

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

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NEWS RELEASE

Lake Tahoe experts share research and aquatic invasive species control programs on second visit to Lake George.

Two lead researchers and the Aquatic Invasive Species Program Coordinator for the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency visited Lake George in November to share research on Asian clam management and discussed partnering on other lake projects.

For more information see media contacts below.

January 4, 2012

Lake George, NY – In mid-November the Lake George Asian Clam Rapid Response Task Force (LGACRRTF) was fortunate to collaborate with three visiting Lake Tahoe experts to discuss Asian clam control efforts and exchange information about aquatic invasive species spread prevention programs such as boat launch stewardship, mandatory boat inspections and decontamination programs. As part of their visit, the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute's Darrin Fresh Water Institute (DFWI) hosted Dr. Marion Whitman, University of Notre Dame, Department of Biological Sciences and Dr. Sudeep Chandra, Natural Resources and Environmental Studies, University of Nevada, Reno as a part of their student guest lecture series. Ted Thayer, Lake Tahoe Planning Agency's Aquatic Invasive Species Program Coordinator came to visit Lake George after a representative from the Fund for Lake George and the Lake George Park Commission traveled to Lake Tahoe earlier in 2011 to learn about Lake Tahoe's aquatic invasive species programs. Ted shared information about Lake Tahoe's bi-state coordinated mandatory

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Dr. Sudeep Chandra, Ted Thayer, Meg Modley, and Peter Bauer discuss benthic barrier matting challenges and successes at the Norowal treatment site in Lake George, NY Photo courtesy of Lake George Association

boat inspection program and came to discuss other Lake George and Lake Tahoe partnership opportunities. All three Tahoe partners attended a LGACRRTF meeting to help advise and evaluate Asian clam management technologies in Lake George and they made field visits to observe the late fall suction harvesting and benthic barrier mat treatments in process.

Lake Tahoe experts share Asian clam and other lake research

Lake Tahoe and Lake George have a lot in common. Both lakes have good water quality, have similar recreational uses, and of recent importance both lakes are infested with Asian clams. On November 14th, 2011 the DFWI hosted Dr. Marion Wittmann and Dr. Sudeep Chandra as part of their student guest lecture series. These two researchers originally came to Lake George in the fall of 2010 to investigate the then recently found Asian clam infestation in Lake George Village. They shared a cautionary tale in 2010 of what could happen to Lake George based on their experiences in Lake Tahoe if action was not taken quickly to control the species. “We are thrilled to partner with scientists, planning and policy makers from Lake Tahoe. We each share and learn from our individual and collective experiences, and these exchanges will greatly benefit what is most important.....our treasured lakes (Lake George and Lake Tahoe)”, Sandra Neirzwiki Bauer, Director of the Darrin Freshwater Institute.

On this return visit, Dr. Wittmann delivered a talk entitled, “Bottom barrier application to manage Asian clam (*Corbicula fluminea*) in Lake Tahoe: Field observations, monitoring results and lessons learned.” DFWI students and Lake George partners learned about the effectiveness of the Lake Tahoe diver assisted suction harvesting and benthic barrier mat control efforts in Lake Tahoe as well as the use of an autonomous underwater vehicle to conduct a lake-wide survey of Lake Tahoe for Asian clam. Dr. Chandra discussed the challenges and opportunities association with managing the long-term biological field data from the Castle Lake Environmental Research and Education Program.



A boat inspection station near Lake Tahoe. Photo courtesy of Tahoe Regional Planning Agency

Lake Tahoe Mandatory Boat Inspection and Decontamination Program

On November 13th, 2011 Ted Thayer of the Lake Tahoe Planning Agency met with the LGACRRTF and some members of the Lake George Park Commission at DFWI to discuss Lake Tahoe's mandatory boat inspection program. During this informational exchange, LGACRRTF members shared Asian clam in-lake control and spread prevention programs such as outreach brochures, signage, the www.stopasianclams.info website and the Lake George boat launch steward program. "The LGA has been overseeing the lake Steward Program for the past few years but we recognize its limitations in its current form," said Walt Lender, Lake George Association. "It was interesting to hear about the Lake Tahoe program and we look forward to collaborating with them to strengthen our own efforts here on Lake George."

Representatives from the Lake George Park Commission and the Fund for Lake George traveled to Lake Tahoe to learn about their aquatic invasive species research and education and outreach programs in early 2011. On this return visit, Lake Tahoe experts came to share their model of a science based aquatic invasive species control program with Lake George partners.

Ted Thayer provided an overview of the Lake Tahoe mandatory boat inspection program. In Lake Tahoe all access points to the lake are controlled and only boats with an inspection and seal (wire seal that attaches the boat to the trailer), indicating an aquatic invasive species inspection, are permitted to launch. Half a dozen inspection and decontamination sites have been established around the lake, away from the Lake Tahoe boat launches, so the only "inspection" that occurs at marinas or public launches is for the presence or absence of the wire seal. Boats without seals are not allowed to launch and have to go to the off-site inspection and decontamination station. Lake Tahoe will honor other inspections from a few known uninfected lakes. The seal breaks when the vessel is launched into Lake Tahoe. Once in Tahoe's water the boat may be infested with Asian clams or

other species such as Eurasian watermilfoil. Ted stressed the importance of the collaboration and partnership efforts that were made to work with all lake stakeholders including local businesses in developing the program.

The Lake Tahoe and Lake George partners then discussed how this program might be modified to meet Lake George's needs to prevent the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species. "It was extremely informative to hear from Ted Thayer, the Aquatic Invasive Species Program Coordinator in Lake Tahoe, all about their highly successful mandatory boat inspection and decontamination program underway all around Lake Tahoe. This program is a model for what we need to do here on Lake George. The only truly effective way to stop new invasive species from infesting Lake George is to create a program like the one now working in Lake Tahoe that insures only clean boats are launched on the lake. This shows that this type of comprehensive program can work. We have much to learn from Lake Tahoe as we try and build a similar program" said Peter Bauer, Executive Director of the FUND for Lake George.



Lake Tahoe and Lake George experts oversee benthic barrier maintenance at the Norowal site in Lake George, NY. Photo courtesy of Lake George Association.

Tahoe experts take a tour of Asian clam management in Lake George

While the three Tahoe experts were visiting Lake George they took a field visit to observe the benthic barrier mat control project underway at Norowal Marina and the suction harvesting site at Middleworth Bay. Members of the LGACRRTF shared their successes and challenges with the Asian clam control field implementation and compared notes with the Tahoe expert's experiences.

In 2011 the Task Force treated over 12.5 acres in Lake George for Asian clams. This is a huge accomplishment given the permits and logistics and costs involved. Since late April the LGACRRTF and Lake George community have become keenly aware of the challenges posed by this invasive species. There is significant work to do in 2012 in Boon Bay and based on the results from treatments this fall in the Village, Norowal Marina and Middleworth Bay, more follow up treatments may be necessary. The LGACRRTF will assess what control measures are appropriate at these sites in early 2012.

Establishment of a sister lake partnership between Lake Tahoe and Lake George?

The Lake Tahoe experts and the Lake George Asian Clam Rapid Response Task Force members have expressed interest in creating a formal sister lake partnership to ensure continued collaboration and exchange of lake science research. Members of the Lake George Park Commission also expressed interest in this opportunity. "Visiting Lake George provided great opportunity to share information and ideas regarding prevention and control of aquatic invasive species. It was very encouraging to see all of the good work that is being done at Lake George and the coordination by the regional and local organizations involved in the effort. Lake Tahoe and Lake George share similar challenges with regard to controlling current invaders and preventing new species from establishing, and by continuing this partnership we can learn a lot from each other", Ted Thayer, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

U.S. Senators Feinstein(CA) and Reid(NV) have been successful in securing federal dollars to support the restoration of Lake Tahoe, which includes invasive species spread prevention and control programs. A similar partnership for the Lake Champlain Basin between NY and VT U.S. Senators may be possible which could benefit Lake George. "Lake Tahoe and Lake George share similar lake management, water quality, use, and re-

search priorities. A formal partnership between the two lakes would be valuable and might help to secure more resources for aquatic invasive species management”, Meg Modley, Lake Champlain Basin Program.

The partnership developed between Marion, Sudeep, and Ted and the Lake George partners has facilitated a rapid response to the Asian clam infestation in Lake George. Many more opportunities for partnership clearly exist and the exchange of information between Lake George and Tahoe is equally valuable. “The scientific community at Lake Tahoe has been extremely grateful for the sharing of scientific information collected by DFWI and the many groups that are trying to manage clams at Lake George. In a little over 1 year we have learned that there are similarities and dissimilarities between the ecology of invading clams in our respective lakes. Sharing information from Lake George, the scientists and managers have taught that managing clam populations in the very nearshore may be possible at a large scale, managing zebra mussels may be possible in lakes with low calcium levels (Tahoe doesn't have these yet), and that there are many ways to start thinking about preventing future invasions to our lakes. I hope we can continue to work in an East meets West fashion to develop scientifically driven management strategies to keep our lakes beautiful and clean for future generations”, Dr. Sudeep Chandra, University of Nevada, Reno.

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 RPI 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, 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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