

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: INVASIVE SPECIES SUB-COMMITTEE

DATE: OCTOBER 8, 2014

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS DICKINSON
CONOVER
MONROE
FRASIER
BEATY
SIMPSON
STROUGH

OTHERS PRESENT:

KEVIN B. GERAGHTY, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
MARTIN AUFFREDOU, COUNTY ATTORNEY
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
FRANK E. THOMAS, BUDGET OFFICER
SUPERVISORS BROCK
MERLINO
SEEBER
TAYLOR
DAVE WICK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE LAKE GEORGE PARK COMMISSION
DAVID DECKER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE LAKE GEORGE WATERSHED
COALITION
ED GRIESMER, LOON LAKE ASSOCIATION/ADIRONDACK LAKES ALLIANCE
JANE SMITH, EAST SHORE SCHROON LAKE ASSOCIATION/ADIRONDACK
LAKES ALLIANCE
DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*
CHARLENE DiRESTA, SR. LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Mr. Dickinson called the Invasive Species Sub-Committee meeting of the to order at 10:32 a.m.

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

Mr. Dickinson announced there was no formal agenda for this meeting, the purpose of which was to receive an update on the Boat Inspection/Washing Program from Dave Wick, Executive Director of the Lake George Park Commission (LGPC). Prior to the update, Mr. Dickinson continued, the Committee would hear from a guest speaker who was in attendance at the request of Mr. Monroe. Mr. Monroe introduced Ed Griesmer, President of the Loon Lake Association (LLA)/Adirondack Lakes Alliance (ALA), and he informed the ALA was an Adirondack-wide lake association which had been founded by Mr. Griesmer and Jane Smith, President of the East Shore Schroon Lakes Association (ESSLA). Mr. Monroe advised it would be beneficial for the Committee members to be informed of the activities of the ALA because he felt the group would be influential and would build on some of the successes experienced on Lake George.

Mr. Griesmer said the ALA had actually been formed in 2008 as a more regional lake association. He commented that this past summer some of the ALA members had discussed the fact that lake associations had not been included in many of the invasive species efforts. He added lake associations were typically under represented with the groups that made decisions regarding this very urgent situation which existed in the Adirondacks. He mentioned the survival of many of the lakes in the Adirondacks from the threat of invasive species was dependent upon lake associations because they consisted of the volunteers who were dealing directly with the invasive species in the water as divers or scouts and were the people who developed the lake management programs. Mr. Griesmer explained the ALA had decided to expand their regional efforts to advocate for the needs of the waterbodies in the Adirondacks. He stated the ALA had five regions within the Adirondack Park with two Regional Directors from each region, as well as an Executive Committee. He continued by saying the Executive Committee of the ALA met and partnered with other groups dealing with

the same invasive species issue in the Adirondacks. He stated the ALA hoped to lend a voice in terms of explaining the needs of the lakes and what the lake associations were dealing with and to be an active partner to other groups in the Adirondacks dealing with the issue. He mentioned the ALA was a collective group that shared information and best practices, as well as advocated the needs of lakes in the Adirondacks. He commented that some of the Supervisors had been involved with the ALA in an advisory capacity which was welcomed. He expressed the ALA was learning from other groups, such as the LGPC through their efforts with the Boat Inspection/Washing Program.

Mr. Dickinson acknowledged Ms. Smith and pointed out she had attended several Invasive Species Sub-Committee Meetings. He said he was excited about the ALA and had attended some of their meetings. He commented the ALA was a real asset to the Adirondack Park and to New York State and he opined lake associations were volatile and carried great strength. He said the County was looking forward to coordinating some efforts with the ALA in order to extend invasive species prevention activities throughout Warren County, the Adirondack Park and New York State.

Mr. Monroe informed he had worked with Mr. Griesmer for several years on Loon Lake and he stated the LLA had led the charge and taken on most of the burden in connection with invasive species. He added that Ms. Smith and the ESSLA had accomplished the same in connection with Schroon Lake. He said he appreciated the efforts of the lake associations and he felt the ALA would be an important voice when dealing with the State in terms of pointing out the need for financial assistance. He commented lake associations could not manage the problem of invasive species on their own. He mentioned the Towns were supplying some financial assistance but the introduction of additional invasive species into the waterbodies would place the situation beyond the abilities of the Towns to help without the financial assistance of the State and Federal Governments.

Mr. Wick distributed a handout detailing the progress of the Boat Inspection/Washing Program to the Committee members; *a copy of the handout is on file with the minutes*. Mr. Wick stated one of the goals of the LGPC was to be as open as possible with the information derived from the Boat Inspection/Washing Program which was nearing the end of its first year. He advised the Program had been a success and had been met with very positive responses from the boaters, marinas and the general public. He credited the success to the tremendous amount of partnering in connection with the project and he commented that Warren County had been the largest financial partner besides New York State. He opined the Program would not have been possible without the support and financial assistance offered by Warren County.

Mr. Wick informed there had been approximately 19,000 boaters year-to-date utilizing the Inspection Sites and approximately 10,000 boats had been inspected prior to entering Lake George. He noted a boat inspection took approximately 5 to 7 minutes to complete. He said 11% to 12% of the boats had required decontaminations because they did not meet the cleaned, drained and dried standard. He reported 1% to 1.5% of the boats had contained visible invasive species which were documented and removed prior to decontamination and he pointed out there was no charge for the Boat Inspection/Washing Program. He said the Inspection Sites had been well staffed and the only criticism of the Program had been that Inspectors spent a lot of time waiting for boats to inspect or wash. He commented the over staffing had been done on purpose in order to ensure proper coverage and now that the anticipated number of boats was known the Inspection Sites could be properly staffed.

Mr. Wick reported the 2014 budget for the Boat Inspection/Washing Program had been \$700,000 and the actual expenditures would be approximately \$600,000, although he acknowledged the Program would continue until December 1st and each site would be manned by a couple of

Inspectors until that date for safety purposes. He stated the Rogers Rock and Huletts Landing Inspection Sites would close when the State closed those public areas for the year. Mr. Wick said he would ask Chairman Geraghty about the possibility of attending a Board Meeting in November, December or January to review the all of the information derived from the Boat Inspection/Washing Program in more detail with the full Board of Supervisors.

Referring to the handout, Mr. Wick stated the table on the back of the document detailed information pertaining to how many boats visited each Inspection Site and required decontamination. He pointed out the columns on the right hand side of the table presented year-to-date totals for all 6 sites. He stated all the information had been tracked and was currently being analyzed by LGPC staff members. He explained once all of the information was analyzed then meetings would be scheduled to relay the information and success of the Program with: Warren County; the marinas; Governor Cuomo's Office; the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC); and individual Towns. One of the goals, he continued, was to make sure everyone was informed of the success of the Program to allow them to decide whether or not they wanted to continue to support it. He reminded the Committee members this was a two-year pilot program which terminated on December 31, 2015 but the LGPC would like to continue the Program on a long term basis. He stated the LGPC had identified funding for the first two years of the Program but had not formed a long term funding plan.

In summary, Mr. Wick stated the Boat Inspection/Washing Program had a successful first year and a lot of time was expended on outreach efforts and working with the public. He advised Inspectors had received feedback from boaters who had indicated the invasive species issue was important enough to take five minutes of their time in order to have their boats inspected.

Mr. Beaty pointed out the year-to-date total of boats exiting Lake George was listed as 5,287 and the number of decontaminations for same was listed as 21 and he asked if these numbers were correct. Mr. Wick had replied affirmatively and explained these boaters had requested decontaminations because they planned to launch their boats in other waterbodies. He stated the LGPC was always happy to offer decontaminations in these circumstances to ensure the invasive species present in Lake George were not introduced to other waterbodies. He added decontaminations for boats exiting Lake George were not completed on a regular basis but were sometimes requested and if possible were completed. Mr. Dickinson apprised that boats exiting Lake George could potentially contain up to five invasive species.

In answer to a question posed by Chairman Geraghty, Mr. Wick responded the LGPC had gone out of their way to accommodate fishing tournaments on Lake George including staffing the Inspection Sites prior to the regular hours of operation. He said the LGPC had worked with the Warren County Conservation Council and the Lake George Fishing Alliance to ensure the fishing industry in Lake George was not negatively impacted by the Boat Inspection/Washing Program. He commented the inspections commenced at 6:00 a.m. at the Rogers Rock Inspection Site to accommodate the early morning fishermen.

Mr. Monroe advised that last summer he had invited the President of the New York State Conservation Council to attend a meeting with the SAVE (Stop Aquatic inVasives from Entering) Lake George group to alleviate concerns and misconceptions that there would be a \$40 fee associated with the Boat Inspection/Washing Program. He added once the misconceptions were eliminated the New York State Conservation Council had revoked their opposition to the Program. Mr. Monroe informed that he and Eric Siy, Executive Director of the Fund for Lake George (FLG), had recently attended the New York State Conservation Council's Annual Convention in Utica, New York to give

a presentation on the Program which was well received. He said the Council members were supportive of the efforts being completed on Lake George and were pleased to hear about the upcoming fishing tournament being planned by Robert Blais, Mayor of the Village of Lake George. Mr. Monroe apprised he had invited some of the representatives from the New York State Conservation Council to a meeting to discuss a broader Adirondack strategy and he noted the meeting had also been attended by sportsmen and representatives from the Conservation Fund Advisory Board; the Adirondack Land Owners Association; the ALA; the ESSLA; and the FLG, as well as some Warren County Supervisors; and the Chairman of the Hamilton County Board of Supervisors. Mr. Monroe opined the efforts towards protecting Lake George were great but more needed to be completed to protect the other waterbodies in the Adirondack Region. Other than the Lake George environmental groups, he continued, most of the burden was being carried by the individual Towns and lake associations. He informed there would be a follow up meeting with the Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program (APIPP) in December which would involve a broader group of organizations/agencies.

Mr. Brock asked the types of visible invasive species found on the boats inspected by the Program and Mr. Wick commented there were 149 Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) found which he listed, as follows: 101 Eurasian Watermilfoil; 23 Zebra Mussels; 13 Curly-Leaf Pondweed; 2 Asian Clams; 8 Water Chestnuts; and 2 snails. Mr. Wick stated the lakes from which these AIS had originated were tracked and most of the Zebra Mussels had originated in Saratoga Lake. He explained one of the first questions asked by the Inspectors was the last waterbody the boat had been launched and there were 542 individual waterbodies listed. He stated many of those waterbodies contained AIS which were not currently present in Lake George. He mentioned the majority of the boaters were very open about providing information and had accepted the Program as a means of protecting Lake George. Mr. Brock asked if the waterbodies with known AIS were doing anything towards eradication and prevention. Mr. Wick informed that a delegation which included two State Senators and the Director of Kendall Wood Lake Association and Lake Authority to the LGPC two weeks prior to engage in a two-hour discussion on the Lake George Boat Inspection/Washing Program. Mr. Wick said they were working hard to get a prevention program into place for Kendall Wood Lake which had five known AIS.

Mr. Simpson advised he had heard several comments from different conservation groups which were supportive of the Boat Inspection/Washing Program and one of the comments he heard often questioned what efforts would be done for the other waterbodies. Mr. Wick informed the APIPP was scheduling a meeting to be held in December and there were other organizations looking at regional strategies.

Mr. Dickinson asked if there were any changes planned for the 2015 Boat Inspection/Washing Program and Mr. Wick responded the largest change would be in the staffing levels. Mr. Wick noted the weekly staffing would be evaluated based on the data obtained this year and he anticipated a savings of \$50,000 to \$100,000 without impacting the level service. He said the Program would commence on April 15, 2015 as opposed to the May 15th starting date for 2014 and he added the Frozen Boats Program would not be conducted in 2015. Mr. Beaty asked if the budget of \$700,000 was anticipated to be decreased and Mr. Wick replied affirmatively.

Mr. Conover asked if the location of the Lake George Inspection Site at the Lake George Transfer Station was favorable and Mr. Wick replied affirmatively and pointed out the majority of the decontaminations for 2014 had taken place at this location. Mr. Wick commented the Mossy Point Inspection Site experienced a large number of return visitors who were mostly fishermen. A brief discussion ensued.

Mr. Monroe stated the handout contained a lot of important information including the number of visible AIS detected; however, he asked if there was any information available pertaining to microscopic AIS. He asked if the possibility of taking water samples from the boats had been considered in order to track the microscopic AIS. Mr. Wick responded that some water samples had been collected from the bilge plugs and motors of boats and had been sent to Darrin Freshwater Institute to be analyzed. He added this process was not easy and had only been completed a few times with no microscopic AIS being detected. He advised more water samples would be collected next year but currently the LGPC was relying on scientific information and the knowledge of which AIS were identified in other waterbodies.

According to the handout, Mr. Monroe said, there did not appear to be a lot of visitors to the Huletts Landing Inspection Site and he suggested the location be moved out to the traffic corridor which would benefit other waterbodies. Mr. Wick explained the Huletts Landing Inspection Site was located at the only boat launch on the east side of Lake George. He agreed there had only been 460 boats inspected at this site but opined the presence of the Huletts Landing Inspection Site meant these boaters did not have to travel to the Rogers Rock Inspection Site in order to launch. Mr. Wick added there was very little cost involved with the Huletts Landing Inspection Site because the existing staff were reimbursed for their time at \$15 per hour. A brief discussion ensued.

Mr. Monroe reported the study on the economic impact of AIS throughout the Adirondack Region would soon be available. He informed the APIPP had received grant funding for the completion of the study and he and Mr. Conover had been interviewed as part of the process. He said he had seen a draft version of the study and the largest economic impact was that property values were estimated to have suffered a \$14 billion impact which he considered a low estimate. He advised this study would create a compelling case that the State and Federal Governments needed to take measures to help the municipalities and lake associations which were trying to deal with the invasive species issue.

As there was no further business to come before the Invasive Species Sub-Committee, on motion made by Mr. Simpson and seconded by Mr. Strough, Mr. Dickinson adjourned the meeting at 11:05 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Charlene DiResta, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist