3. Detailed Project Description: Following the Upper Saranac Foundation's (USF) successful hand-harvest control of Eurasian watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*, EWM) at Follensby Clear Pond through previous New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) Invasive Species Grant Program (ISGP) funding, USF is proposing a native plant restoration initiative to advance long-term ecological recovery and site resilience.

With EWM biomass substantially reduced and infestation areas dramatically diminished, the re-establishment and expansion of native submerged aquatic vegetation—specifically *Vallisneria americana* (wild celery)—represents the logical next phase of restoration. Increasing native plant coverage will enhance habitat complexity, stabilize sediments, improve water clarity, and strengthen ecological resistance to reinvasion. This proposed effort will be supported through NYSDEC ISGP Round 4 funding under the Restoration and Resiliency of Sites Impacted by Invasive Species category.

To ensure a scientifically rigorous and methodologically consistent approach, USF will collaborate with Adirondack Research on project design and implementation. Together, we have consulted with aquatic restoration practitioners across New York State who have successfully implemented *Vallisneria* propagation and transplanting initiatives. Their experience has informed the development of our standard operating procedures (SOPs) and confirms that this technique is appropriate for Follensby Clear Pond, where *Vallisneria americana* already occurs naturally in established beds.

Project implementation will follow the NYSDEC Division of Lands and Forests, Bureau of Invasive Species and Ecosystems Health, Invasive Species Coordination Section – Region 9 Aquatic Restoration Program Protocol (attached).

Pre-Planting Assessment and Monitoring

Prior to implementation, USF will conduct a comprehensive aquatic vegetation survey to:

- Document existing native plant communities;
- Confirm minimal residual EWM presence;
- Evaluate substrate composition, depth, and light availability; and
- Identify optimal restoration plots within previously managed areas.

Following planting, a structured multi-year monitoring program will track plant survival, percent cover, density, and spatial expansion. Monitoring results will inform adaptive management strategies and ensure that restoration objectives are achieved effectively and efficiently.

Harvest, Propagation, and Replanting Plan

The proposed project involves limited hand-harvest of *Vallisneria americana* from Follensby Clear Pond and nearby connected waterbodies within the Adirondack Park, including Fish Creek, Square Pond, and Fish Creek Pond. All collections will occur in June 2026.

Collection Method:
Plants will be harvested by hand from existing submerged beds at depths of approximately 3–4 feet below the water surface. No harvesting will occur along shorelines or within emergent wetland zones.

Environmental Safeguards:
No dredging, filling, mechanized equipment, or substrate disturbance will occur. The lake bottom, shoreline, and wetland fringe will remain unaltered. No docks, structures, or permanent installations are proposed. All activities are strictly ecological in nature and consistent with maintaining water quality and aquatic habitat integrity.

Propagation:
Harvested plants will be cultivated in a controlled greenhouse environment to promote root development and vegetative expansion through the summer and winter of 2026–2027.

Replanting:
Propagated plants will be reintroduced during July and August of 2027 and 2028 into selected areas of Follensby Clear Pond where EWM was previously harvested. Replanting depths and site conditions will mirror those of donor beds to maximize establishment success.

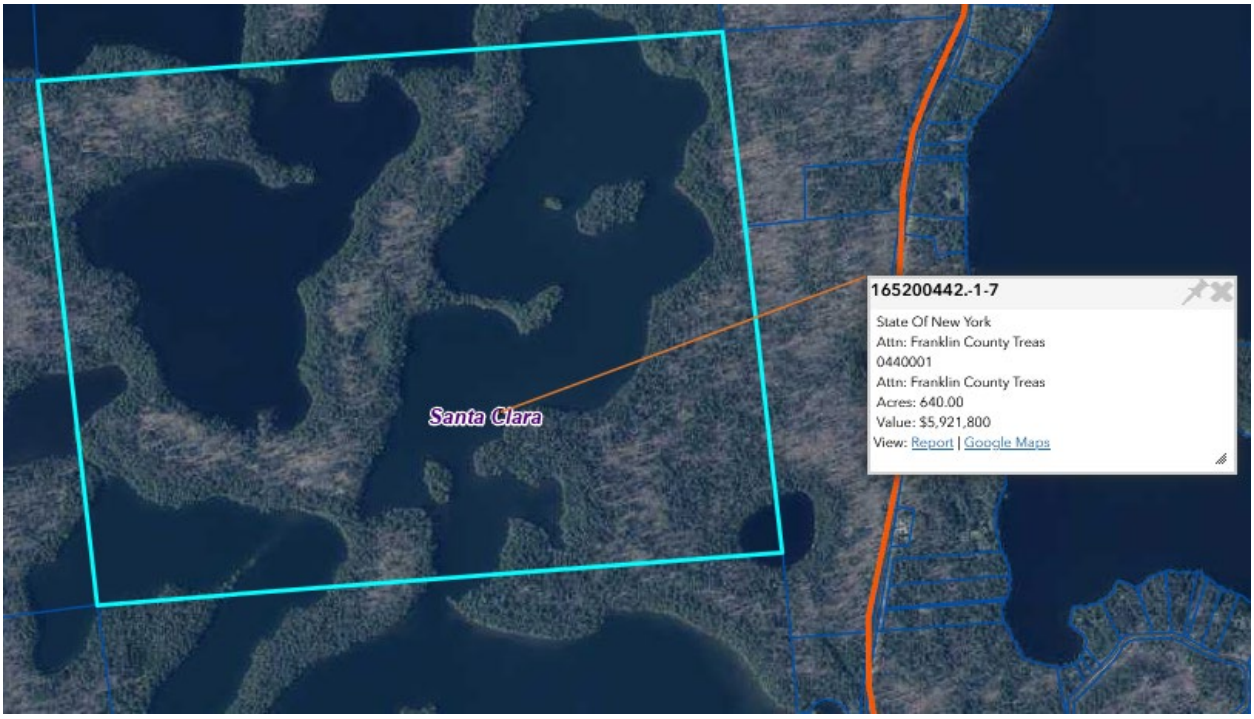
Project Purpose and Ecological Benefit

This initiative is designed to reinforce the long-term success of prior invasive species control efforts by accelerating native vegetation recovery in formerly infested areas. By increasing native plant density and spatial distribution, the project will:

- Improve fish and macroinvertebrate habitat;
- Enhance sediment stability and nutrient uptake;
- Support water clarity and overall water quality; and
- Increase ecological resistance to future invasive species establishment.

This restoration effort represents a strategic transition from invasive species suppression to active ecological recovery, strengthening the long-term resilience and ecological health of Follensby Clear Pond and the broader Upper Saranac watershed.

4. Survey or Deed Plot: Follensby Clear Pond, NY-30 Saranac Lake, NY 12983
Tax ID #442.-1-7 T20 G 23 Parcel 0440001 and 453.-1-1 T20 G 24 Parcel 0450101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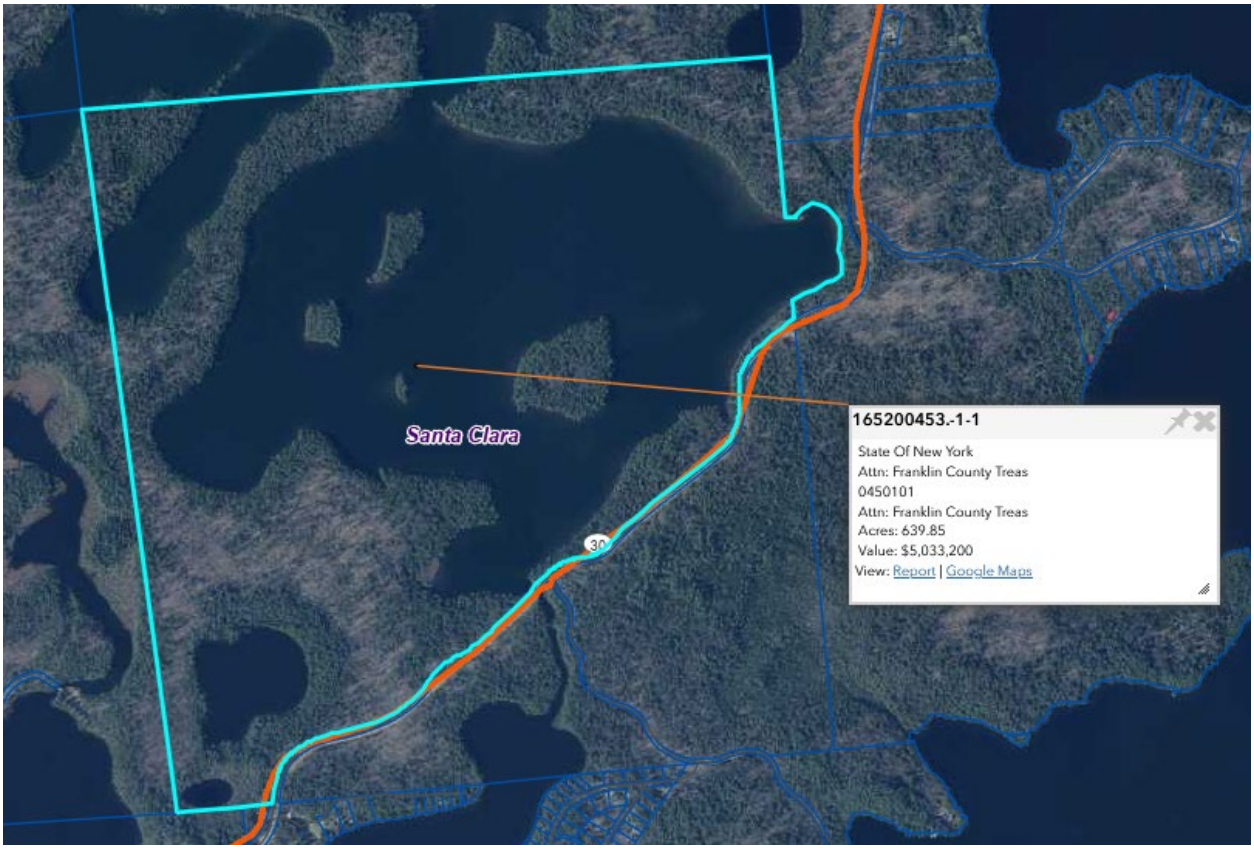
View: Report | Google Maps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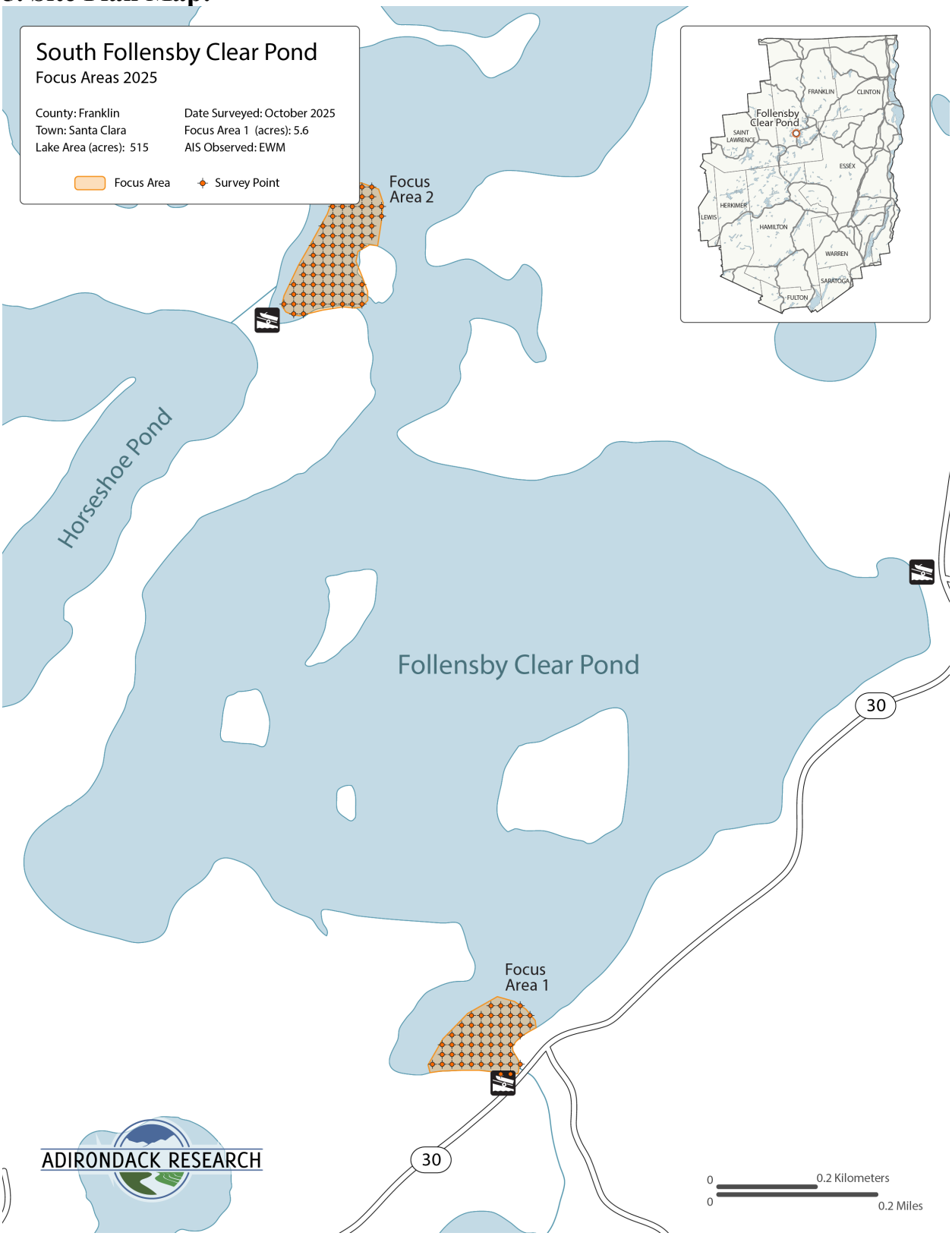
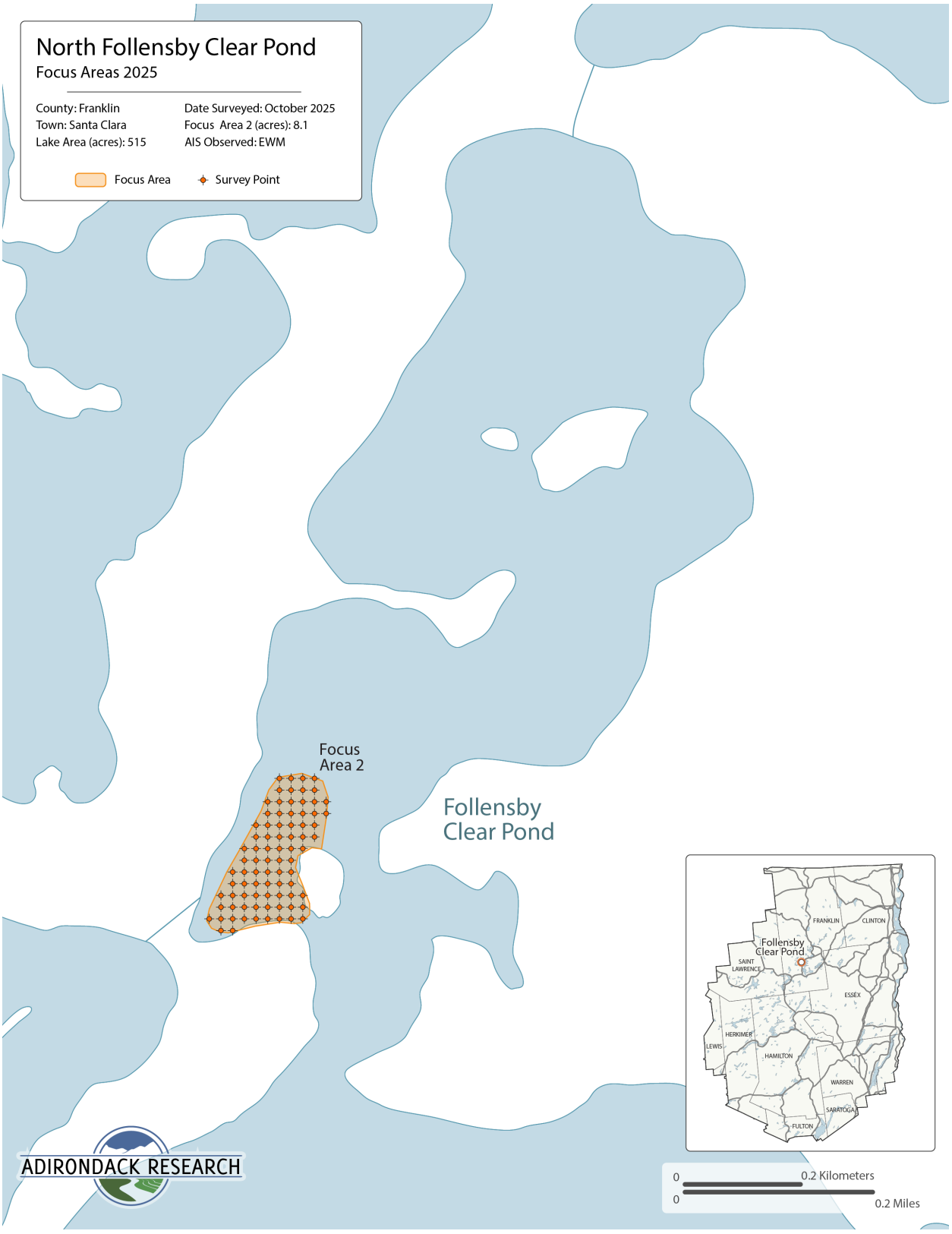
View: Report | Google Maps

5. Site Plan Map:




North Follensby Clear Pond
Focus Areas 2025
County: Franklin
Town: Santa Clara
Lake Area (acres): 515
Date Surveyed: October 2025
Focus Area 2 (acres): 8.1
AIS Observed: EWM
Focus Area
Survey Point
Focus Area 2
Follensby Clear Pond
FRANKLIN
CLINTON
Follensby Clear Pond
SAINT LAWRENCE
ESSEX
HERKIMER
LEWIS
HAMILTON
WARREN
SARATOGA
FULTON
ADIRONDACK RESEARCH
0
0.2 Kilometers
0
0.2 Miles

10. Waste Disposal: Project-generated waste will be minimal and limited primarily to hand-harvested aquatic invasive plant biomass, including Eurasian watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*), and minor incidental organic debris collected during removal efforts. Based on prior management results, quantities are expected to be low.

All harvested plant material will be securely contained and removed from the waterbody immediately following collection. Biomass will be transported to an upland compost location well away from surface waters, wetlands, and drainage areas to prevent reintroduction. No disposal will occur within Follensby Clear Pond or along its shoreline.

No hazardous materials, dredge spoils, construction debris, or solid waste will be generated as part of this project. Decontamination wash water will be discharged in upland areas where runoff cannot enter surface waters.

11. Prevention of Invasive Species: The Upper Saranac Foundation (USF) will implement strict prevention and decontamination protocols to eliminate the risk of introducing or spreading aquatic invasive species (AIS) during project activities at Follensby Clear Pond.

All survey, harvesting, and planting equipment—including boats, trailers, wetsuits, BCDs, the Hookah dive system, mesh bags, anchors, ropes, and GPS equipment—will be thoroughly inspected, cleaned, and decontaminated prior to deployment, at the end of each work session, and before use in any other waterbody. Decontamination will be conducted using USF's LANDA high-pressure, 140°F hot-water unit located at Back Bay on Upper Saranac Lake. These procedures are consistent with AIS best management practices and significantly reduce the risk of transporting plant fragments or other organisms between waterbodies.

Aquatic vegetation surveys will be conducted to document existing plant communities, detect any residual or new AIS presence, and guide adaptive management. Divers will utilize line transects and grid-pattern search swims to maximize detection. If invasive species are identified, they will be immediately hand-harvested using containment methods designed to minimize fragmentation and secondary spread. Particular attention will be given to areas surrounding and downwind of active work sites.

All removed invasive plant material will be securely contained and transported to an upland compost location well away from surface waters, wetlands, or intermittent drainage areas.

Harvested *Vallisneria americana* intended for propagation will be inspected and rinsed prior to greenhouse placement to ensure no invasive fragments are transported with donor material. Controlled greenhouse conditions will further prevent cross-contamination.

Through rigorous decontamination, monitoring, containment, and documentation procedures, USF will prevent the importation or spread of invasive species during project implementation.