

Paying for Milfoil Control

News from the Chateaugay Lake Foundation, October 2014

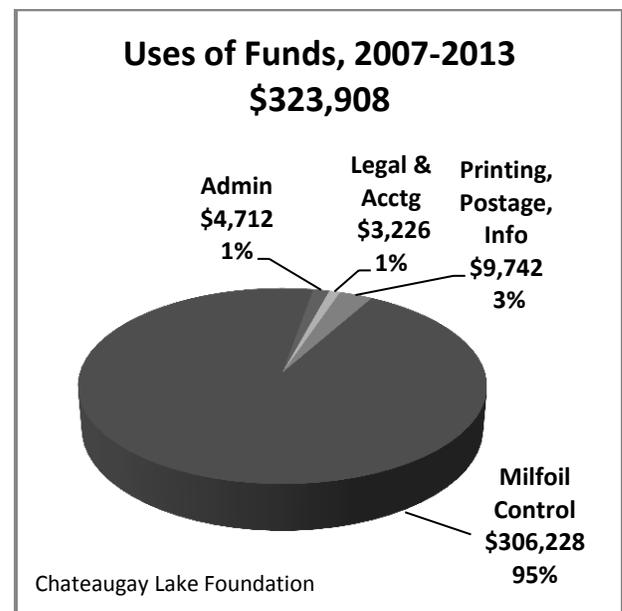
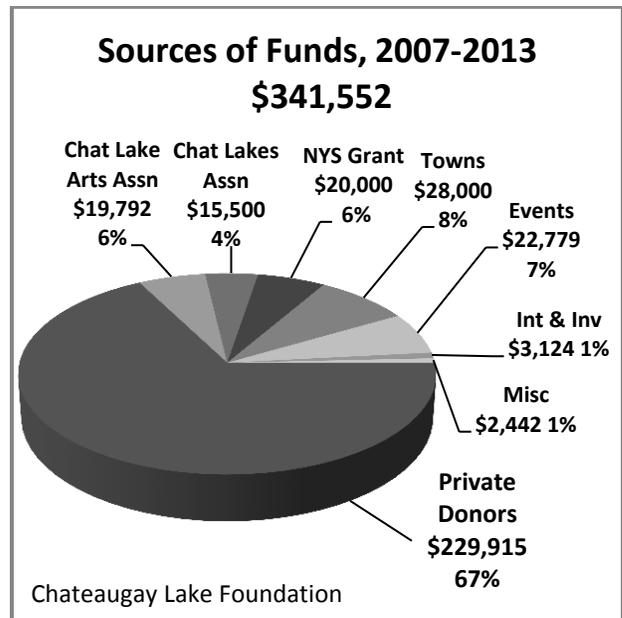
No doubt about it – controlling invasive species in our waters isn't cheap! Each week of milfoil removal by the contractors hired by the Chateaugay Lake Foundation costs about \$7,400. This works out to \$1,850 per 10-hour day for the three-member dive crew, which includes two certified SCUBA divers and a top-water support person.

This past summer, the AIM crew worked for two weeks to maintain control at the DEC boat launch and the Sand Bar, covering about 30 acres that once were densely infested. The milfoil has been reduced by 90 percent and is being maintained at these lower levels. This benefits the rest of the Lake as well, by controlling a major source of spread.

Some have wondered about using herbicide, but that isn't cheap either. Saratoga Lake—a 3,762 acre lake similar in size to the 3,400 acres of the Chateaugay Lakes—has been using herbicides along with machine harvesting since 2007. Their cost is about \$255,000 *per year*. The program is funded by an aquatic weed control district supported by the lake's 1,400 shore owners.

To date, Chateaugay Lake shore owners and their family and friends have provided the lion's share of funding for milfoil control—about two-thirds of the \$341,000 raised through 2013 (see chart). Both the Chateaugay Lakes Arts Association, upon its dissolution, and the Chateaugay Lakes Association have provided major support. (The CLA's total is now \$19,500, with this year's generous donation.) Fundraising events are increasingly important, including the summer raffle supported by local businesses, artists and artisans.

The three surrounding towns have provided \$2,000 to \$2,500 per year, though not every year. Dannemora has participated in six of the seven years of the project. Bellmont and Ellenburg have provided funding in only four years, neither in 2014. Yet lakefront properties make up a sizable share of the towns' tax base: 20 percent in Dannemora, 28-29 percent in Bellmont and Ellenburg. The Towns have a major—if not always well recognized—stake in maintaining lake property values.



Local government support and participation are crucial to obtaining the limited state and federal funding that is available. See the examples of Lake George and Black Lake. Also, assuming the Chateaugay Lake Foundation succeeds in bringing the milfoil under control, there will be an ongoing need to maintain control that calls for a municipal response.

Eventually—whether it is out of general funds or a dedicated tax district—the towns will have to play a larger role in protecting the Chateaugay Lakes as public assets, similar to the roadways that must be maintained for a town to thrive.

