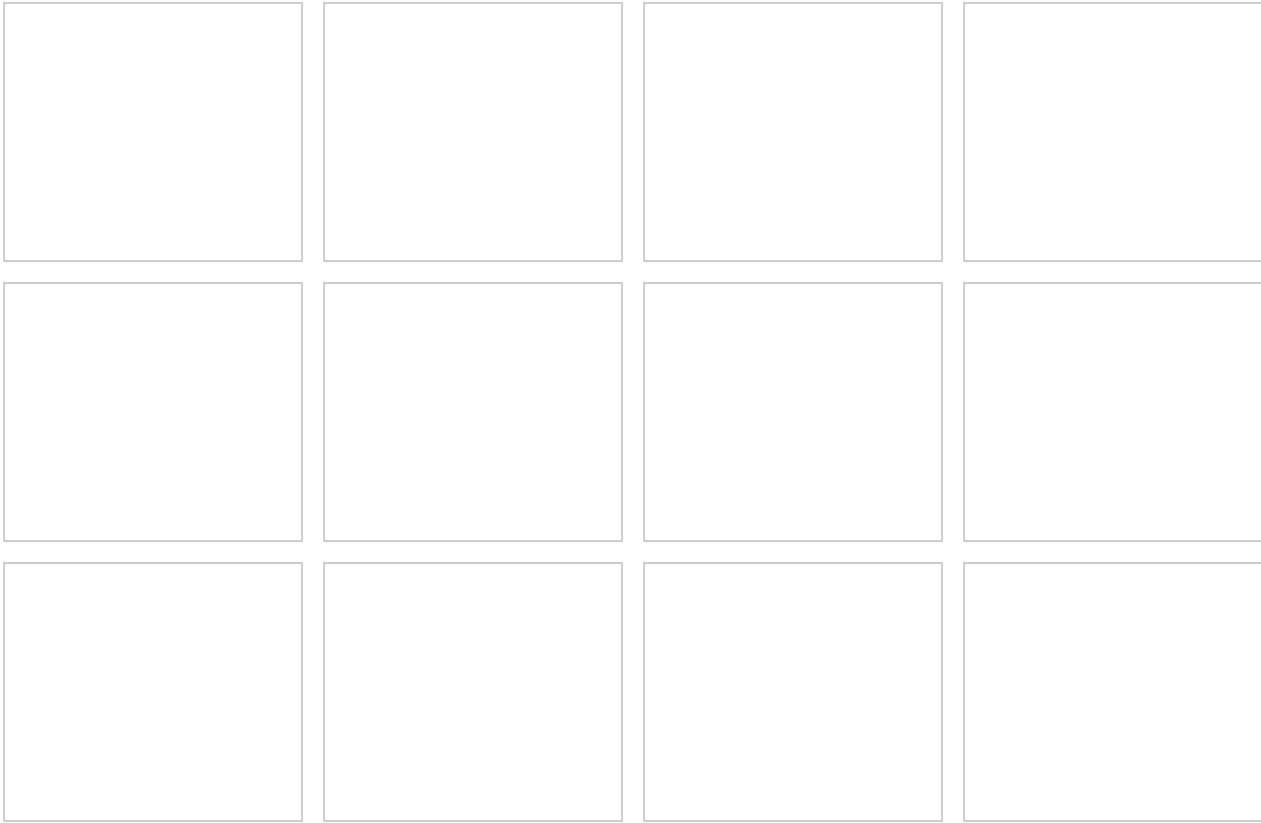
The water primrose poses many ecosystem threats due to its rapid and extensive growth, according to the Peconic Estuary Program. Studies indicate that *Ludwigia* species are able to double their biomass in 15 to 20 days in slow-flowing waters and in about 70 days in rivers, allowing for the rapid destruction of native ecosystems, according to the PEP [website](#). It can quickly block waterways, interfering with human uses of water systems such as boating, swimming, and fishing. Water primrose also reduces biodiversity and degrades water quality by decreasing pH and dissolved oxygen content. Because its leaves are above the water surface, *Ludwigia* does not add much oxygen, if any, to the water column and shades out submerged plants below that could add oxygen to the water column.

Volunteers have spent literally thousands of hours pulling out the plants, which are then hauled off in trash containers. They have removed as much as 60 cubic yards in one day.

Researchers are not sure how the plant got into the Peconic River estuary. The only other location on Long Island where *Ludwigia* has been found to date is in Prospect Park, Brooklyn, according to the PEP website.

Check back again for video of the volunteers at work.

*RiverheadLOCAL photos by Peter Blasl.*



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