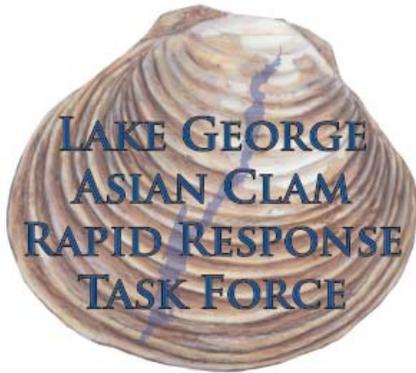


Lake George Asian Clam Rapid Response Task Force



NEWS RELEASE

Task Force releases report for 2011 Asian clam treatments in Lake George and 2012 Plan

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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Scientific Diving International

University of California Davis Tahoe
Environmental Research Center

University of Nevada Reno

Vermont Department of Environmental
Conservation

Task Force achieved strong results in Lake George Village and Norowal Marina. Spring and fall treatments are planned for all four infested sites covering 15 acres in 2012.

For more information see media contacts below.

March 29, 2012

Lake George, NY – The Lake George Asian Clam Rapid Response Task Force (Task Force) released a report on 2011 activities and the 2012 plan (see attached). The report is also posted at www.stoptheasianclam.info. The report provides details and results from treatments of over 12 acres of infested areas, including two treatments in Lake George Village and fall treatments at Norowal Marina and Middleworth Bay North.

The Task Force started 2011 believing the Asian clam (*Corbicula fluminea*) infestation in Lake George Village was the only one in Lake George. The Village infestation was discovered by staff from the Rensselaer Darrin Fresh Water Institute in 2010. This discovery resulted in the formation of the Task Force and an initial survey of 40 sites along 10 miles of shoreline in the south basin that did not find any other Asian clam infestations in the fall of 2010. After treatment efforts were underway in 2011, three new sites were found in the Town of Bolton in Boon Bay, Norowal Marina and Middleworth Bay North. A formal lakewide survey was organized to inspect another 173 high risk and suitable habitat sites around Lake George, all of which were found to not have Asian clams.

The Task Force implemented a control effort that utilized 50 foot x 7.5 foot PVC benthic barrier mats placed on the lake bottom and weighted

down with rebar and sandbags. The mats were left in place for a minimum of 45 days to suffocate the Asian clams. This technique was used in Lake George Village in the spring and the fall and in Norowal Marina in the fall. Over 820 mats were installed in Lake George Village in the spring, 350 in the fall, and over 250 mats were installed at Norowal Marina. More than 7.5 acres were treated in total in Lake George Village and over 2.5 acres at Norowal Marina. The Task Force experimented with a suction harvesting effort over a 1 acre area in Middleworth Bay North, utilizing lands of Beckley's Marina for dewatering operations. While this operation removed over 52 cubic yards of sediments and a number of Asian clams, it did not meet the Task Force's expectation for overall control as post treatment surveys found live clams remaining and dispersed throughout the site.

"We feel very positive about our work in Lake George Village in 2011" said Peter Bauer, Executive Director of the FUND for Lake George. "In areas that we treated twice, once in the spring and again in the fall, we achieved almost 100% kill. There are areas in the Village that last year were loaded with clams that now only have dead clams. We're planning for ambitious spring and fall treatments where we extensively survey the Village and place benthic barrier mats anywhere we find live clams. Whereas in 2011 we carpeted the lake bottom of the infested area with benthic barrier we anticipate a spot matting operation where mats are installed in small clusters where pockets of live clams persist."

"The management and potential eradication of Asian Clams in Lake George serves as an example where treatment decisions and strategies are being informed by science. Scientific data collected which included dissolved oxygen and ammonia concentrations under mats during treatment, and mortality of clams under mats after treatment have made it possible to optimize both treatment strategies and maximize results. In 2012 we will continue this science driven treatment approach," said Dr. Sandra Nierzwicki-Bauer, Director of the Rensselaer Darrin Fresh Water Institute.

Results from 2011 revealed that in areas treated twice in Lake George Village over 99% of clams were dead. Areas treated once found just 2% of the clams alive. One unanticipated result in all sites was that a high percentage of "inactive" clams were found. An inactive clam is one that could not be determined to be live or dead in mid-December. More work will be undertaken this spring to determine the status of inactive clams. Results after the first treatment at Norowal Marina found only 10% of clams to be alive, with most of these under difficult-to-mat dock areas. Norowal also had a high percentage of inactive clams. Live clams remain throughout the Middleworth Bay North site, though this area also has a large percentage of inactive clams.

"We are encouraged by the successful eradication effort to date, and are hopeful that commitment to this focused effort will see Asian Clams permanently removed from the waters of Lake George. As the Task Force continues to mitigate the impacts of an invasive species introduction, we earnestly call upon the greater community to join us in the effort to safeguard our water resources by exercising due diligence in the routine self-inspection and decontamination of boats, fishing gear, and construction equipment, thereby preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species between freshwater systems," said Tom Conerty, Vice-Chair of the Lake George Park Commission.

The overall results from the 2011 treatments were positive, yet revealed the practical realities that control and eradication of Asian clams in Lake George may require sustained effort with two treatments annually (spring and fall) for several years.

"The Village of Lake George worked closely with the Task Force. We are grateful for the patience, forbearance, and cooperation of the many businesses and resorts that were impacted by the treatments last year to control

the Asian clam. I am heartened by the results, but cognizant that this effort will need to be sustained for several years at least” said Mayor Robert Blais, Lake George Village.

Planning is underway for 2012 treatments. Divers will start surveying the four infested sites with scientists in early April to map areas with live clams. Treatments will begin in late April and run through mid-May. Mats will be maintained on the lake bottom for 45 days and removed starting in mid-June. All mats are expected to be out of the lake by July 1, 2012. Boon Bay will be the largest site where between 350-550 mats will be installed depending on what survey results determine. It is anticipated that between 200-300 mats will be used at the other three sites.

“The Lake George Asian clam control effort brought together federal, state, and local partners working in the Lake Champlain Basin beginning in 2009. The Lake George Asian Clam Rapid Response Task Force has raised awareness about aquatic invasive species spread prevention as many partners have been forced to examine the link between their livelihoods and the condition of the Lake. The strong focus on scientific monitoring and evaluation of the benthic barrier mat and suction harvesting treatments provides valuable information to the region and the rest of the world. The Asian clam 2012 treatments will follow the same rigorous evaluation” said Meg Modley, Lake Champlain Basin Program.

A lakewide survey effort will be organized in 2012 to follow up the work in 2010 and 2011, where more than 210 sites in high risk areas or areas of suitable habitat were inspected. “The survey was a very important step for the Task Force last season. While new infestations could still appear in the future, the lakewide survey assures that for now resources are being spent where they need to be,” said Walt Lender, Executive Director of the Lake George Association.

“The Asian clam invasion of Lake George exposed not only the approaches, tools and resources required for rapid response but also the need for improved prevention programs. Lake George continues to lead by example” said Hilary Smith, Director of the Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program.

The Asian clam control effort cost over \$630,000 in 2011. The Lake George Asian Clam Rapid Response Task Force is grateful for all the support received and thanks the following contributors: the Lake George Park Commission (\$208,000), Warren County (\$130,000), NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (\$75,000), Lake Champlain Basin Program (\$75,000), Lake George Association (\$30,000), FUND for Lake George (\$30,000), Lake George Watershed Coalition/NYS Department of State (\$30,000), Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program (\$10,000), Town of Bolton (\$10,000), The Nature Conservancy’s Dome Island Committee (\$10,000), Town of Lake George (\$5,000), Village of Lake George (\$5,000), Town of Hague (\$5,000), Town of Queensbury (\$5,000), Washington County (\$5,000), Town of Ticonderoga (\$3,000), Town of Dresden (\$3,000), Town of Putnam (\$3,000) and Essex County (\$2,500).

“This effort would not have been possible without the vast amount of in-kind services provided by the Village of Lake George, the Town of Lake George and the Town of Bolton and the Warren County Soil and Water Conservation District. Their assistance helped us to organize a massive effort and we’re very grateful” said Peter Bauer, Executive Director of the FUND for Lake George.

Lake George Asian Clam Rapid Response Task Force

The Lake George Asian Clam Rapid Response Task Force is managing the Asian clam control and 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, The Nature Conservancy's Dome Island Committee, Lake George Watershed Coalition/NYS Department of State, 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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