

FIRST FULL SEASON OF EURASIAN MILFOIL CONTROL GETS UNDERWAY

News from the Chateaugay Lake Foundation

Spring 2009

This summer, a four-man dive team from the Adirondack Watershed Institute (AWI) at Paul Smith's College will be working throughout the season to reduce the Lake's Eurasian milfoil infestation. The work will begin in early June and will continue for eleven weeks through mid-August. Areas targeted for control this year include the section of the Narrows from the Boat Launch to the Sand Bar, and the inlet to the Lower Lake. This will advance the near-term goal of creating milfoil-free navigation channels, focusing on the heavily infested areas at the entrances to the Upper and Lower Lakes from the Narrows.

Building on Last Year's Work

Last year, with the aid of a New York "member item" grant from Senator Betty Little, the AWI dive crew placed 100 benthic mats in the vicinity of the DEC Boat Launch and hand-harvested the rest of the seven-acre site. This year, the crew will remove, clean, and re-install the original mats to cover adjoining densely infested areas. Plus, the Chateaugay Lake Foundation (CLF) is supplying materials for 200 new mats to be made by a work crew from the Lyon

Mountain Correctional Facility, which should be ready in time for installation in June.

One hundred of the new mats will be installed in the area of the Sand Bar and the other 100 will be installed at the inlet to the Lower Lake.

In late May, before the mats are installed, AWI Director Dan Kelting and his assistant will be conducting an underwater survey of each site to map the aquatic plant growth and prepare a plan for optimum placement of the mats. They also will be marking off "transects" along the lake bed, which are sections used to take counts of milfoil plants to measure density. Counts will be compared from year to year, to track progress in bringing the milfoil under control at each of the sites.

It will take about two weeks to install the benthic mats at the three sites. Thereafter, the crew will be hand-harvesting milfoil around the perimeter of the mats and up the channel of the Narrows. They will be trying some new techniques to increase the efficiency of the hand-harvesting effort. The harvested milfoil will be collected in a



shallow, flat-bottomed “jon” boat and towed to shore, where it will be taken on a boat trailer to a nearby field and dumped. Each load will be weighed so there is a record of the amount removed.

APA Permit Approved

In March, the CLF received APA permit approval for benthic matting and hand-harvesting of areas under their jurisdiction, which extends to water depths of 6 ½ feet. This complements last year’s agreement with the DEC, which allows the CLF to conduct milfoil control activities on DEC-managed sites, including the Boat Launch and the South Inlet. Together, these approvals mean that the State regulatory agencies have given the go-ahead to carry out a lake-wide milfoil control effort!

Planning for South Inlet Control Effort

The \$90,000 available this year for milfoil control is not sufficient to tackle the fourth high-priority site—the South Inlet of the Upper Lake. However, the Town of Dannemora has provided \$2,500 for the milfoil project this year, which will be used for survey work and installation of transects at this large site. This will provide information needed to seek a state grant to

help with milfoil control here in future years. In the meantime, the CLF has obtained DEC approval to install “milfoil hazard” marker buoys along the outer perimeter of this bed. The buoys are intended to discourage boat traffic that contributes to milfoil fragmentation and spread. ***Lake residents and visitors are urged to avoid entering the milfoil hazard area.***

Volunteer Opportunities

Once again, volunteers are needed to help with milfoil project activities. Boat launch stewards are needed to greet boat launch users and inform them about the milfoil problem and other invasive species and ways to prevent spread. A particular concern is preventing introduction of new invasives, such as zebra mussels or water chestnut, found nearby in Lake Champlain. “Top water” stewards are also needed to help patrol the work site and collect milfoil fragments when the divers are working. Please consider volunteering a few hours for these worthwhile activities that can be fun and rewarding, as well as helping to protect the Lake. Send an email to info@chateaugaylakefoundation.org to indicate your interest and availability.



Fundraising Continues

Although the economy is not helping, fund-raising efforts will continue this year toward the capital campaign goal of \$500,000. Private contributions received to date total \$120,000 with an additional \$51,000 pledged for the future. This includes a very helpful three-year commitment by the Chateaugay Lakes Association for \$2,500 each year. The CLA commitment has helped persuade the Towns to participate, with Bellmont contributing \$2,000 for work in 2009, Ellenburg pledging \$2,500 a year for three years beginning in 2009, and Dannemora committing \$500 last year and an additional \$2,500 for work this year. This brings the total government support for the project to \$32,500, including the \$20,000 state grant received for last year's work at the Boat Launch.

Contributions of time, talent and equipment are also important sources of support. Last year, volunteers contributed 700 hours for stewardship work, plus additional time for fundraising activities. Donated kayaks and other donated equipment have been a big help. This year, Cindy and Chris Spinner have kindly offered the use of one of their boats to collect the milfoil; we could use a second collection boat to cut the number of times the milfoil must be transported each day. Camp Chateaugay is allowing us to use their property as a staging area for installing benthic mats at the Sand Bar. The Adirondack Watershed Institute is contributing "pro bono" services equal to an extra week of dive time to help us keep within our contract budget. Please let us know if you think you can help in any way.

