

## WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

**COMMITTEE:     INVASIVE SPECIES SUB-COMMITTEE**

**DATE:            FEBRUARY 12, 2014**

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**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:   OTHERS PRESENT:**

SUPERVISORS DICKINSON  
                  CONOVER  
                  MONROE  
                  FRASIER  
                  BEATY  
                  SIMPSON  
                  STROUGH

KEVIN B. GERAGHTY, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD  
PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR  
MARTIN AUFFREDOU, COUNTY ATTORNEY  
AMANDA ALLEN, DEPUTY CLERK OF THE BOARD  
FRANK E. THOMAS, BUDGET OFFICER  
SUPERVISORS BROCK  
                  MCDEVITT  
                  MERLINO  
                  TAYLOR  
                  WESTCOTT  
MICHAEL SWAN, COUNTY TREASURER  
DAVE WICK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE LAKE GEORGE PARK COMMISSION  
RICH NAWROT, EAST SHORE SCHROON LAKE ASSOCIATION  
JANE SMITH, EAST SHORE SCHROON LAKE ASSOCIATION  
BILL MCGHIE, EAST SHORE SCHROON LAKE ASSOCIATION  
JAMES CAMPINELL, COUNCILMAN, CITY OF GLENS FALLS, 1<sup>ST</sup> WARD  
DON LEHMAN, THE POST STAR  
THOM RANDALL, ADIRONDACK JOURNAL  
CHARLENE DIRESTA, SR. LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

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Mr. Dickinson called the Invasive Species Sub-Committee meeting to order at 10:40 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Simpson, seconded by Mr. Conover and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Copies of the agenda were distributed to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda is on file with the minutes.*

Commencing the agenda review, Mr. Dickinson stated the first item on the agenda was an update on the milfoil eradication efforts in Lake George from Dave Wick, Executive Director of the Lake George Park Commission (LGPC). Mr. Wick advised the LGPC had released an RFP (Request for Proposals) for milfoil control on Lake George and had received proposals from some qualified companies. He informed that following review of the proposals, the LGPC had selected Aquatic Invasive Management, LLC (AIM) to assist with the milfoil removal in Lake George. Mr. Wick commented the LGPC had received \$100,000 in grant funding from the Environmental Protection Fund to be used towards 2014 efforts. He added \$100,000 had been received in 2013 of which \$35,000 had been used towards the Lake Steward Program; however, he continued, for 2014, the entire \$100,000 would be used towards milfoil eradication, as well as an additional \$75,000 from the Fund for Lake George and \$75,000 awarded to the Lake George Watershed Coalition from a State grant. He opined that 2014 would be the biggest year for Lake George for milfoil control efforts. He advised they were hoping for the same level of funding for 2015, in order to have two years of \$250,000 funding applied to milfoil control on Lake George.

Mr. Wick informed that Lake George had been fighting the milfoil control battle since 1986. He stated the invasive species prevention program (mandatory boat inspections and washes) would be in place by May 15, 2014, which would theoretically stop new invasive species from entering Lake George.

He said there was a strong possibility of getting the milfoil down to a level which had not been seen since the mid 1980's, within two to three years of effort. Mr. Conover asked Mr. Wick to extend the Board of Supervisor's thanks to the Governor's Office and the Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) for their financial contributions towards eradication efforts.

Mr. Dickinson requested an update on Asian Clam eradication efforts for 2014. Mr. Wick advised there was a half acre of matting on Glenburnie, which was located on the northeast shore of Lake George. He said AIM had been contracted to complete all of the matting work on Lake George in the second week of June. He noted the mats would be left in place for a longer period of time this year. He reminded the Committee members that it was challenging to locate and kill the juveniles; however, he continued, the LGPC had worked with Darrin Freshwater Institute, who developed a methodology through lab and field work to identify the juvenile Asian Clams. He stated that if they could confirm complete eradication on Glenburnie then they would complete a Lake-wide survey and place any new sites found on an immediate response protocol, which involved sieving for adult and juvenile clams. He acknowledged the LGPC did not have a great plan in place to eradicate the estimated 40 to 50 acres of Asian Clams in Lake George. He stated the LGPC was good at killing the clams but they were spreading faster than they could be killed. He advised of a scientific study on density and reproduction. He said the Lake George-Lake Champlain Basin Program had received a proposal from the LGPC for \$35,000 towards Asian Clam eradication efforts. Mr. Wick informed the Asian Clam population in Lake George had not yet reached the density levels which would cause any impairment to the Lake. He said the current max density was about 400 clams per square meter; however, he continued, that density level was found in August in an area which had zero clams per square meter in May. He reported the Asian Clam Task Force meetings continued and anyone was welcome to attend.

Mr. Westcott asked if there were any emerging technologies which could be utilized and Mr. Wick replied in the negative. Mr. Wick advised that disturbing the clam beds had been found to be extremely effective at reducing the number of clams. He added that chemical applications were also effective but caused the clams to dig down deeper into the substrate. Mr. Dickinson commented the Village of Lake George drew their water out of Lake George from areas which were highly infested and he doubted chemical applications would be a viable option.

Mr. Beaty asked for clarification if the mats were killing the adult clams but not the juveniles and Mr. Wick replied affirmatively. Mr. Wick stated 10 acres of mats had been applied in 2012 and when the water temperature reached approximately 57 degrees, the Asian Clams spawned and each Asian Clam could spawn about 10,000 new clams. He advised that mats were placed 50 feet beyond the known infestation in an attempt to get all of the juvenile clams; however, he added, the following year, there were very few clams found in the treated areas but juvenile clams were found outside of the matted areas.

Mr. Dickinson pointed out there was a pending item pertaining to the \$300,000 earmarked in the 2014 County budget for invasive species, \$150,000 of which had been previously allocated to Lake George. Mr. Merlino reminded the Committee members that at a previous meeting it had been decided that the remaining \$150,000 would be divided between six other lakes in Warren County (Lake Luzerne; Lake Sunnyside; Glen Lake; Loon Lake; Brant Lake; and Schroon Lake). He advised the Lake Luzerne Town Board had requested him to submit a request for \$50,000 for the eradication of milfoil in Lake Luzerne. He said Lake Luzerne also contracted with AIM and they had estimated a cost of \$96,200 in 2014 for eradication efforts. He mentioned the necessary funds were not available in the Lake Luzerne Town Budget.

Mr. Strough stated Lake Sunnyside had already submitted a request for \$15,000 for milfoil eradication efforts and Glen Lake had plans to submit a request, as well. He pointed out that both Lake Sunnyside and Glen Lake had established environmental taxing districts for the purpose of funding eradication efforts. He said he had advised the representatives of both lakes to submit strategies which detailed the fact that the cost of eradication efforts exceeded their financial capacity. He mentioned six lakes had been identified as being in need of financial assistance for eradication efforts and he suggested a point system be developed in order to prioritize the requests. Mr. Dickinson said it would be beneficial to set a time limit for submission of funding requests. He added once the requests were received the Committee could review all of the requests prior to making decisions. He suggested the interested parties be notified that requests would need to be submitted and by which date. Mr. Beaty suggested guidelines should be established prior to the submission of requests, in order to ensure fairness.

Mr. Monroe apprised the Town of Chester had expended about \$140,000 in 2013 on eradication efforts, such as the Renovate Project, matting, hand harvesting and the prevention program. He said it was clear to him that assistance from the State was necessary and he pointed out these were all State owned bodies of water. He agreed that assistance from the County should be based on priorities and he felt there should be a focus on prevention measures. He stated the proposed County-wide mandatory boat inspection/washing law would go a long way towards prevention. He informed of a presentation to be held on Thursday, February 13, 2014 at the Adirondack Park Agency on the treatment used in Chester last year and the Renovate Project.

Mr. Merlino opined it would be unfair to establish criteria for the remaining \$150,000 when Lake George had already been allocated \$150,000. He advised Lake Luzerne had been fighting this issue for several years and had been the first Lake in the area to utilize the Renovate Project. He said it had been very successful; however, he added, without the necessary funding to continue efforts, the milfoil had re-grown in the treated areas.

Mr. Strough informed that Lake Sunnyside had about \$20,000 set aside through their environmental taxing district for milfoil eradication. He explained chemical treatment of the lake would cost approximately \$19,000 and would eradicate about 85% of the milfoil. He continued by saying the remaining 15% of the milfoil would be removed by hand harvesting at a cost of approximately \$15,000. He stated Lake Sunnyside's request for \$15,000 would result in almost 100% eradication and would eliminate the problem for Lake Sunnyside.

Mr. Geraghty commented the Towns of Chester, Horicon and Lake Luzerne had only used their own funds for years towards the eradication of milfoil. He added when they had commenced contributing on a County-wide basis to the efforts in Lake George, the communities around Lake George had not contributed a large amount of funding. He said it was important to look at the history of which Towns had contributed towards eradication efforts for several years. Mr. Strough interjected that the Town of Queensbury had contributed, as well. A brief discussion ensued.

Mr. Simpson commented the Town of Horicon had expended hundreds of thousands of dollars between Brant Lake and Schroon Lake for several years. He advised there were two public access points on the lakes which benefitted the County and he felt public access points should be part of the criteria used to determine funding allocation. Mr. Conover said his understanding had been that there were three municipalities which had committed significant amounts of money for some time and had infrastructure in place. He noted representatives from Lake Sunnyside had attended a previous meeting to request \$15,000. He advised it was necessary for the Lakes to form a strategy and have the infrastructure in place prior to treatment. He stated he believed the remaining

\$150,000 would be divided among the lakes which were prepared to utilize the funds towards their current eradication efforts. He said he liked the idea of reviewing the requests prior to allocating funding and he opined the request from the Town of Lake Luzerne was reasonable.

Martin Auffredou, County Attorney, pointed out that it would be necessary to determine if the County had the authority to commit public funds towards lakes which were not owned publically and did not have public access points.

Mr. Monroe stated it was important to keep in mind what was at stake. He pointed out the assessed value of homes around Lake George was about \$10 billion and the annual sales tax collections were about \$50 million. He questioned the impact to the assessed values and sales tax collections if the water quality of Lake George declined. He pointed out the assessed value of homes around Loon Lake was approximately \$250 million. He noted both Horicon and Chester had homes around Schroon Lake and sales and property tax revenues were tied to the quality of the lake. He opined prevention measures were the only way to stay ahead of the invasive species issue which was why he was concerned with the progress of a mandatory boat inspection and washing program for the entire County. He stated he would be in favor of allocating some funds towards moving forward with the mandatory boat inspection and washing program. Mr. Monroe commented the County needed to make a request to the State for matching funds to that end. He advised the Nature Conservancy was working through the Adirondack Invasive Plant Program on an Adirondack wide plan to be released next month. He apprised the Fund for Lake George had been involved in discussion with the New York State Conservation Council looking for support.

Mr. Conover stated the Lake Stewards Report showed that transient boaters continued to bring in milfoil. He mentioned the lakes in the Towns of Chester, Horicon and Lake Luzerne were primary boating routes and if they eliminated their invasive species then they were protecting Lake George from further invasive species. Mr. Conover commented the Committee should not wait too long to allocate the funding as the programs would need to be put into place in 2014.

Mr. Simpson asked Rich Nawrot, of the East Shore Schroon Lake Association, how many boats had been handled on the Horicon Schroon Lake Launch in 2013 and Mr. Nawrot replied there had been 2,705 watercrafts reported while the Lake Stewards were on duty. Mr. Nawrot stated the majority of the boats were from Lake George, Lake Champlain and other local water bodies. He noted Lake Stewards were not on duty seven days a week; however, he continued, they wanted to expand the Lake Steward Program for seven day coverage, twelve hours per day. A brief discussion ensued.

Mr. Strough agreed with Mr. Monroe that prevention measures were important. He stated each lake needed to develop a strategy to eradicate invasive species. He opined that lakes with plans in place should receive preference over lakes without plans when allocating funds. He commented that Lake Sunnyside had several "unofficial" public access points. He mentioned Lake Sunnyside had a strategy and required an additional \$15,000 in funds in order to implement it and solve the milfoil problem for another three to five years. Mr. Dickinson suggested another Committee meeting be scheduled solely to discuss the allocation of the \$150,000 remaining in the 2014 County Budget for invasive species. He said he would contact Joan Sady, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors, to determine an acceptable date to schedule the meeting. He stated a separate meeting could be scheduled solely to discuss prevention programs.

Mr. Thomas pointed out there was a limited amount of funding and although it would be nice to assist the Towns that had already been contributing towards invasive species control, he felt the amount of funds available would not accomplish much and might be better spent towards prevention

measures. Mr. McDevitt said this was the first time he had heard there might be legality issues with committing public funds towards lakes which were not owned publically and did not have public access points and he felt this was an important issue. He questioned if there was a precedence that lakes, such as Lake Sunnyside, could not be funded with public money. Mr. Strough interjected the Town of Queensbury had expended tax funds in the past to assist with Lake Sunnyside and he reiterated that both Lake Sunnyside and Glen Lake had established environmental taxing districts. Mr. McDevitt stated that it sounded as if Lake Sunnyside had a well documented, well thought out plan and he asked if a legal opinion had ever been obtained to determine whether it was legal to expend tax dollars on a lake which was not used by the public and had no public access points. Mr. Strough countered that the public used Lake Sunnyside, which had many common areas and vacant lands used by the public. He said he felt it was important that each of these lakes focus on a strategy to fix the problem of invasive species. He added he had seen the strategy from Lake Sunnyside and had informed Glen Lake that they needed to develop a similar strategy. He opined a strategy should be demanded of any lake that was requesting funding. Mr. Simpson stated the Town of Horicon had commenced a strategy for both Brant Lake and Schroon Lake and he pointed out that strategy meetings were held four times each year. A brief discussion ensued.

Mr. Westcott opined this process of allocating funding had an opportunity to identify the lakes which did not have a strategy in place. He said communities which had not taken proactive measures could potentially be adding to the invasive species problem. He advised the process could help identify the lakes in need of a strategy and the County could assist in developing a plan. He said a matching funds program might make sense in a situation where the lake had not already developed a plan. Mr. Dickinson reiterated that another Committee meeting would be scheduled for the sole purpose of discussing the allocation of funds.

Mr. Dickinson pointed out there was a pending item concerning the preparation of an outline of questions to assist in the interview process for potential candidates interested in providing consultant services regarding the preparation of SEQRA (State Environmental Quality Review Act) documents and an Environmental Impact Statement relating to mandatory boat inspections and washing for all bodies of water in Warren County. Mr. Conover recommended the Committee interview each of the companies to discuss the work program for the process. He said he was particularly interested in the time line for completion of the program. Mr. Dickinson replied that another meeting could be scheduled to interview each of the companies. He added each Committee member should outline questions that they would like answered during the interviews. Mr. Monroe advised the companies may not be aware of the work being completed by the Nature Conservancy and he said the report would be available next month. Mr. Dickinson asked if there was a need to wait for the report and Mr. Monroe replied in the negative saying the forthcoming report should be pointed out to the companies as it could reduce the necessary work.

Mr. Monroe stated there was a need for an educational program on the County level to ensure that boaters were aware of the impact of doing nothing to prevent the spread of invasive species.

As there was no further business to come before the Invasive Species Sub-Committee, on motion made by Mr. Conover and seconded by Mr. Simpson, Mr. Dickinson adjourned the meeting at 11:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Charlene DiResta, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist