

# Lake George Park Commission E-News Letter

## Five easy steps to help protect water quality:

- Go fertilizer free
- Make a shoreline buffer
- Remove a section of lawn and plant a native species tree
- Put a rain barrel under a downspout
- Have your septic pumped.

## Eurasian Watermilfoil Results Best Ever

The Lake George Park Commission's program outputs for Eurasian Watermilfoil management reached an all time high level of success in 2009. The Commission devoted significant in-kind staff services and approximately \$113,583.66 in New York State Environmental Protection Fund appropriations to clear 157 milfoil sites, lay 1.8 acres (about 78,000 square feet) of benthic barrier and removed 5.2 acres of steel weights and benthic barrier (225,000 ± square feet).

Although eight new sites were added this year, 164 of the 177 locations where milfoil has ever been recorded were cleared in 2009, a 92.7% rate, the highest rate recorded in the twenty-four year history of the program. There was a reduction in the number of un-managed milfoil beds from 16 to 9, also the best annual achievement recorded. The 15 remaining beds and moderate areas are smaller in area and compare to a high of 41 in 1999. Several huge persistent milfoil beds, the subject of intense

management effort for years, were pronounced cleared for the first time in 2009.

The Commission's prime contractor Lycott Environmental, Inc. has prepared a report of Commission activities that also incorporates the results of a parallel project started in 2009 by the Fund for Lake George, Inc. The Fund for Lake George and the Commission coordinated their efforts. Fund for Lake George contractor, AIM, harvested 252,155 plants helping to clear seven dense milfoil beds.

## Lake George Park Commission Marine Patrol Report 2009

Peruse the LGPC Marine Patrol 2009 report [www.lgpc.state.ny.us](http://www.lgpc.state.ny.us) and you will get a sense of the wide diversity of services the patrol provides the users of the Lake. "Our goal is nothing less than the best marine patrol in the country and the Commission has dedicated all required resources to this mission," said Commission Chair Bruce Young when releasing the report. "We have excellent and experienced people and it shows everyday," Mr. Young said. (more inside)

## Marine Patrol report continued from page 1

The challenges confronting the patrol are considerable. The Lake covers more than 28,000 acres of water surface area in three counties and it adjoins eight municipalities. There are an estimated 430,000 separate private boating excursions on the Lake each year. The patrol provides: assistance to stranded boaters; emergency

response and first aid; law enforcement; vessel safety inspections; search and rescue; security for special events; sanitary inspections; recovery of lost and stolen property; fire suppression; hazard removal; boater training and public education. Officers recruited and trained by the LGPC bring a complementary variety of skills and experience including

backgrounds in law enforcement, education, first aid, firefighting and vessel operation. Certified peace officers, marine patrol officer are called upon in all kinds of situations where people and property are at risk

*The LGPC administers  
Special Anchorage  
Areas in Sandy Bay  
Paradise Bay*



## Stream Corridor Protection

It is worrisome to realize that Lake George and many of its tributary streams are listed as having impaired use pursuant to the U.S. Clean Water Act. The factors listed as causing the impairment for the use as a water supply and for recreation are sedimentation, urban runoff and stream bank erosion. During 2009, the Commission prepared an Environmental Impact Statement and held hearings on new regulations for stream corridor protection. The goal is to better protect the Lake and its feeder streams by leaving a natural buffer along streams when land is developed. The protected area would allow for natural infiltration and treatment of stormwater runoff, trapping contaminants and plant nutrients. The regulations would also establish improved standards when streams are disturbed and limit the number and design of new stream crossings.

In July 2009, the Commission submitted the regulations and a Regulatory Impact Statement to the Governor's Office of Regulatory Reform for approval. In order to be proposed as State regulations, the draft regulations and supporting documentation must first be approved in accordance with State Executive Order 20. Such approval would clear the way for the regulations to be formally proposed. A public comment period and hearings would follow and more changes could be made before any final action on the regulations occurs.

The current draft emerged after more than one hundred people turned out for public hearings last February. The Commission also considered approximately 500 written comments. There were a considerable number of expressions of support for the rules as well as for the need for effective action to protect the Lake. There was also a lot of opposition to the rules especially related to the potential regulatory impact on private property. As the current draft emerged, the Commission sought to address as many of the concerns as possible without undermining the important objectives relative to water quality.

Among the significant changes to the original draft is a new definition of the streams to be protected. Protected streams will be only those shown on a map to be finalized with the regulations. This change addresses the concern expressed by many objectors that far too much uncertainty would result if it was left to determined protected streams as individual development projects arise. The Commission has prepared a map of the streams which has been posted on its website.

The revisions also add a provision which allows for an expedited waiver to be granted for a project on an existing lot of record when the area within the stream corridor is more than 30% of the lot size. All of the traditional variance approaches also apply as do minimum set backs. However, the measure would allow relief in the individual case when the impact upon a land owner is disproportionate.

The current draft of the regulations, maps and much more information is available at [www.lgpc.state.ny.us](http://www.lgpc.state.ny.us)

## Lake Water Levels Meet Targets in 2009

Lake George's water levels are managed as much as possible to provide optimum conditions for recreation and natural resources while avoiding wide fluctuations. The only control is through the operation of discharge facilities. When surplus water is released, it is used to generate electricity at two hydroelectric generation plants along the LaChute River.

The target Lake elevation for summer months is set in state law. An operating regime governs the remainder of the year. The Commission monitors the Lake's water level and adherence to the discharge requirements. Lake George is maintained within a narrow range compared to other nearby lakes, about 14 inches in 2009 between the winter low and the Spring high.

Historically, lake levels were recorded each day by use of a simple wooden gage fixed to the dock at the Rogers Rock Hotel. Even though a modern gage is now used and is located elsewhere, it is still referred to as the Rogers Rock Gage (RRG). The zero level of the original gage, an arbitrary point, has been determined to be 316.06 above mean sea level (msl). Often lake levels are expressed as feet and hundredths of feet above this zero datum. The target summertime elevation is 3.5 on the RRG which computes to 319.56 msl.

Each year the Lake is drawn down to a lower level to accept anticipated runoff from melting snow in the Spring. Snow surveys are performed at designated locations and regular intervals to help calculate potential runoff and the winter elevation is adjusted within certain limits. Ideally, the Lake crests at an elevation of 4.0 RRG in April. However, the Lake may rise above desired levels when melting snows and heavy rains combine. Once all the discharge capacity is opened, natural forces control the lake level. After cresting, the Lake is gradually drawn down to Summer levels reserving some extra for evaporation during the warm months.

The lake level data for 2009 are available through the following link [www.lgpc.state.ny.us](http://www.lgpc.state.ny.us) The snow survey data are converted to show the theoretical lake level that would result if all of the snow was converted to surface water runoff to the Lake before any adjustment in Lake level could be made. It is therefore useful information but does not predict an event likely to occur.

**Pollution Hotline (518) 668 9347**

The Commission investigates suspected pollution. Call the pollution hotline to report problems including; failed septic systems; sedimentation and erosion.