

# Policy Adoption Fact Sheet: Invasive Species Action Plan/Invasive Species Task Force

2020 Comprehensive Plan Review | David Chernack, Joint Environmental Committee Intern

**Why is this action important?** Invasive species are a prevalent ecological problem. Species that are not native to Rhinebeck—which often arrive here by human-assisted means—can do terrible damage to our ecosystems and to our native species. For example, invasive European Starlings monopolize breeding sites that could be used by our native Eastern Bluebirds. Some invasive species can even damage human health: certain species of non-native weeds and shrubs are the preferred haunts for black-legged ticks, which spread Lyme disease.

In order to combat the threat of invasive species, Rhinebeck should establish an Invasive Species Action Plan and Invasive Species Task Force. The task force would be tasked with choosing priority invasives to address, as well as involving the public; the action plan would enshrine the task force’s work in municipal codes.

**How is this action implemented?** The Town and Village Boards would need to approve the creation of an invasive species committee; however, an invasive species task force could simply grow out of the Joint Environmental Committee or the Village Tree Commission. After research is done by the task force, a policy would likely need to be reviewed by an environmental professional before being adopted into Town or Village codes. This action also presents a major point of collaboration agencies.

**What does the Comprehensive Plan say about it?** The Town’s 2009 Comprehensive Plan lightly mentions invasive species, but only insomuch as stating that the Town should plant native species in landscaping projects. It largely leaves out any mention of their ecological importance.

**What departments will it involve?** The Town and Village Boards, the Joint Environmental Committee, and the Thompson-Mazzarella Park Development Committee would be involved in implementation this action.

**What will it cost?** Relatively little. Outside of the potential cost of contracting with an ecological or environmental professional or firm—such as Hudsonia, Ltd.—this action can be carried out by volunteers from the Joint Environmental Committee and the community at large.



**Invasive species action plan quick facts:**

*CSC points:* none

*Benefits to Rhinebeck:* removal of unwanted non-native species, reduced risk of Lyme, opportunities for community action

*Cost:* medium

*Relevant agencies:* Village/Town Boards, Joint Environmental Committee, Thompson-Mazzarella Park Development Committee, Village Tree Commission