

Oswego County Soil and Water Conservation District

Water Chestnut Hand-Pulling Permit Information

July 2022

In New York, a permit is required from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC) to hand-pull water chestnuts when the area is determined to be in a wetland or the 100' buffer zone. Another permit is required from the NYS Canal Corp for hand-pulling populations that are within the Canal System (i.e. Oswego River, Oneida River). The District currently has 4 valid wetland permits for waterbodies across Oswego County and plans on applying for more during the fall and winter months. The process begins during the summer and can take up to a year depending upon workload, the review process, and landowner response. The steps involved and other information are listed below.

1. Full-time staff and interns utilize GPS and GIS to map out the water chestnut populations in July and August.
2. The maps are used to conduct an environmental assessment of each waterbody and individual site. Project areas are reviewed for the presence of NYS freshwater wetlands and rare or endangered species.
3. Staff completes an application and submits it to the NYS DEC to obtain a general permit for invasive species control in a wetland. This is done for each waterbody containing regulated areas. This requires maps, photos, a narrative, and other related information. Depending upon the ownership, written permission may need to be obtained from each landowner. Either way, an extensive review of each waterbody is conducted to determine if anyone owns both sides of a stream/river or if their ownership extends into the waterway.
4. The District usually has several communications with the NYS DEC once their review process begins. A permit is generally obtained within 2 to 4 months for this particular practice.
5. If working in the canal system, a work permit application must be submitted to the NYS Canal Corp after the wetland permit has been obtained. This requires maps, a narrative, and insurance forms. This can take 4 to 6 weeks to secure. The intern crew starts the hand-pulling operation in mid-June, so this is our internal deadline for obtaining the proper permits.
6. The NYS DEC wetland permit is valid for 5 years and the Canal Corp permit is required annually.