

LAKE L G 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

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NEWSLETTER

Spring 2008

State Grants Aid Eurasian Watermilfoil Program

The Lake George Park Commission has released a report of its 2007 Eurasian Watermilfoil Management (EWM) Program. 2007 was the Commission's 22nd year of EWM management activities. The sustained management actions have checked milfoil's spread and protected hundreds of acres of native plant communities.

The Commission made very good use of a New York State Environmental Protection Fund grant, expanding management for the second straight year in 2007. Several bed areas of EWM that had been "wait-listed" for many years were covered. These included long-existing beds in: Glenburnie/Blairs Bay; Huletts/Eichlerville Bay; Gull Bay; Hague; and Elizabeth Island Channel. Benthic Barriers were also installed over a newly discovered bed near Lake George Village, at West Brook, Dunham's Bay and at a dozen more locations.

In total about 4 acres, 171,000 square feet, of the weighted benthic barrier material was placed to smother dense EWM during July and August of 2007.

additional listed-sites were found to be clear of Eurasian Watermilfoil in 2007. Thus, 132 (82.5%) of the known milfoil sites in Lake George were clear of milfoil at the end of the 2007 effort. A total of 19,753 plants were removed by hand harvesting during the year.



Eurasian Watermilfoil

Management activities in Lake George have had a positive effect on the control of many milfoil sites. However, 14 sites remain with dense milfoil beds and eight sites have moderately dense growth (two of which are not suitable for physical management). Thus, 22 sites in Lake George require future management. This is necessary work for coming years. However, the report indicates a positive trend compared to 26 and 36 sites requiring future management in 2006 and 2000, respectively.

The complete report is available for review on the Commission's website www.lgpc.state.ny.us.

To report suspected Eurasian Watermilfoil, please contact the Commission. ■

"It is nice to finally be able to respond to people who have waited so long to have milfoil beds near them managed. This is a bigger and better program than in past years and we are grateful for the State assistance."

– Commission Chair Bruce E. Young

Hand harvesting is when divers pull roots and stems of scattered EWM plants usually from among native plant colonies. This selective control helps keep EWM from crowding-out native plants. Over time, repeated annual hand harvesting is effective at eliminating small clusters with up to 500 EWM plants. Sites are checked regularly and if EWM is found, cleared with hand harvesting.

There were 160 EWM sites at the conclusion of 2007. Of these, 82 sites were cleared using hand harvesting. Fifty

COMMISSION 2008 AGENDA

- Advance new regulations/program for stream corridor protection and tree clearing
- Target 22 remaining milfoil sites
- Improve invasive species prevention awareness, launch signage, etc.
- Advance water quality initiative to reduce pollutant loads



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Stream Corridor Management and Tree Clearing

During 2007, the Commission began a community planning process to better protect the Lake's water quality by formulating new regulations on stream corridor management and vegetation clearing in the watershed's forested mountainsides. More than 20 stakeholder organizations participated through representatives in a series of four workshop meetings. The process produced a literature review, conceptual framework and significant public comment on preliminary draft regulations.

At the outset of 2008, the Commission re-organized the effort and set project milestones for 2008. The steps ahead include preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement and additional public hearings. Also, a Regulatory Impact Statement that assesses costs and a plan for governmental coordination have to be prepared before a rule-making can be completed.

Precipitation is the source of the lake, 80% of which falls on the watershed and flows as runoff in streams or as shallow groundwater. These streams and forested drainage areas form a water buffering and purifying system that give the lake its character. As development reaches higher and higher in the watershed, there is greater potential for impacts and the loss of the system's purifying features. Also, the continuing impact of past actions on streams and the lake is manifest in the untreated runoff of pollutants from highway systems and overly intensive development.

Stream buffers comprise an area of native forest and ground cover along a stream that is undisturbed when the surrounding land is developed. Stream buffers have been shown to be one of the most effective and least costly methods to preserve the quality characteristics of receiving waters. During the planning process in 2007, there was some agreement, even among the diversified interests represented, that stream buffers offer a range of benefits for our communities and would greatly help protect the lake.

The process also elicited legitimate concerns that new regulatory programs or standards have the potential to unduly restrict private property or create overly burdensome project review procedures. On the other hand, many comments expressed the concern that inadequate standards now may lead to future development patterns that will not sustain lake's high water quality. It is at this critical nexus of issues that the Commission will develop more information and organize more discussion in 2008.

The Commission has contracted for the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, an interactive planning tool to guide the evaluation. Presently, work is underway on a schedule for the release of more data and for public meetings during the Spring and Summer of 2008. When completed this schedule will be a framework for completing this important project within State procedures for rule-makings as soon as possible. Visit the Commission's website for up-to-date information or send a comment to us at info@lgpc.state.ny.us. ■

Marine Patrol Report

The Commission has released its report of 2007 Marine Patrol activities. The report includes acknowledgments for the assistance of other agencies especially Warren County Sheriff's Office and NYS Department of Environmental Conservation.

During 2007 Commission officers logged over 1800 vessel contacts including providing assistance to more than 500 boaters and issuing more than 1000 tickets and warnings. A complete listing of marine program outputs is included in the report.

The report's "unusual incidents" section highlights the diverse nature of patrol responsibilities. Emergency responses by the patrol reflect the highest priority. These include: water rescue; boat stranding; search for lost hiker; fire fighting and accident response. Enforcement of the State Navigation Law and the Commission's "recreation quality" regulations is also a busy part of the patrol's activities. The Commission has improved the boater's map, launch signage and educational materials and increased boater education courses through Marine Patrol activities.

The 2007 results show an increase in boat noise tickets issued. This seems to indicate an increase in non-compliant boats being brought to the lake. The Patrol works with boating groups and regatta sponsors on voluntary compliance with boat noise limits. However, the Commission maintains a strict enforcement policy for all violators of the boat exhaust noise regulations. The report also notes that regattas and other planned events are increasingly challenging the Marine Patrol's capacity to patrol busy weekends.

Visit the Commission's website www.lgpc.state.ny.us to view the report in its entirety. Send your comments to the Commission at info@lgpc.state.ny.us. ■

Recreation Quality

The Commission has posted a paper reporting additional analysis of data collected in its study of Water-based Recreation, Trends and Impacts (2006). The paper examines the attitudes and perceptions of three groups of Lake George boaters to determine factors that may be influencing satisfaction with water-based recreation.

The overall goal of the Commission's program of education, lake-regulation and enforcement is to meet the objectives of the Commission's enabling New York State Legislation to manage boating and recreational activities to protect the Lake's water quality and to prevent overcrowding, congestion and safety hazards.

Overcrowding and congestion are negative evaluations made by individual users in the context of their expectations and actual conditions. The Commission designed the study to provide data relative to these evaluations.

Overall, the study quantified the level and diversity of boating activities, estimated the intensity of boat traffic in certain zones and assembled information on all types of recreation facilities. The study also included a stratified random sample of lake users by group.

Attitudes and perceptions of lake users are relevant to estimates of social carrying capacity. It is an interesting result that two main groups of lake users have statistically similar perceptions of factors affecting satisfaction. Annual boat permit holders tend to have a long affiliation with the lake, over thirty years on average. This group's attitudes are not statistically different from boaters who also register/own docks (generally home, condo owners) on such issues as boat noise, PWC noise and rowdy behavior (see below). The percentage of users reporting these as problems is worth noting.

Please visit www.lgpc.state.ny.us to review the paper. Send your comments to at info@lgpc.state.ny.us. ■

(Table 5 from Recreation Quality Report) **Most common written descriptions of things that contributed most to respondents' dissatisfaction with their 2005 Lake George recreation experience, by lake user group**

Things That Contributed Most to Dissatisfaction	Residential Dock Owners	Annual Boat Permit Holders	Temporary Boat Permit Holders
	<i>Percent of respondents who wrote down something</i>		
Overcrowding, too many boaters	26.7	33.3	26.9
Motorized noise—too much or too loud	28.1	13.0	4.8
Decline of water quality	11.1	12.5	5.8
Problems with other boaters—too rowdy, not following rules	7.4	8.9	11.5
PWCs (type of problem not specified)	13.4	7.8	2.9
Speeding by other boaters, feeling unsafe	6.0	5.2	6.7
Too expensive	3.2	3.1	8.7
Limited public access to the water	0.5	3.6	4.8
Boat wakes	4.6	3.1	3.8
Too much upland development, concerned about stormwater runoff	6.0	2.6	2.9

Who We Are - What We Do

We are a New York State planning, environmental and public safety agency with special responsibilities for water quality and lake recreation. Boat and dock registrations are the main source of revenue to a special state trust fund that supports the Commission's programs. The Commission has enacted and enforces State regulations governing boats, speed, PWC, boat noise, anchoring, marinas, moorings, docks and stormwater runoff from upland development. In addition to the Marine Patrol, EWM program and planning initiatives reported within, the Commission also:

- Operates a pollution hotline and is a first responder to pollution concerns – (518) 668-9347,
- Coordinates an Invasive Species Prevention Participating Business Program – an information and referral network of over 60 participating businesses,
- Conducts enforcement and compliance activities that protect the lake,
- Oversees lake water levels and monitors compliance with the dam operating guidelines,
- Administers a program of annual and short term boat and dock registrations,
- Coordinates with other agencies and organizations.



Boat Count - 2007

Area	Inboard& I/O's	Outboards	Sailboats	Rowboats/Canoes	PWC's	Airplanes	Totals
North of Sabbath Day Pt. to Ticonderoga Bridge	574	200	210	459	66	0	1509
Ticonderoga Bridge East Shore to Bluff Head	305	165	95	297	55	0	917
North of Veteran's Beach to Montcalm Point	293	67	52	246	31	0	689
Bluff Head East Shore to 14 Mile Island	224	87	67	266	10	0	654
North of Montcalm Point to Sabbath Day Point	31	18	13	37	15	0	114
The Narrows	36	21	12	2	0	0	71
Mother Bunch Islands	13	13	1	2	1	0	30
14 Mile Channel to Harris Bay Yacht Club	847	128	125	606	80	0	1786
Harris Bay Yacht Club to Million Dollar Beach	448	74	35	339	59	0	955
Million Dollar Beach to Fish Point	810	156	89	380	127	0	1562
North of Fish Point to Veteran's Beach	233	70	28	175	17	0	523
Sagamore Docks (Green Island)	50	16	8	2	0	0	76
Long Island, Speaker Heck & Diamond Island	12	8	3	3	0	0	26
Marinas	1134	323	157	88	40	0	1742
Totals	5010	1346	895	2902	501	0	10654