

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: INVASIVE SPECIES SUB-COMMITTEE

DATE: MARCH 1, 2013

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS DICKINSON
CONOVER
MONROE
MASON
FRASIER
LOEB

OTHERS PRESENT:

MARTIN AUFFREDOU, COUNTY ATTORNEY
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
SUPERVISORS KENNY
MCDEVITT
SOKOL
TAYLOR
THOMAS

COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:

SUPERVISOR BENTLEY

MICHAEL SWAN, COUNTY TREASURER
WALT LENDER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE LAKE GEORGE ASSOCIATION
EMILY DEBOLT, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, LAKE GEORGE ASSOCIATION
ERIC SIY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE FUND FOR LAKE GEORGE
DAVE WICK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE LAKE GEORGE PARK COMMISSION
JOE STANEK, LAKE GEORGE PARK COMMISSION
JOHN STROUGH, COUNCILMAN, 3RD WARD, TOWN OF QUEENSBURY
ZANDY GABRIELS, TOWN OF BOLTON
DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*
THOM RANDALL, *ADIRONDACK JOURNAL*
ANTHONY HALL, *LAKE GEORGE MIRROR*
CHARLENE DIRESTA, SR. LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST
FOR ALL OTHERS PRESENT PLEASE SEE ATTACHED SIGN-IN SHEET

Mr. Dickinson called the meeting of the Invasive Species Sub-Committee to order at 9:33 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Loeb, 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 packet were distributed to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda packet is on file with the minutes.*

Commencing the agenda review, Mr. Dickinson said the first item on the agenda was a presentation from Walt Lender, Executive Director of the Lake George Association (LGA), regarding outreach efforts. Mr. Lender commented there had been discussion on the need for outreach efforts on Invasive Species prevention at the January 28, 2013 Committee meeting. He reported there had been ongoing education and outreach efforts by groups working together to produce materials and online educational resources. He introduced Emily DeBolt, Director of Education for the LGA.

Ms. DeBolt distributed a rack card and handout to the Committee members; *copies which are on file with the minutes.* In reference to the rack card, Ms. DeBolt commented that several groups had contributed to the development of the material. She said the Lake Stewards distributed the rack cards at the boat launches and it was distributed at locations such as Chambers of Commerce, motels, hotels, marinas, businesses, etc. She mentioned this was one of the main educational pieces printed last year. She noted the logo and information on the rack card and handout tied into the Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers campaign. She advised of a newly created website, www.ProtectLakeGeorge.com, and displayed the website to the Committee members. She pointed out there was a video on the website which detailed how to ensure boats were cleaned, drained and dried and she played the video for the Committee members. Ms. DeBolt said the rack card would

be re-worked to include a QR Code which would direct the public to the website and allow access to the video. In reference to the handout, Ms. DeBolt pointed out that the Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers logo was displayed and a sampling of websites with a direct link to the www.ProtectLakeGeorge.com website was included on the back of the handout. She reviewed specific details of the website including a "What's New" tab which allowed the LGA to post recent activities, such as meetings and documents pertaining to aquatic invasive species. She noted the website allowed the public to enter their email addresses to subscribe to updates on new information.

Mr. Dickinson thanked Mr. Lender and Ms. DeBolt for their presentation. He reported his attendance at an LGA meeting to discuss the removal of Asian Clam mats. He commented the process of placing and removing the mats was very involved. He informed of the projected cost of approximately \$100,000 to remove six acres of mats and store them for future use. He mentioned the LGA meeting had been attended by representatives from the NYS DEC (New York State Department of Environmental Conservation), the APA (Adirondack Park Commission), the LGPC (Lake George Park Commission), the Fund for Lake George, the LGA, and the Darrin Fresh Water Institute. Mr. Dickinson explained in detail the steps taken by the Darrin Fresh Water Institute to obtain scientific data necessary for the eradications efforts.

Mr. Dickinson informed of a meeting Mr. Monroe had scheduled with representatives from the Governor's Office a few weeks prior. He said a few members of the Committee had been in attendance and had made known their intention to cooperate with the State in aquatic invasive species control. He noted funding had not been discussed during the meeting; however, he said, they had challenged the State to assist in funding the purchase of two additional wash stations. He said a total of five wash stations were needed to comply with the pending environmental impact statement and one wash station had already been purchased. He pointed out the Commissioner of the NYS DEC had met with several representatives of the Invasive Species Sub-Committee and had offered to purchase two additional wash stations. Mr. Dickinson noted he had not been in attendance at the meeting with the Commissioner of the NYS DEC and he asked the Supervisors who had attended for further information.

Mr. Monroe stated the meeting had been beneficial and there had been recognition of the local efforts towards aquatic invasive species prevention and control. He said there was a willingness to work cooperatively on some of the initiatives which had been started locally. He apprised there was a sense that there would be greater enforcement of the County's local law by NYS DEC and possibly the LGPC. He said he had discussed the enforcement by NYS DEC with the Region 5 Director the day before and was awaiting further information. Mr. Monroe reiterated the NYS DEC had committed to the purchase of two wash stations. He informed of an agreement to cooperate with voluntary boat washing stations. He stated the NYS DEC had agreed to look into the possibility of voluntary boat washes at the three State boat launches. He said the Commissioner had concerns that efforts in Warren County would set a precedent for the remainder of the State; however, he opined, the precedent would be positive as it involved local government and not-for-profit organizations working together towards aquatic invasive species prevention and control which would reduce the cost burden on the State. He commented the Adirondacks were very different from the remainder of the State when it came to regulations due to the existence of the LGPC and the APA. He pointed out they had presented information that in Warren County there was an assessed value of \$6.5 billion for the towns surrounding Lake George and invasive species could have a dramatic impact on property values and tourism. Mr. Monroe stated he had also pointed out the necessity of fairness to all of the stake holders (ie. property owners, boaters, environmental groups, local governments, etc.). He said it was important that the necessary funding include contributions from all of the stake holders.

Mr. Conover opined the meeting had been helpful and he noted Mr. Mason had attended the meeting, as well. He said the Commissioner appeared to be interested and well versed. He advised the Commissioner had committed assistance in purchasing two additional wash stations and had indicated there would be several more meetings to discuss the issue. Mr. Mason said the meeting had been a cooperative effort and was constructive. He noted the majority of the meeting involved discussions on possible solutions. He indicated that endorsements were received from various groups and towns.

Dave Wick, Executive Director of the Lake George Park Commission, informed of the receipt of an additional \$50,000 in funding and said there were four main goals for the money. He stated \$10,000 would be allocated towards educational outreach, \$20,000 would be used towards an increased marine patrol presence with the remaining \$20,000 being used towards enhancing the LGA Boat Steward Program and towards the purchase of two boat washes. Mr. Monroe noted he believed the discussion on enforcement had uncovered that the NYS DEC and LGPC were willing to help enforce the County's local law. Mr. Wick stated the LGPC had discussed their ability to enforce the local law with their attorney. He explained the marine patrol operated exclusively on the Lake and would not be able to become involved in transport issues; however, he added, they were expanding out to the launch points.

Mr. Conover asked if Joe Stanek, of the Lake George Park Commission, was prepared to discuss aquatic invasive species issues throughout the Country. Mr. Stanek distributed a handout to the Committee members; *a copy of the handout is on file with the minutes*. Mr. Stanek explained the handout reflected a map of the United States and detailed locations which had been affected by Zebra Mussels, Quagga Mussels or both species. He said the left side of the handout contained a list of which States had enacted mandatory inspections and which States only had education outreach programs. He pointed out a blue dotted line on the map and noted all of the States to the west of the line had mandatory inspections. He commented that Lake Tahoe in Nevada had five wash stations at five sites to ensure inspections and Lake Powell in Utah had five stations, as well. He stated that Minnesota was east of the dotted line but had enacted mandatory inspections on critical lakes which did or did not have a current invasive species present. He noted they had a seal system in place wherein a red seal represented that a vessel was recently in a lake with known invasive species and a green seal represented recent activity in a lake with no known invasive species. He said this system allowed boats with a green seal to bypass the mandatory inspection process upon entering a lake. He pointed out the States to the east which did not have mandatory inspections had the highest concentration of Zebra and Quagga Mussels. He said New York State had approximately 36 water bodies which currently contained either Quagga Mussels or Zebra Mussels or both species.

Mr. Monroe asked about the two locations on the map which indicated they had eradicated Zebra Mussels; the Potomac River in Virginia and the Platte River in Nebraska. He inquired about the process used in eradication in these areas and Mr. Stanek replied mostly hand harvesting but in some cases in small bodies of water there was a chemical which could be used. Mr. Stanek added chemical eradication was not an option for large bodies of water, such as Lake George. A brief discussion ensued.

Mr. Loeb asked Mr. Wick a four part question pertaining to Asian Clam efforts, as follows:

1. when would the mats be removed;
2. what could the LGPC find in the survey once the mats were removed;
3. what were the possible outcomes of those findings; and
4. what steps would be taken to deal with the outcomes.

Mr. Wick responded the majority of the mats would be removed in May. He said the only funding generated for the 2013 program so far was \$200,000 committed by the Governor's Office and the remaining \$60,000 from the Village of Lake George. He commented approximately \$100,000 was necessary for the removal and storage of the mats and \$100,000 was necessary for scientific research. He added that left \$60,000 towards additional efforts on the eradication of the Asian Clams. He stated the hope was that there would be a 100% kill rate for all of the mats. He noted the efforts put forth in 2012 had been greater than previous years and the treatment time frame of approximately 45 days had also been an increase over previous efforts. Mr. Wick commented that a 100% kill rate would give the LGPC the political support to continue their efforts. He said if a 100% kill rate was not achieved then discussions would need to take place concerning the priorities of the efforts and the frequency of treatments. A brief discussion ensued.

Mr. Loeb inquired about Pending Item No. 1 pertaining to possibly adding a line item to the County budget for Invasive Species Control. Mr. Dickinson replied this item was still under discussion as the funding would be multifaceted. Mr. Dickinson commented several Committee members had discussed this topic with other Supervisors. He said he felt strongly that a line item would be added to the budget in the future. Mr. Mason reported he had emailed all of the Town Supervisors inquiring about the amount of funding each Town had committed to invasive species efforts over the past five years. He said he would report his findings to the Committee once he had received responses from all of the Towns. Mr. Monroe pointed out this issue did not only pertain to Lake George, it pertained to all bodies of water in Warren County. He said the Town of Chester had spent about \$300,000 from 2005 to present. Mr. Dickinson commented that Lake George was mentioned often but he pointed out the program was County wide. Mr. Monroe informed of a decision by the Hamilton County Supreme Court which opened water bodies on private land to the public. He added the areas had been well protected by the owners in the past but would now be open to the public.

Pertaining to Pending Item No. 2 concerning the drafting of a local law requiring mandatory boat inspections and/or decontaminations, Mr. Dickinson stated this item would be discussed in detail in the Legislative & Rules Committee meeting immediately following this meeting.

As there was no further business to come before the Invasive Species Sub-Committee, on motion made by Mr. Loeb and seconded by Mr. Conover, Mr. Dickinson adjourned the meeting at 10:28 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Charlene DiResta, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist