

Lake George Asian Clam Rapid Response Task Force



Steering Committee

Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program

Darrin Fresh Water Institute

FUND for Lake George

Lake Champlain Basin Program

Lake George Association

Lake George Watershed Coalition

NYS Adirondack Park Agency

NYS Department of Environmental
Conservation

NYS Lake George Park Commission

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NEWS RELEASE

Asian clam control plan moves forward with encouraging results from the Lake George Village treatment site where 99% of clams have been killed.

Task Force plans additional treatment to Village site and new treatments for other sites this fall in the Town of Bolton

For more information see media contacts below.

September 12, 2011

Lake George, NY. - In the wake of Labor Day weekend crowds at Lake George and as Tropical Storm Irene has come and gone leaving unprecedented damage to the region, the Lake George Asian Clam Rapid Response Task Force (LGACRRTF) plunges ahead with Asian clam treatment and is rolling out an initial management plan for the known infested sites in the Lake.

A priority action plan to complete the Asian clam treatment at Lake George Village, submit permits to treat the new Norowal, Treasure Cove, and Shepard's Park sites, complete the lakewide survey, and evaluate the overall success of the benthic barrier mat treatment at Lake George Village is under development.

Lake George Village Asian clam treatment success

Two consecutive forty-five day benthic barrier mat treatments of Asian clam in the Lake George Village have been very successful. As the treatment period has come to a close, RPI's Darrin Freshwater Institute

(over)



Task force members survey new areas for Asian clam infestation. Photo courtesy of Lake George Association

(DFWI) conducted one final round of water chemistry sampling and lifted the edges of mats to gather some of the clams beneath to determine a preliminary estimate of treatment efficacy. Hundreds of sieve samples were collected and results show that over 99% of the clams collected were dead. “Based on these preliminary results the use of benthic barrier (mats) has proven to be extremely successful in killing clams, however, follow-up spot treatments will still be required in areas difficult to obtain effective “sealing” of mats. Additionally, once the remaining mats have been removed a comprehensive survey of the overall treated area for clam mortality will be conducted for final results.” Says Sandra Nierzwicki-Bauer of DFWI.

There remains approximately 5% of the Lake George Village site that includes shallow beaches and other rocky, dock, or wharf sites that were not able to be matted and is now of the highest management priority. The LGACRRTF plans to mat and/or suction harvest the remaining areas to complete the treatment of the Lake George Village site. “Completion of the Lake George Village site treatment in its entirety is the highest priority of LGACRRTF. It is critical that we understand how effective our management of this site can be so we may evaluate the treatment of other infested sites in Lake George. Clam mortality of over 99% under the mats is very encouraging and now we have to focus on the remaining 5% of the treatment area, as well as spot treat areas that did not achieve 100% mortality in the original treatment. The results of the lakewide survey will help us prioritize and focus the response to the other infested sites in our efforts to prevent the spread of this species to other locations in the Lake Champlain Basin”, Meg Modley of the Lake Champlain Basin Program.

The intensive rain, wind, erosion, and wave action brought by tropical storm Irene upturned and damaged a number of benthic barrier mats in the treatment site. Some of these mats are in the process of being removed as they will cause a hazard to boating and clean up activities after the storm. Other disrupted mats will be re-secured to the lake bottom until the remaining 5% of the treatment area can be matted or suction harvested. “We’re working with the regulatory agencies to complete the cleanup of the site after Irene, re-install 200-250 mats on beach areas and in areas that we were unable to treat last spring, and to remove all other mats, especial-



Asian clams can reach the size of a dime or larger in 2-3 years. Photo courtesy of Lake George Association

ly those in deep waters. Our plan is to complete this project by early December. We're encourage by the results so far, but we have still more work" said Peter Bauer, Executive Director of the FUND for Lake George.

Mat removal

Mats were secured and weighted on the bottom of the lake at the Lake George Village treatment site area using rebar and sandbags to maintain seals. Since April, when the first mats went in, a thin layer of sediment accumulated in areas where there were depressions in the mat due to the contours of the lake bottom or other disturbances. DFWI and LGA comprehensively sampled this sediment and in a few locations a handful of live clams were found on top of the mats. The LGACRRTF supports suction harvesting and/or matting the remaining 5% of the treatment area before the installed mats are removed. This would prevent any live clams living on top of the existing mats from infesting the remaining treatment area during mat removal. Similarly the LGACRRTF is working with APA to develop a mat removal plan that will minimize the risk of spreading any possible remaining live clams.

Removal of mats will take place in three stages. First, all hazard mats will be removed by the middle of September. This will be followed by transferring mats from deep water areas for re-installation for secondary treatment on beaches and other shallow water areas. Once the secondary treatment is completed, all other mats will be removed. The beach areas and shallow areas will see mats removed in early December.

Expansion of the Asian clam management plan to address the Norowal, Treasure Cove, and Shepard's Park sites:

LGACRRTF has submitted applications to the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) for the treatment of additional Asian clam infested sites that were discovered during the lakewide survey. The few clams discovered

in Shepard's Park which is just south of the Lake George Village treatment site will be matted with a modification to the existing APA permit in late September. The Fund for Lake George has submitted a permit application for Norowal Marina to the APA. An application is being organized to try suction harvesting in the Treasure Cove area of Middleworth Bay, which involves the APA, NYSDEC and the US Army Corps of Engineers. APA experts visited all the known Asian clam infested sites and determined that they were all under their jurisdiction. All of the treatment sites require plant surveys by the APA. Plant surveys have been conducted by DFWI at Boon Bay, Shepard's Park, Norowal, and Treasure Cove.

Preparations for permit application submittals are underway to treat Boon Bay. Due to the size and cost of treatment of Boon Bay, and the desire to test suction harvesting as a treatment method, the decision has been made to treat this area in 2012.

Lakewide survey continues

The second highest priority of the LGACRRTF is to complete the lakewide survey for Asian clams in Lake George. The lakewide survey involves a team of snorkelers or scuba divers (as needed for deeper areas) swimming parallel along the shoreline in areas that have been identified as possible clam habitat. The swimmers complete a visual inspection as well as sieving for the presence of Asian clams.

“Around 70 sites have been surveyed to date by LGACRRTF members,” said Emily DeBolt with the Lake George Association. “And we have about the same number of sites that we have identified as priority survey sites to go, so that means we are only about half way done at this point.” Survey work is very slow going, with crews averaging 0.2 miles per hour when in water.

As the fall approaches and water temperatures cool work in the water becomes increasingly challenging. The LGACRRTF greatly appreciates the cooperation and support of the local community, businesses and surrounding municipalities in conjunction with state and regional funds and resources.

New Funding Helps Project

The LGACRRTF is heartened by new commitments of funding for treatment of Asian clams on Lake George. The Warren County Board of Supervisors voted to allocate \$100,000 to the project. The Lake George Park Commission has committed an additional \$200,000 to the project and the Town of Bolton committed an additional \$5,000 for use in 2011 and has made a commitment for further support in 2012.

“Voting to approve an additional \$200,000 from current year funds for Asian Clam rapid response efforts as we did is unprecedented for our small agency,” said Bruce E. Young Chairman of the Lake George Park Commission. “It is critical that we continue to support the Task Force's efforts to get ahead of this problem, Mr. Young said.



Scientists conduct plant surveys. Photo courtesy of Lake George Association.

Lake George Asian Clam Rapid Response Task Force

The Lake George Asian Clam Rapid Response Task Force is managing the eradication effort. This Task Force includes a wide variety of organizations, scientists and agencies. The Task Force includes the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute Darrin Fresh Water Institute, Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program, FUND for Lake George, Lake Champlain Basin Program, Lake George Association, the NYS Lake George Park Commission, The Nature Conservancy's Dome Island Committee, Lake George Watershed Coalition, the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, NYS Adirondack Park Agency, Bateaux Below, Inc., InnerSpace Scientific Diving, Scientific Diving International, and the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation as well as researchers from Lake Tahoe.

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