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– **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** –

NY BASS Teams with Onondaga County Soil and Water to Attack Water Chestnuts

Liverpool, New York---The New York BASS Nation and the Onondaga County Soil and Water Conservation District teamed up to address a significant water chestnut infestation along the Seneca River between the Grenadier Village Marina and the Route 31 bridge over the last week in July. Having the NY BASS conservation boat to use as a platform for both harvesting and collecting the chestnut plants was the key to successfully removing all of the plants on both sides of a five mile stretch of the river.

Students from the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, working under a grant from Onondaga County, used a combination of canoes and the conservation boat to hand pull the water chestnuts in the shallows of the river. These areas are highly susceptible to water chestnut infestation which can rapidly spread in just a few short years from some occasional plants to a widespread mat which crowds out all native plants along the shoreline.

The team was led by Brian Sommer and include Alex Fisher, Alex Kulakowski and Richard Monaco under the direction of Mark Burger. They spent eight hours each day raking and pulling plants. A single seed pod can produce a root system which will form anywhere from a single plant on the surface to as many as six plants, all from that one root/seed system. Each mature plant produces five or six new seed pods. So if left unchecked in two years you go from one plant to as many as 200 plants. The hard work these young men did will pay dividends for future years to keep the water way clear and to allow the native aquatic plants to flourish.

During the day, as the conservation boat was filled, the group returned to the Grenadier Village Marina where our hosts, Larry and David Valenti provided transportation and composting of the harvested plants. Their participation in this program was a key element of success in proper disposal of the plants.

The NY BASS Nation conservation boat was operated by Paul Hudson and Fred Blom. This boat is a dual purpose pontoon boat that was recycled out of retirement to become a valuable tool in harvesting water chestnuts as well as a fishcare release boat for many tournaments around the state each year. The boat is equipped with a wide front deck and four tanks for holding fish for return after tournament weighins. For chestnut harvests, the tanks are covered with a tarp to minimize debris in the tanks. The boat has been used to harvest water chestnuts on Oneida Lake for several years and in 2015 was part of a major effort on Braddocks Bay in the Rochester area.

For more information on water chestnuts and other aquatic invasives, please go to the link below...

<http://fingerlakesinvasives.org/>

Pictures....

- #1 Team raking up chestnuts from the conservation boat
- #2 Conservation boat returning for off loading
- #3 Team posing with a few hours work before off loading