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STATE CREATES NEW INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL
Council to Implement Measures That Will Combat Threats to Native Species

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Pete Grannis and New York State Agriculture Commissioner Patrick Hooker today announced the creation of a new council charged with implementing specific initiatives to protect native species and prevent the spread of invasive plants and animals. The New York Invasive Species Council, recently signed into law by Governor Eliot Spitzer, will coordinate statewide efforts to control invasive species.

Invasive species are non-native plants and animals that push native species to extinction. Through direct predation and competition for nutrients, these resilient invaders disrupt food webs, alter physical habitats and come to dominate and fundamentally degrade ecosystems. Once introduced, invasive species reproduce and grow in numbers, thus exacerbating their influence on ecosystems over time. Common invasive species found in New York State include zebra mussels, Eurasian watermilfoil, purple loosestrife, giant hogweed and black swallowwort. Other recent new or expanded species discoveries include didymo, the Asian longhorned beetle, and the sirex woodwasp.

“Invasive species pose an ever-growing risk to the health and diversity of our native ecosystems,” Commissioner Grannis said. “The establishment of the Invasive Species Council will continue the work begun by the Task Force and will ensure that the recommendations developed with our many partners will be implemented. The Council and its Advisory Committee will enhance our ability to fight this growing threat to New York’s biodiversity, food supply, recreation, commerce and industry.”

Commissioner Hooker said, “For years now, we have actively sought to detect and contain exotic invasive species as they pose a significant threat to the viability of our farms, not to mention our environment. Early discovery and detection is key to eradicating these pests, and I look forward to working with the entire Council, exploring the invasive species issue, identifying the most serious pests to New York and providing guidance for effective control and management.”