STATE OF NEW YORK
LAKE GEORGE PARK COMMISSION
A NEW YORK STATE ENVIRONMENTAL, PLANNING AND PUBLIC SAFETY AGENCY
DEVOTED TO THE PRESERVATION OF LAKE GEORGE AND THE SAFETY OF ITS USERS

NEWSLETTER

October 2003

Lake George Park Commission
P.O. Box 749
Lake George, NY 12845
Tel: (518) 668-9347
E-mail: info@lgpc.state.ny.us
Web: www.lgpc.state.ny.us

Commission's Milfoil Management Program Expanded

The Commission expanded Eurasian watermilfoil management activities in 2003, clearing a record 115 sites as the ratio of cleared sites to total sites continued the positive trend of recent years. Bed areas, the heretofore unmanaged dense milfoil colonies, were also reduced for the fourth year in a row by Commission contractors. Suction harvesting efforts removed 47 barrels of dense milfoil from waters adjacent to the Village of Lake George and 8,000 square feet of dense milfoil was covered with mats in Hague. Several larger scattered plant areas were hand-harvested this year including the removal of more than 2,800 plants from a newly discovered colony along Glenburnie. The 16,000 +- milfoil plants removed by hand harvesting usurped the previous annual total by 43% as several new or previously unmanaged sites were tackled using this method.

The Commission has acknowledged that fighting milfoil is an annual maintenance effort and a drain on agency resources, but the alternative runaway expansion of this invader has unthinkable consequences for the lake and the local economy.

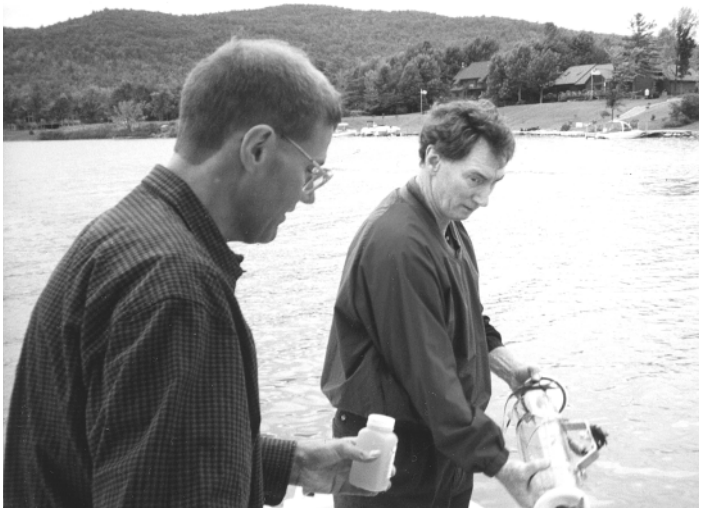
"Providing leadership on this most serious of problems is a core value of the Commission. Accordingly, it is a priority objective of the Commission to protect the lake and its users from the destructive consequences of milfoil infestation with the ultimate goal of eradication of this invasive plant and restoration of the native plant community. Because milfoil can expand rapidly from a small colony to an un-manageable bed in just a year or two, effective and early interdiction and control obviates not only ecological damage but inestimable future expenses for control. It is critical that milfoil control efforts are sustained."

(from LGPC 2004 budget proposal)

North End Turbidity Occupies Water Quality Staff

An unusual condition of milky-green turbidity affected the extreme northern reaches of the lake all summer occupying Commission water quality personnel. Reports from residents began reaching the Commission July 7th but some callers indicated that the condition had existed for some time before. By July 10th Commission water quality engineer Tom Wardell had taken preliminary samples and confirmed that unusually dense turbidity extended from the lake's outlet to as far south as Coates Landing—by July 17th Hearts Bay was affected. Samples taken by the Commission were immediately sent to the Darrin Freshwater Institute and the New York State Departments of Environmental Conservation and Health were notified. Initial concerns of an algae bloom were not borne out.

Dr. Charles Boylen of the Darrin Freshwater Institute reported to the Lake George Watershed Conference in August that suspension of clay particles, possibly from land disturbances, was the most likely source of the discolored water. Commission staff conducted inspections of the upland throughout July and August for possible sources of sedimentation. *(continues page 2)*



Dr. Kenneth Wagner (right), a limnologist with ENSR and Tom Wardell, Commission Water Quality Engineer take water samples near Mossy Point.

P.O. Box 749
Lake George, NY 12845
Tel: (518)668-9347
Fax: (518)668-5001

E-mail:
info@lgpc.state.ny.us

Web:
www.lgpc.state.ny.us

North End Turbidity *(cont'd from pg 1)*

Turbid water from suspended clay particles is not unusual in this part of the lake where clay soils exist. However, the condition was unusually severe, persistent and widespread compared to previous events. While troubling, there was no indication that the condition presented any kind of public health concern.

In August the Commission contacted Dr. Kenneth Wagner, a limnologist with ENSR International. Dr. Wagner visited the site in September with Commission staff, collected samples and conducted bottom observations using a special underwater video camera. Dr. Wagner's conclusions are:

"1. The turbidity is mainly a function of clay particles suspended in the water. Algae are not a significant factor in observed low visibility. Some organic matter is also present, but is not a dominant factor in observed turbidity.

2. The clay appears to come from surficial bottom sediments. Even if it came from elsewhere initially, there is enough fine sediment present now to allow resuspension events capable of producing the observed turbidity.

3. Clay may be suspended by wind or boat activity. Which factor is more important is not known from observations made to date, but either could be responsible. Similar turbidity has been noted in the channel in the north half of Cayuga Lake, where dredging cleared plants and exposed clays which were then resuspended by boats using this channel. Wind is always a factor, and may vary in its intensity and effects over time.

4. Presence of complete plant cover will limit suspension. Plant cover should be more extensive in areas less than 15 feet deep where coarse sediment is not the dominant substrate. Absence of plants from as much as 50% of the colonizable substrate suggests damage by ice or boats or low light. The turbidity problem may be self-sustaining in that it limits plant growth and promotes more resuspension.

5. Sampled clay particles will settle in a matter of days under quiescent conditions, but wind and/or boat activity provide enough energy to prolong turbidity to a matter of weeks or even months.

6. Development may have added clay deposits, if they were not there already, and the deep freeze may have induced ice damage to plant communities, resulting in the less than complete coverage by plants in shallow portions of this area. Increased use of the area by bigger boats may be another important factor that has not been clearly documented or evaluated. These factors are more speculative, but may help explain the recent trend in increased turbidity at the north end of Lake George."

(Dr. Kenneth J. Wagner)

Commission representatives briefed a meeting of local officials and residents in August and the Commission is continuing public outreach efforts and to monitor the situation as of this writing.

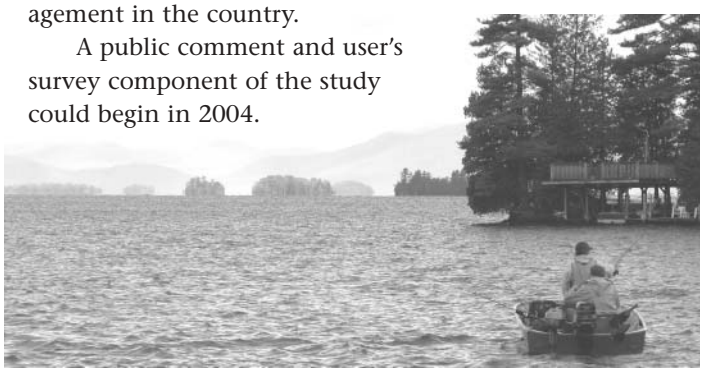
Commission Evaluates Water Recreation Study Designs

At the July Commission meeting Dr. John Titre of Park Studies, Inc. presented to the Commission on his more than 25 years of experience in the conduct of water-based recreation studies. The Commission is considering ways to fulfill its mission to promote reasonable public access to the lake while reducing congestion, overcrowding and safety hazards.

Dr. Titre has helped more than fourteen lake communities in recent years with a consensus building process toward common goals for lake recreation management.

The Commission invited Dr. Titre here from his home base in Colorado for a brief visit and talk. Dr. Titre is one of the leading practitioners of water-based recreation management in the country.

A public comment and user's survey component of the study could begin in 2004.



2003 Milfoil Management Results

Year	Total # of Milfoil Sites	Density of Milfoil Growth: Bed	Moderate	Scattered	Status: New*	Cleared**
1985	3	3	0	0	3	0
1986	22	9	0	13	19	0
1987	43	8	0	29	21	6
1988	55	8	0	35	12	12
1989	66	12	6	23	11	25
1990	76	13	8	19	10	36
1991	91	11	7	27	15	46
1992	97	16	4	40	6	37
1993	106	21	13	10	9	62
1995	111	26	13	5	1	67
1996	118	25	11	9	7	73
1997	123	28	11	13	5	72
1998	127	31	7	6	4	83
1999	134	34	7	4	7	91
2000	136	28	8	3	2	94
2001	141	24	11	4	5	103
2002	144	23	7	4	3	110
2003	146	22	4	5	2	115

* First year in which Eurasian watermilfoil was observed at a particular site.
** Indicates all visible Eurasian watermilfoil removed by management activities.

Preliminary Marine Patrol Statistics

Rainy weekends in June and early July dampened lake use for the first part of the season according to Marine Patrol Officer observations but boaters were making up for lost time in August and beyond. Labor Day weekend was one of the busiest long-time observers could recall.

By Labor Day the Patrol had provided 1,516 "assists" to boaters. These included: rescues, stranded boaters, courtesy gas, attempts to locate, pumping, towing and directions.

The Commission compiles data on Marine Patrol activities through mid-October. The following results are a partial listing of activities through September 1, 2003.

Accidents Investigated with Report 13

PWC Involved 3

Tickets Issued 170

Tickets for Violation of PWC 5 mph, 500 ft. rule . . . 41
(approximately 25%)

BWI Arrests 1

Vessel Noise Tests 26

Boater Assists 1,516

STATE OF NEW YORK
LG
Lake George Park Commission
P.O. Box 749, Lake George, NY 12845