

MILFOIL CONTROL UPDATE: A SUCCESSFUL SUMMER

News from the Chateaugay Lake Foundation

October 2013

Every summer for the past six years, the Chateaugay Lake Foundation has hired contractors to control Eurasian water milfoil. This non-native aquatic plant has invaded Chateaugay Lake as well as many other Adirondack lakes. The milfoil control work has been supported primarily by private donations from shoreowners who want to protect the environment and water quality of the lake.

Thanks to these donors and other fund-raising, over \$320,000 has been raised to date. This has made it possible to treat 61 acres (23 percent) of the 263 acres of infested shoreline. There has been major progress controlling milfoil in one of the worst areas that is a source of spread for the entire lake—the Narrows from the Boat Launch to the Sand Bar. However, much remains to be done.

This past summer, we were able to fund three weeks of work by the hired dive crews, the same as last year. Divers spent two weeks hand-harvesting in the south Narrows and a week removing benthic mats. All of the mats now have been removed and sold, since we have found that hand-harvesting produces more lasting results. In the future we will be relying exclusively on hand-harvesting.

Why Not Herbicide?

Some have asked why we do not try herbicides. However, this would be equally if not more expensive. Also, it probably would not be permitted for Chateaugay Lake, since the APA requires that treatment areas be "sequestered" or curtained off—an impossibility in our large lake. Moreover, with herbicide use, the dead plant matter

remains in the lake and uses up oxygen as it decays. The excess nutrients lead to algae blooms while the reduction in oxygen causes fish kills.

In contrast, removing the plant matter by hand harvesting removes a source of nutrients that can promote weed growth. Since we began milfoil control in 2008, over 90 tons of milfoil has been removed. Water testing since 2007 shows an improvement in water quality measured by a reduction in phosphorus, one of the major indicators of nutrient levels. The lake's water quality has shown steady improvement, as milfoil levels go down.

Results to Date

For details on the milfoil control work that was done this summer, with some excellent digital maps, visit the website of our contractor, Aquatic Invasive Management (AIM), at www.milfoilremoval.com. Go to "Current Projects" and click on Chateaugay Lake.

2013 Harvested Areas



The milfoil density measurements done by the Adirondack Watershed Institute (AWI) at the beginning and end of each summer document the progress that has been made. Since treatment started, milfoil levels are down 85 percent at the Boat Launch and 83 percent at the Sand Bar, which was a focus of hand harvesting this year. Density is also down 72 percent in the connecting bay where Camp Jeanne d'Arc and Camp Chateaugay are located. This is good news for the entire lake since there will be less milfoil spread by boats traversing these areas.

Control efforts also seem to be helping to slow the rate of spread at other major trouble spots. Milfoil levels have been trending down at both the South Inlet, where milfoil hazard buoys have been installed to discourage boat traffic, as well as at the inlet to the Lower Lake.

What's Next?

A top priority is maintaining and gradually expanding the control that has been achieved. This will require a minimum of two to three weeks of work each summer. However, the Foundation is also planning a Phase 2 fundraising campaign to expand milfoil control to other parts of the lake.

We will be kicking off a new "Dedicated Donations" program to give donors the option of designating contributions for a specific lake segment: Upper Lake, Lower Lake, Chateaugay Narrows. The funding goals and plans for each segment will be announced in our fall fund-raising letter going out soon. Please stay tuned and help us take milfoil control to the next level. Our dedicated team of volunteers are counting on your support!