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MONDAY, MAY 2, 2011 / 9:32 AM

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Asian Clam Invasion Appears Limited to Lake George Village

By Anthony F. Hall

Sunday, November 21, 2010 

The colony of Asian clams discovered in Lake George last week appears to be confined to an area between English Brook and Pine Point.

“As far as we can tell, the population is contained within a relatively small area,” said Peter Bauer, executive director of The Fund for Lake George. “More research will follow this week and next to verify this. We’ll also survey other areas that appear to be suitable habitat for the species. But if we’re lucky and maybe this is an isolated infestation that we caught early, then eradication of this invasive species is a strong possibility.”

A team of divers, composed in part of members of Bateaux Below and Aquatic Invasive Management, the firm retained by The Fund for Lake George to harvest milfoil, began surveying the lake’s south basin last week.

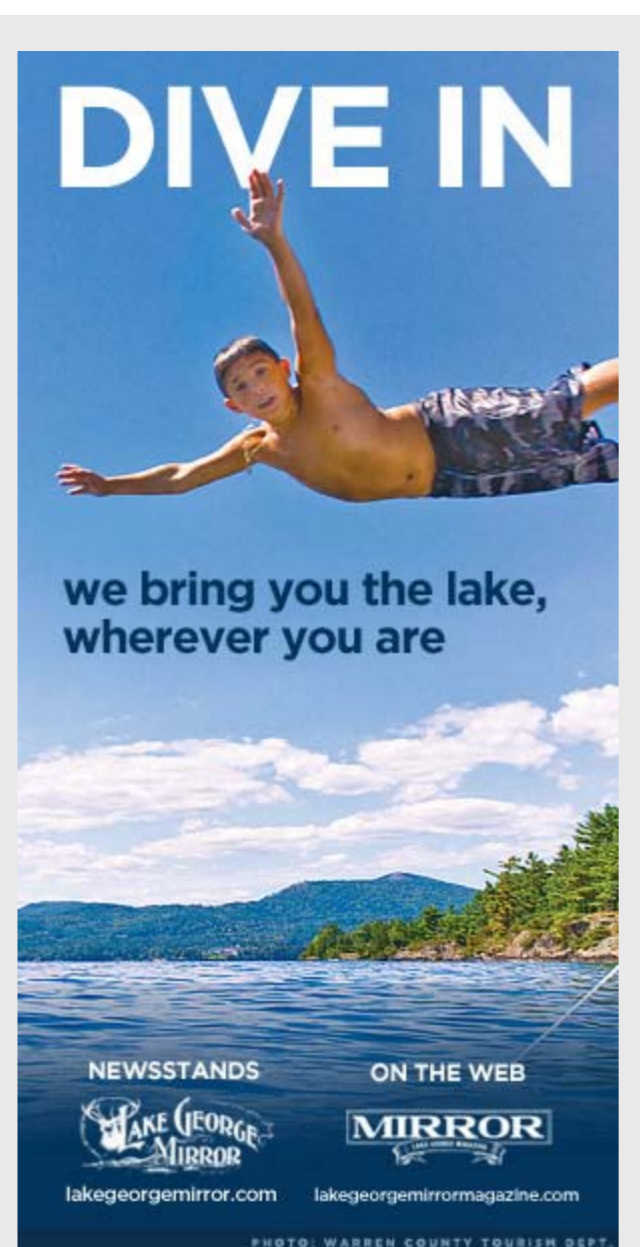
“The preliminary surveys narrowed our area of interest to the area just north of Hall’s marina, the south shore of the lake, and the west shore of the lake from English Brook south,” said Dr. Dan Marelli, the expert retained by the Darrin Fresh Water to co-ordinate a rapid response to the discovery.

“The dive team did not see any Asian clams outside of the area defined by Pine Point to the south and English Brook to the north,” said Marelli.

“We now have to evaluate the best treatment options that can be undertaken,” said Sandra Nierzwicki-Bauer, the executive director of the Darrin Fresh Water Institute, which discovered the clam in Lake George. “We have reached out to the regulatory agencies to assess all our options.”



An Asian Clam, *Corbicula fluminea*.



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of news coverage for Lake George and the Adirondacks

According to Nierzwicki-Bauer, further research is needed before a particular strategy is adopted.

“The policies must be driven by the science,” said Nierzwicki-Bauer.

Installing benthic barriers is, in all likelihood, the most feasible method of eradicating the invasive clam, said Peter Bauer.

“It seems that smothering them with benthic barriers may be our best option,” said Bauer. “The upside to this is that in Lake Tahoe they’ve achieved 99% and better mortality rates through barrier use. The downside is that barriers kill native mollusks as well as plants. The best course of action will be deliberated over the next few weeks with a treatment hopefully undertaken this fall.”

Lake George Village officials will provide whatever assistance is necessary to combat the newly-discovered invasive, said Mayor Bob Blais.

“It will take a concerted partnership effort to address Asian clam in Lake George,” said Meg Modley, Aquatic Invasive Species management coordinator for the Lake Champlain Basin Program. “The Lake Champlain Basin Program will assist management efforts in any way possible as this species affects not only Lake George but the entire Lake Champlain Basin watershed and beyond.”

The invasive fresh water clam species poses a serious threat to native mussels and the Lake George ecosystem, said Sandra Nierzwicki-Bauer, director of DFWI.

“It is now most important that we pull together with other organizations and the public to mount a rapid and effective response to this disturbing discovery,” said Bruce E. Young, chairman of the Lake George Park Commission

The Lake George Association has assumed primary responsibility for promoting public awareness about the Asian clam, said Walt Lender, the Lake George Association’s executive director.

“It is very important to spread the word to area boaters and business owners, as we do not want the clam to spread further within our own lake or to other nearby bodies of water as well,” said Lender.

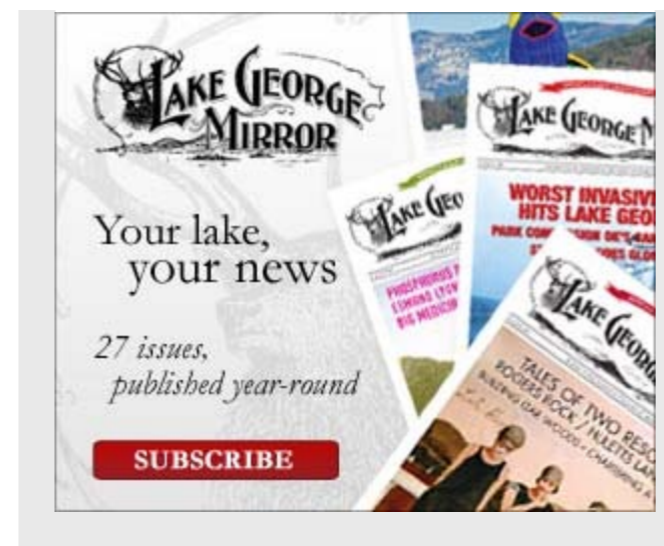
Earlier this week, the LGA began distributing a new public informational flyer about Asian clams.

Designed specifically for Lake George, the flyer will help the general public discern the Asian clam from the native mollusks that live in Lake George and pose no threat, said the LGA’s Emily DeBolt.

“The public is asked to look for the clams in sandy or gravelly bottom areas of Lake George, in shallow, warm water; this is the clam’s preferred habitat,” said DeBolt.

If anyone finds a clam that matches the description of the Asian clam, he should get a sample or take a photograph and call the Lake George Association at 518-668-3558, the FUND for Lake George at 518-668-5913 or the Darrin Fresh Water Institute at 518-644-3541.

Moreover, DeBolt stated, the public can avoid spreading the Asian clam, as well as other invasive species, by following these guidelines whenever leaving a waterway: check and remove any visible mud, plants, fish or organisms from boats, trailers, equipment, clothing, dogs, etc; clean and eliminate water from equipment; be sure to drain all water, including live wells and bait buckets; do not use Asian clams as bait; dry anything that comes in contact with the water; never release plants, fish, or other animals into a waterway unless they come from that waterway; wash your boat and all



The Most of MIRROR MAGAZINE



equipment before entering and when leaving Lake George.

The flyer can be printed from the LGA's website, lakegeorgeassociation.org.

The Fund for Lake George has also published a fact sheet about the Asian clam, which is available on that organization's website, fundforlakegeorge.org.



Tags: Asian Clam, Darren Fresh Water Institute, Fund for Lake George, Lake George, Lake George Association, Lake George Invasives

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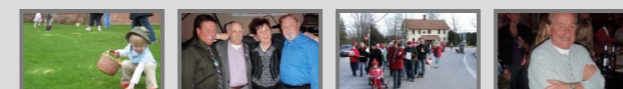
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