

VOLUNTEER WAIVER AND RELEASE FORM

Trapa bispinosa Manual Harvesting

Hosted by the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District (NVSWCD)

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Requirements and Potential Risks

- You must be 16 years of age or older to participate in this activity. Minors under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. The parent or legal guardian is expected to always stay with their child, regardless of their participation.
- Regardless of age or level, for safety reasons, you MUST know how to swim.
- Swimming is NOT permitted.
- Hand harvesting *T.bispinosa* is a strenuous activity. Know your limitations, including physical fitness. You MUST be in good health and capable of performing tasks that include pushing, pulling, and/or lifting to participate in this activity.
- Hand harvesting *T.bispinosa* is a hazardous activity. Some of its mature seeds have barbs that may be sharp, attach to your clothing, and could cause injury. Please use caution when handling *T.bispinosa*. You must adjust for risks of being in a water environment, such as water temperature, shallow or unclear water, and underwater hazards (e.g., rocks, mud, vegetation, wildlife, and slippery or uneven ground).
- There will be NO lifeguards on duty.
- NVSWCD does not have watercraft available for volunteers to use. However, if you own a kayak or canoe and wish to use it at this event, you may bring it along with you. Please be aware that the use of watercraft is an inherently dangerous activity. Dangers and hazards include but are not limited to accidents which occur during transportation or travel to and from the site, slip and falls while getting into or out of the boats, overturning of the boats, loss of balance, impact, collision with or entrapment by trees, logs, and deadfall.
- You are advised to wear a personal floatation device while wading and/or boating.
- You will be responsible for all your personal belongings in and/or out of the water. We do not recommend bringing anything into the water that you do not wish to get lost, wet, or damaged.
- We will be pulling (manual harvesting) *T.bispinosa* in mostly stagnant freshwater ponds. These ponds have NOT been water quality tested. Please avoid touching your face when exposed to this water and wash/sanitize your hands before eating or drinking.
- You MAY NOT bring unregistered volunteers with you to the event.
- Leaving no trace is everyone's responsibility. You MUST follow the applicable Leave No Trace (LNT) principles during this volunteer activity. This includes but is not limited to disposing of waste properly, leaving what you find, respecting wildlife, and being considerate of other visitors. For more information on LNT principles: [The 7 Principles - Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics \(Int.org\)](#)
- You MUST handle nature responsibly and respect the environment around you.
- Use of alcohol and drugs is NOT permitted while participating in this activity.

This agreement releases the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District or the landowner/ managing agency from all liability relating to injuries that may occur while volunteering. I agree to hold the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District entirely free from any liability, including financial responsibility for injuries incurred, regardless of whether injuries are caused by negligence.

I confirm that I understand that participating in this activity involves confronting various, unavoidable risks. By signing this waiver and release, I confirm that I agree to assume the risks involved in participating in this volunteer activity. These include but are not limited to personal injury, loss/ theft of personal items and damage to personal property while engaging in the voluntary activity of harvesting *T. bispinosa*. I understand that I am participating voluntarily, and that all risks have been made clear to me. Additionally, I do not have any conditions that will increase my likelihood of experiencing injuries while engaging in this activity.

I forfeit all right to bring a suit against the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District or the landowner/ managing agency for any reason. In return, I will be allowed to volunteer with the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District. I will also make every effort to obey safety precautions as listed in writing, and as explained to me verbally. I will ask for clarification when needed.

I acknowledge that I will receive zero compensation for my participation in this volunteer activity.

I hereby grant the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District permission to take photographs and/or video of volunteers, and I acknowledge that they may or may not be used in its publications, social media, or progress reporting forms- without payment or other consideration. I understand and agree that all photos will become the property of the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District and will not be returned.

I affirm that I am at least 18 years of age, or, if I am a minor between the ages of 16-18, I have obtained the required consent of my parent(s)/guardian(s) as evidenced by their signatures below. If I am a parent/guardian of a minor participating, I agree to stay and supervise my child at all times.

By signing below, I understand and accept the waiver above. If you are a parent or guardian that is participating in the volunteer activity alongside your child, you must sign your own individual form.

Signature of Participant: _____

Date: _____

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian: _____

Date: _____

Please keep a copy of this form for your own records