

Join CATS and Forage for Early Mushrooms July 20th

Ari Rockland-Miller returns to lead this popular event. Mushrooms follow a time table, so get on board. There is a \$20 fee. Details at: ChamplainAreaTrails.com or call 518.962.2287



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HOMES EVERY WEEK!**

THE

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EDITION

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Mapping Schroon Lake bottom

Grant will help
Schroon Lake
Association get
handle on aquatic
invasives

by Tim Rowland
STAFF WRITER

SCHROON LAKE | Like the ivy at Wrigley Field, Eurasian watermilfoil dies back in the winter then springs to life with vengeance come spring. With a heavy central stem and short whorls of soft, bristle-like leaves, it somewhat resembles a green bottle washer whose strands can grow up to 20 feet in length.

It tolerates colder water, so it springs to life earlier in the spring than native plants and races toward the water's surface where it forms a dense mat on the surface that prevents needed sunlight from filtering down to other aquatic species. It fouls boat propellers, is yucky if not impossible to swim in and is undesirable to game fish and other organisms that make up a healthy Adirondack lake ecology.

Mapping Cont. on pg 3



Mossy Point is one of two boat launches on northern Lake George that is not locked down after hours

Ti joins list of communities supporting tighter control of boat launches

By Tim Rowland
STAFF WRITER

TICONDEROGA | Ticonderoga has joined a list of towns calling for after-hours lockdowns of two northern Lake George boat launch

es to prevent the spread of invasive species.

The board signed a memorandum of understanding at its last monthly meeting "to work in good faith to create an effective program to prevent the introduction of aquatic invasive species in Lake George."

Supervisor Joe Giordana said most jurisdictions around the lake have signed the memorandum, which describes a "serious and urgent threat" by invasives to the health of Lake George, which is considered a model in the fight against invasives. The same jurisdictions voted in 2013 in favor of stricter rules to prevent invasives, which can damage fisheries, native ecology and tourism.

Although they specify them specifically south of Ticonderoga, Mossy Point boat launches have closed since the launches do, in Lake George Beach in Lake George.

Staff members inspect incoming boats that do not have a tag of a species that the craft

» **Mapping** *Cont. from pg. 1*

The Schroon Lake Association has aggressively fought invasive species, and its members, in conjunction with the Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program, will spend the summer criss-crossing the 9-mile-long water body, mapping the bottom to document vegetation and water depth. Milfoil will be of interest, as will the lake bottom itself, which is changing and becoming higher in places because of sediment deposits brought in by runoff from the Schroon River.

The project is made possible in part by a \$5,000 grant from the Cloudsplitter Foundation of Saranac Lake.

"Cloudsplitter has been very helpful in aiding many Schroon Lake community programs. We are extremely grateful for their help," the Schroon Lake Association said in a release. Cloudsplitter's mission is to improve the future for the flora, fauna, communities and people of the Adirondacks.

Glen Repko, a member of the Schroon Lake Association, said the project will map the bottom 30 feet at a swath using a transducer that reads physical features and converts the information into electronic signals. The technology is currently used on 20 Adirondack lakes.

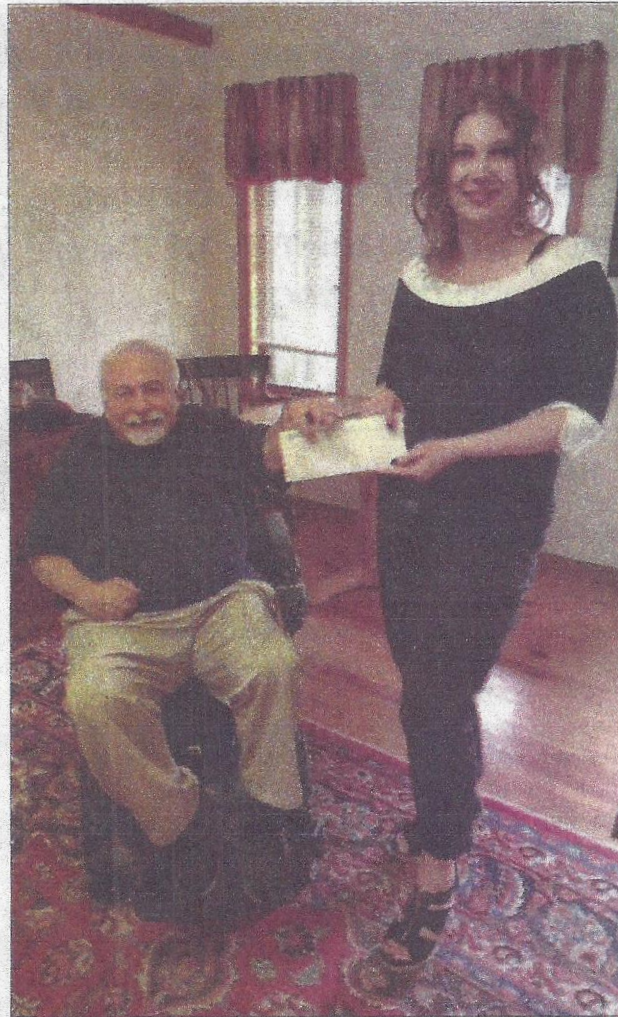
The map will give the association a baseline so it can track changes in the lake bed in the future. Divers ply the waters each year to pull out aquatic invasives, which are a constant concern.

Milfoil "clogs the water and typically can kill a lake over a period of time," Repko said.

The depth of the lake is a concern as well because deeper waters are essential for the survival of cold water fish such as lake trout and Atlantic salmon. But upstream sediment runoff has been making the lake more shallow, Repko said, with depths in places decreasing from 150 feet to 145 feet.

The Schroon Lake Association has been particularly aggressive in fighting invasives and ensuring the water quality, which is noteworthy for its cleanliness.

"You can drink the water right off Schroon Lake," Repko said. ■



Chenelle Palyswiat, executive director of the Cloudsplitter Foundation, presents a \$5,000 check to Mark Granger, president of the Schroon Lake Association. *Photo provided*

Sisters 2, mussels 0

Abby and Molly Wisser show invasives program works

By Tim Rowland
STAFF WRITER

SCHROON LAKE | Abigail and Molly Wisser, now just out of college, wanted summer jobs where they would be able to give something back to the Schroon Lake community that they love. They had no idea how meaningful a contribution that would be.

In one of the more graphic examples of the state invasive species program at its best, the two sisters, within one year of each other almost to the day, may have saved Schroon Lake from an infestation of zebra mussels. Had the mussels, which had attached themselves to the motor housing of trailered boats, gotten into the lake, it could have caused millions of dollars in ecological and physical damage and eradication costs.

"I'm just so proud of both of them," said Mark Granger, president of the Schroon Lake Association. "These two women are lifesavers."

Boat inspection and washing stations have become familiar sites at many Adirondack boat launches. Department of Environmental Conservation regulations prohibit the launching of undrained boats, or boats and

trailers with visible plant or animal material attached to them, at any DEC boat launch.

The inspections and, if needed, washings, do not take long, but some boaters have considered them an inconvenience — although not as much as they used to.

"Fewer and fewer people yell at me every year," Molly said. "As time has gone by, people become more understanding, and some are so kind."

Especially when they know the inspections have done their job. It was a little over a year ago when a boater pulled up who was unfamiliar with the process. Abby said she had to check it out, but not to worry because boats were usually clean. She performed the visual inspection, then began running her hand around the base of the engine housing — and then froze. "I said 'Oh my God,' and he said, 'What? What?'"

Abby sent the boater to the washing station, where her sister blasted off the mussels with pressured water heated to 140 degrees.

Earlier this summer it was Molly's turn. With a trained eye, she spotted mussels in the boat's propeller housing. "You just have to make sure you're thorough and do your job," she said.

Staffing the inspection and washing stations are not always this exciting. On many days, boats are few and far between. Molly said she's had time to read a number of books, including "War and Peace."



Molly and Abby Wisser pose with boat-washing equipment that keeps endangered species at bay.

Photo by Tim Rowland

Neither sister foresees a career as a conservationist; Abby is an English major, Molly majored in early childhood education. But safeguarding the lake is more than ecological pursuit, there are social issues as well, Abby said, because it's interesting seeing how people and communities interact with nature.

"A lot of us just love the town and the beauty of it, and we want to give something back," she said.

Granger said the women's attitudes toward the lake and community are encouraging, as older conservationists look to turn their responsibilities to younger generations. Events of the past year also show that the state's invasive species program works, and is in good hands.

"If an \$80,000 program can stop a \$2 million problem, we'll take it," he said. ■