

Myriophyllum aquaticum

Parrot feather milfoil

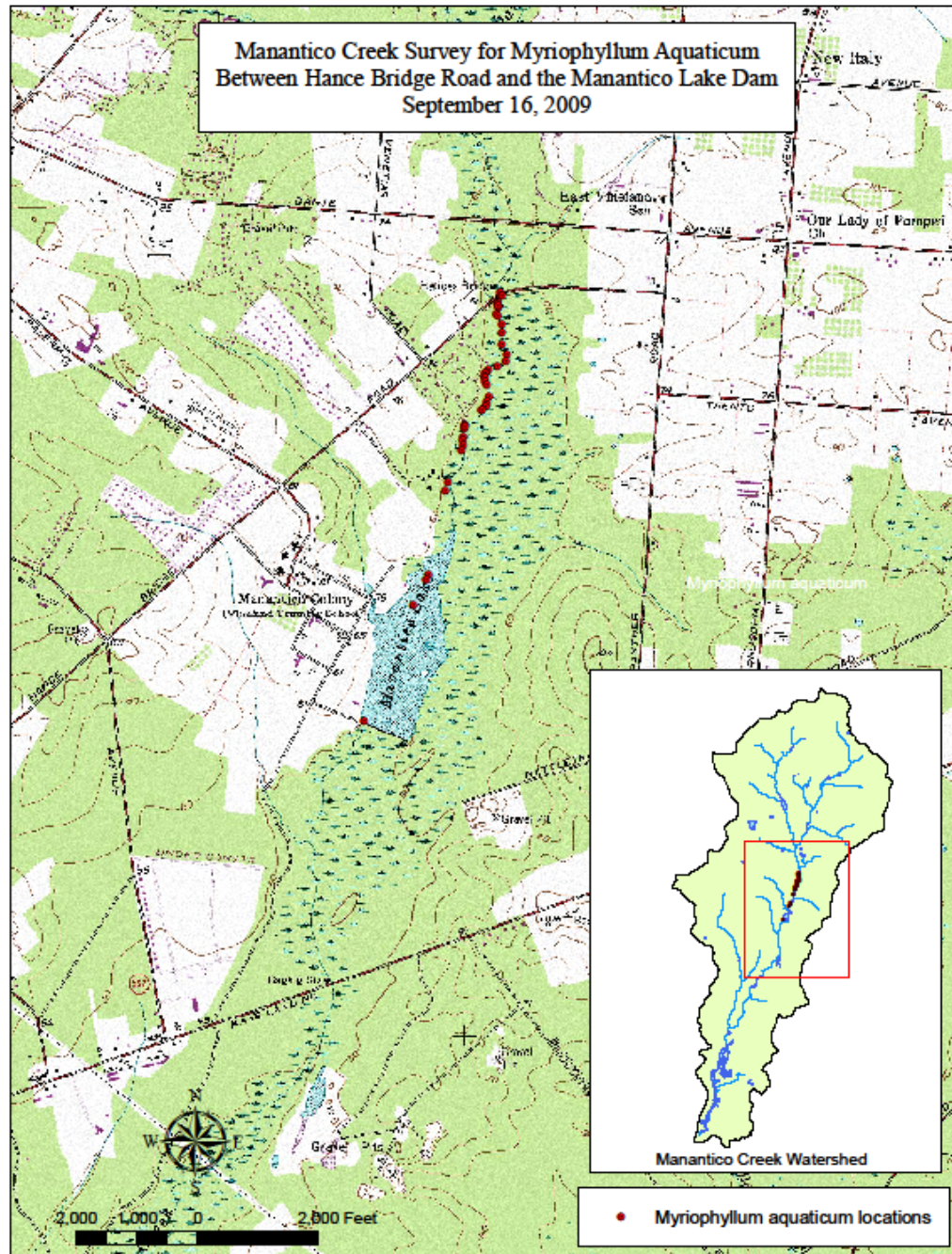




Parrot feather

Parrotfeather (*Myriophyllum aquaticum*) is an exotic invasive water weed from South America. It is becoming a problem in a number of places globally.

Like many exotic invasive waterweeds, it was introduced from Asia by the aquarium and ornamental pond industry.

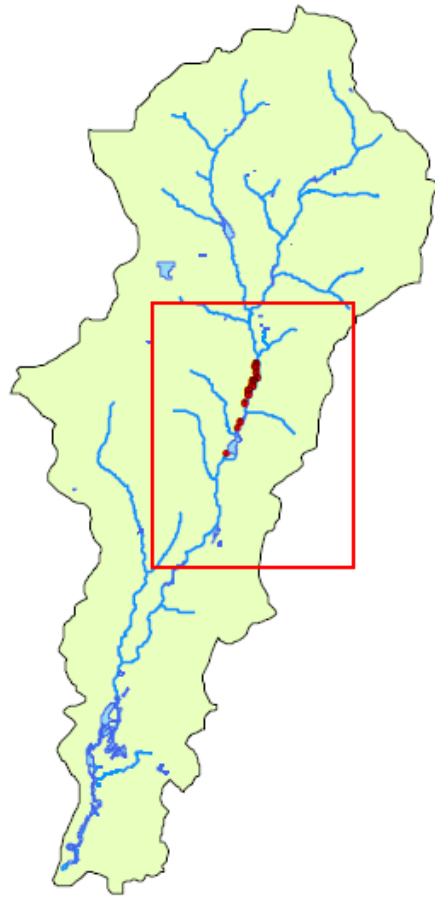


[Citizens United to Protect the Maurice River](#) was first alerted to an invasive plant on the Manantico Creek, Cumberland County, NJ, by Rutgers Cooperative Extension; Dr. Gerry Moore of [Brooklyn Botanic Garden](#) confirmed its identification and advised us that the next step was to map the occurrence.

Via kayak, global positioning systems were employed to document the extent of the infestation.

Here, on a larger scale is the topographic map showing the area we surveyed.

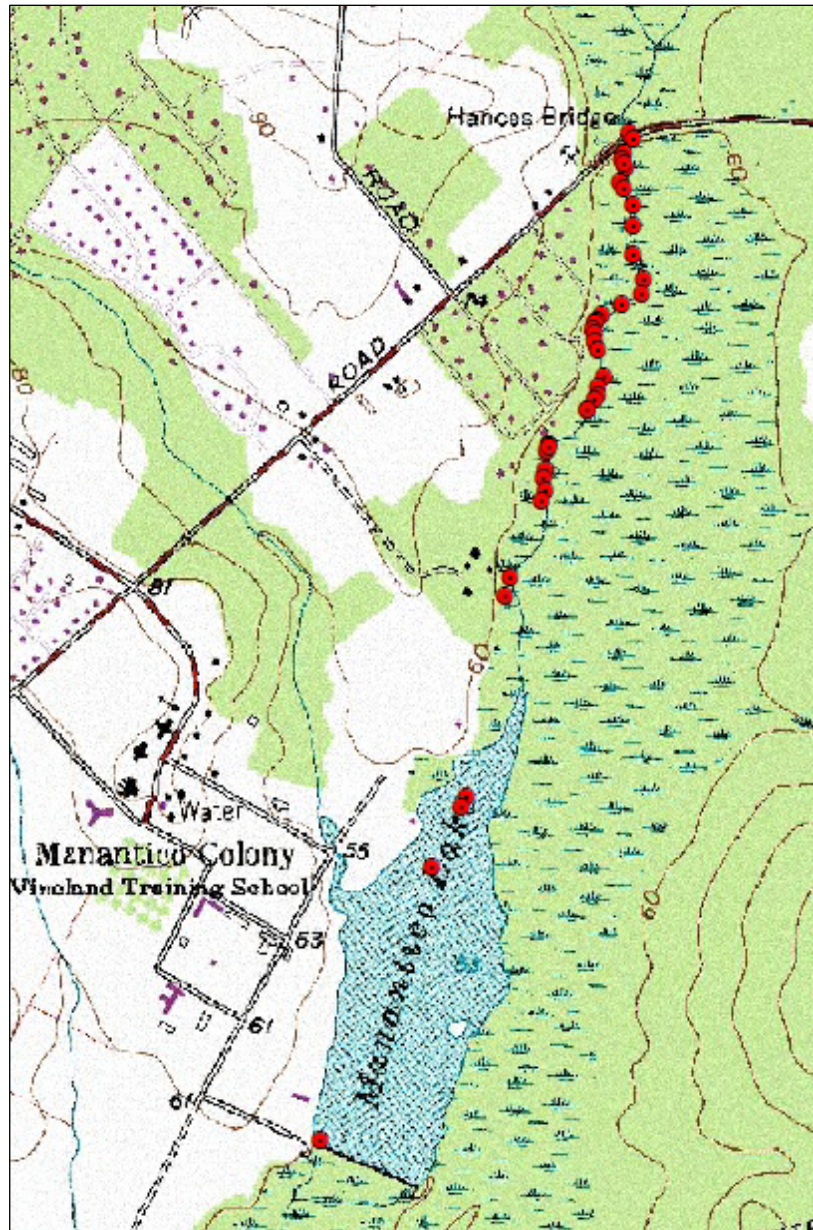




More specifically, here is the documentation of *Myriophyllum aquaticum* within the federally designated Wild and Scenic Menantico Creek.

Menantico Creek Watershed





Documented occurrences of
parrotfeather on the Menantico.





Note here on the Menantico Creek, NJ there is barely enough room for passage of a kayak.

Since new growth results from plant fragments, paddling through the vegetation will cause further distribution of the plant downstream.

Locally





Parrot feather is problematic worldwide, including the UK, US, Australia, Northern Ireland, New Zealand, Java, Hawaii, and South Africa.

As a result of its invasive nature parrot feather has been banned for sale or possession in several states. In fact, the entire continent of Australia has banned import and possession of the species.



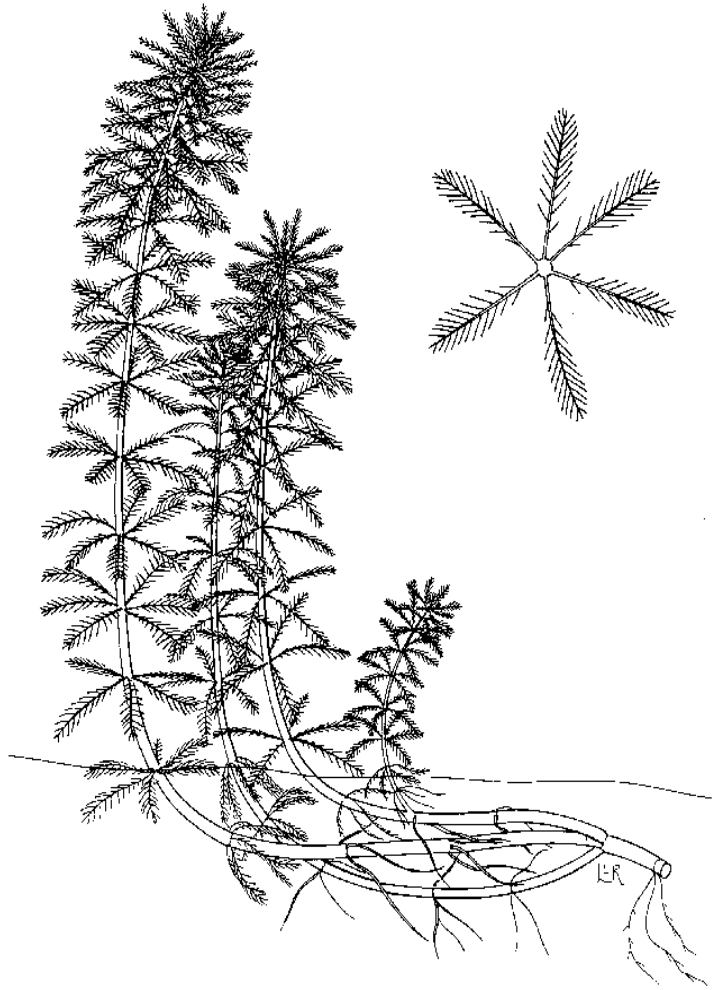


Vineland, NJ

In the U.S. , this plant has primarily posed a problem in the Southeast and in the State of Washington.

However, recently it has been identified in waterways in New Jersey, Connecticut, and New York. Locally, a large population of the plant was discovered in Cumberland County in the non tidal portion of the Menantico Creek in Vineland.





Parrot feather is a rhizomatous aquatic perennial that has both submerged and emergent feathery leaves that appear in whorls along the stems.

Emergent foliage is dark blue green. The emergent stems trail to shoreline and will root in the banks.

Description of plant



Biomass

In some areas, parrotfeather may maintain considerable organic matter, or biomass, during the winter.

Because this aquatic invasive lacks tubers, turions, and winter buds, rhizomes serve all those functions.



Parrotfeather grows along lake and pond edges and slow-moving waterways. Even when attached to the bank, stems can extend several yards out over the water's surface. This exotic species has also been found growing as a floating mat in some lakes.

It will even advance along the banks of ponds and streams.

Habitat





Parrotfeather is easily spread by cuttings and its horizontal root stems called rhizomes. Male plants are unknown outside of South America, so no seeds are produced in North American populations.

Its fragments will readily root. It can be transported long distances on boat trailers.

Reproduction



Negative Impacts

- Decreased dissolved O₂, algae propagation
- Crowds out native plant species and decrease natural diversity of plants and animals
- Obstructs streams and rivers resulting in decreased opportunities for kayaking, canoeing, boating, and fishing
- Localized flooding of ditches and irrigation channels
- Increased mosquito larval habitat



Controlling Growth

- Mechanical removal
- Herbicides
- Cultural methods
- Soil solarization
- Biological controls
- Expensive - \$30-50k **annually** for small backwater infestations; hundreds of thousands for larger infestations



What's Next - How Can You Help?

We have an opportunity to stop its spread and work towards eradication by:

- Developing a treatment strategy for the Menantico Creek Watershed
 - Education - plant native species and encourage others to do the same
 - Treatment and Eradication - encourage neighbors to allow biologists and habitat managers to access property to eradicate parrotfeather
 - Advocate to ban importation of parrotfeather
- Working together with everyone involved:
 - Gardeners/Pond Owners, Nurseries, Boaters, Private Landowners, Fishermen, Farmers, Liveries, Fishermen, Environmental Commissions, City Gov't, Board of Health, Mosquito Commission.





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