



SuAsCo CISMA Small Grant 2021 – Final Report

Organization: OARS

Funding Approved: \$2,674

Project: Water Chestnut Rapid Response Assessment and Control

Description of Program Implementation

OARS recruited and trained two summer Environmental Field Assistants to work as our Rapid Response Team (RR Team). They began work in late June, mapping and pulling water chestnut in areas along the Assabet, Sudbury and Concord Rivers where we have found populations in the past and areas that provide perfect habitat for them (see summary). In early July, our RR Team joined Concord Natural Resources, Concord Land and Conservation Trust and the Town of Lincoln to pull large patches of water chestnut from the Sudbury River between Sudbury Road and Rte. 2. Later in July, OARS staff and our RR Team worked with a volunteer corporate team of 11 to pull weeds in a large patch on the Sudbury River below Rt. 2. This was a patch that we last worked on in 2019. We noted that it was smaller this year, but it will need continued attention. South Bridge Boathouse donated 7 boats for our volunteer day.

Summary of our RR teams mapping and pulling work.

Assabet River:

Our RR team mapped and pulled plants from Hudson to Maynard and Acton. Except for around Crow Island (Ben Smith impoundment), there were none of the large patches that we found in the past. It was truly a “rapid response” effort. The weeds were dispersed all along the shoreline. We usually have used canoes so that massive amounts of weeds could be pulled. This year, on several of the days, the RR Team felt that using kayaks with baskets strapped on allowed them to cover more area and get in and out of the smaller areas where the plants were found. The water levels were much higher and we believe this had an impact on the water chestnut growth patterns. These were also the areas that we have worked on for many years and that could also be a reason for the reduction in water chestnut populations.

Sudbury River:

In Concord, our RR team worked from the South Bridge Boathouse to the confluence and continued on the Concord River to Great Meadows Wildlife Refuge. They found populations of water chestnut along much of the shoreline and were able to remove everything they saw. In past years, only a few single plants along the shoreline were seen.

Concord River:

A paddler friend help identify 2 new very large patches of water chestnut in Billerica that needed serious attention: one from Rt. 3A to just south of 28 Stoney Drive and the other between Rt. 3 and Barrett’s Landing. A total of 449 bushels of weeds were pulled from these 2 patches. The area near Barrett’s Landing was completely cleared but the area near Stoney Drive was just too much to complete in the given time they had, even with significant help from volunteers. Because of our RR Team’s efforts in this area, neighbors learned about OARS, were very excited that someone was helping “their river” and began helping. They spent 2 days working with our team and did their own neighborhood pull on a Saturday. We recommend that a plan should be made to bring down the populations of water chestnut in these areas in the future. Working to get the river abutters involved may be an effective way.

Our original plan included using hand-held mappers. That worked very well when we hired a team to do the mapping and another team to do the weed pulling. With one team doing both jobs, it was too cumbersome and time consuming. We found that working from the past maps and marking up what the conditions currently were worked very well.

OARS' staff time was greater than expected because of all the rain we had this summer. Scouting to find water chestnut locations that were best to work in and checking on water levels to make sure conditions were okay for sending out our RR Team was critical.

Budget Narrative

The grant from the SuAsCo CISMA helped cover the following expenses: payroll for OARS' staff who hired and trained the environmental field assistants and oversaw the program, compensation for the 2 environmental field assistants, and travel (mileage).

Additional support for the work came from the Town of Hudson, Town of Stow, and Town of Billerica.

The corporate event on the lower Sudbury River consisted of 12 volunteers working for 4 hours. Seven boats used were donated by the South Bridge Boathouse. Four volunteers in Billerica worked for an estimate 8 hours using their own boats.

Please see below for a final expenditure report and invoice for reimbursement.

Thank you for CISMA's support of this work!

Julia Khorana
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OARS Final Expenditure Report:

	Budget	Actual
Personnel		
Rapid Response Team	5,054	3396
Staff	1,950	3422
Total Personnel	\$7,004	\$6818
Expenses		
Travel (mileage)	520	237
Supplies	250	0
Total Expenses	\$770	\$237
Total Project Cost	\$7,774	\$7,055
CISMA Grant		
	\$2,674	\$2,674
Municipal Match	\$5,100	\$4,381
Total Funding	\$7,774	\$7,055
In-kind		
7 Boats from South Bridge Boathouse (@\$30/boat)		\$210
80 Volunteer hours (@\$40/hr)	\$1,318	\$3,200
Total In-kind		\$3,420