

Invasive Species Annual Report to the Town of Caroga

December 11, 2024

The 2024 Invasive Specie Program was highlighted by our Pilot Program of using the Herbicide, ProcellaCOR, as a means to help bring our 30 plus year battle with the Aquatic Invasive Species, Eurasian Milfoil under better control and move towards possible eradication.

The Pilot Program focused in the area of the North Shore of West Caroga adjacent to Vrooman Rd and in East Caroga Lake the bay at the Campsite Boat launch, the bay off Avery road to include Kowalski Point and the Channel (Marina location) along with the adjacent area up to the beginning of the outlet stream.

The procellaCOR was applied June 17th and monitored for residual concentrations of the herbicide over the next 4 days by obtaining water samples submitted for laboratory analysis as well as observation of possible negative effects on Native aquatic plants, fish, and water appearance.

Within 4 days no ProcellaCOR could be detected.

A requirement in the APA permit is a Post herbicide survey, and on August 5th, Ready Scout, the ProcellaCOR applicator, returned to complete a survey. We also had an Independent contractor, Adirondack Research, come at the end of August for a 2nd survey and both showed the removal of Eurasian Milfoil in all the Pilot areas was extremely successful with no signs of any negative effects on native aquatic plants or fish.

The complete results of these surveys are attached have been submitted to the APA and will be posted on the Town Website.

At this point in the Pilot program, I am cautiously optimistic we are on the correct path that the use of this herbicide has the potential to effectively bring the lakes back to being almost completely free of Eurasian Milfoil within the next several years.

I use the term Cautiously optimistic for several reasons.

1. While the intent was to stay within the Pilot areas by using the dam to control the water current and an early morning application on a calm day, the wind and water current did result in some herbicide carryover outside of the Pilot areas. Looking back this was a benefit since it removed more Milfoil than we expected.

The downside is these areas will probably see a regrowth in 2025 but not as heavy as in previous years.

2. The Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program (APIPP), Brian Green, Director and Adirondack Research, Ezra Schwartzburg, Director, both collect Invasive Species data within the Adirondack Park and adjacent locations. Both are reporting a reduced amount of Milfoil growth throughout the Adirondacks, so some of our success may be attributed to the overall low growth noticed this year.

3. While the water vessel washing legislation requiring all boats to be cleaned before launching has made a positive impact on the spread of Milfoil, the documentation of the washing can be self-disclosing, meaning they can sign the form without it being washed. Solutions to enforcement are being looked into but we can therefore expect we will still have boats bring Milfoil to our lakes.

Where does this leave us for 2025 and beyond ??

Recommendations//possible options

1. The Diver Assisted Harvesting Program (DASH) ??
For 2025 should remain as 2024 with one morning shift of 4 divers and 1 tender. Total DASH harvest for 2024 was 420 bushels (an increase of 150 from my September report where I had not included West Caroga) that we can expect to have in 2025 if we opt not to treat Bennet's Bay plus any regrowth from untreated areas. The diffusion effect on West Caroga Lake is unknown and there has been a steady increase along E. Shore Rd.
2. We need to put more emphasis on monitoring for Milfoil to achieve Early Detection with rapid response for removal in both lakes. This will require an upgrade of our monitoring equipment and to replace the Lake Management Boat Motor.
3. Offer Assistance to Pecks Lake with their Variable Leaf Milfoil which cannot be treated with ProcettaCOR which is specific to Eurasian Milfoil in our lakes.
4. Fund a steward at the Marina
5. Invest attention to the other lakes within the town of Caroga to prevent infestation of Aquatic Invasive Species.

Given the success of our Pilot program and support from the Town in our efforts, looking forward to the 2025 season. Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions related to this report, the Invasive Species program or the surveys.

Respectfully submitted

Walter Hogan

Director Invasive Species Program

