

Current Projects

Milfoil Removal

Project Description

The plan consists of a multiphase approach to combat milfoil, with the intent of a mass matting and removal by divers, leading to a low infestation level, which is affordable to maintain on an ongoing basis in the fourth and subsequent years. The plan calls for an intensive three year effort to aggressively harvest all 44.3 miles of shoreline, both lake and islands, regardless of ownership. The lake will be completely harvested by a team of 20 divers in each of the first three years (2004-2006), returning in the fourth and subsequent years to a maintenance level effort. In year two, Lower Fish Creek Pond was added to the project. The following actions were fundamental to the development of the plan:



1. Benchmarked successful removal programs from other Adirondack Lakes.
2. Established scientific justification for all elements of the plan.
3. Developed a working partnership with the Watershed Institute at Paul Smith's College, the Darrin Fresh Water Institute, Adirondack Park Agency, New York State Department of Conservation, Adirondack Council, Residents Committee to Protect the Adirondacks, and the Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program.
4. Used the lead diver of the past three years – Tim LaDue, and Michael Martin of Cedar Eden Environmental as project consultants.

Overall management and implementation is under the direction of the Upper Saranac Lake Foundation Milfoil Task Group, consisting of Curt Stiles, Chairman, Charlie Ritchie, Tom Chipperfield, Jim Crane and Peter Woll, with single person management accountability for day to day activity residing with the Dive Team Crew Chief – Tim LaDue. The Adirondack Watershed Institute of Paul Smith's College will provide day to day management support and will document and conduct scientific analysis on the progress of the project. Progress content and data from the most recent [presentation to the Adirondack Park Agency can be found here](#).

Daily and monthly performance data will be maintained, analyzed, and published on this website. Progress reports are given at the July and August USLA Meetings and have been presented periodically to the Adirondack Park Agency.

Milfoil Mapping

Historically, Milfoil Mapping has been a joint effort between The Adirondack Watershed Institute of Paul Smith's College and Michael Martin – USL Lake Manager and President of Cedar Eden Environmental. Updated maps and/or links to accurate maps will appear in this section.

- [2002 – Milfoil Map of Upper Saranac Lake](#)
- [2003 – Milfoil Map of Upper Saranac Lake](#)
- [2004 – Milfoil Map of Upper Saranac Lake](#)
- [2005 - Milfoil Map of Upper Saranac Lake](#)
- [2006 - Upper Saranac Lake Progress to date](#)

[2005 - Lower Fish Creek Pond](#)
[2006 - Lower Fish Creek Pond progress to date](#)

[Potential Growth of Milfoil if left unchecked or unharvested](#)

Water Quality Monitoring and Testing

Water Quality monitoring and testing historically has been conducted by Michael Martin (Certified Lake Manager and President of Cedar Eden Environmental) under the direction of the Environmental Committee of the Upper Saranac Lake Association. Through 2005 an annual report was published and results presented each summer at the two USLA membership meetings. These reports can be found on the USLA website or in the Archive Section of this website.

Beginning in 2006 Upper Saranac Lake is joining the CSLAP (Citizens Statewide Lake Assessment Program) program run jointly by the DEC and NYSFOLA (New York State Federation of Lake Associations). Water Quality volunteers will take samples at the two deep water sites on the lake and five tributary and outlet stations. Data will be reported and analyzed and combined with statewide data sets for accurate comparisons with the other 1200+ lakes in New York State which are part of this program. For more information on volunteer opportunities or questions on water quality, contact Curt Stiles - 518-359-7053.

Our Water Quality Program will evolve over the next year, maintaining the rigorous data collection and analysis processes established previously. As this program develops, more information will be displayed here and by link from the Home Page.

Septic Project

As a lake community, we have been discussing septic system impacts for years. The Upper Saranac Lake Foundation believes it is now time to take action to ensure our Lake is protected from all controllable sources of pollution. While all septic systems are important, our initial efforts will be focused on Large Septic Systems, those with New York State SPDES permits. New York State requires a SPDES permit for septic systems discharging 1,000 gallons per day or more to groundwater, for surface discharges of any kind or systems that cross property lines. The USLF is implementing a plan to address septic problems on the Lake. Extensive discussions have been held with the DEC in Ray Brook concerning the 16 SPDES Permits that exist within the Upper Saranac Lake watershed. . Additionally, there are locations that currently do not have SPDES permits that should. The DEC has agreed to pursue enforcement action, where and when necessary, to bring all systems into compliance.

What can you do to monitor your septic system, particularly if it is within 100 feet of the Lake? 1) Have your system pumped at least every two years. 2) Have the system inspected by a licensed engineer or waste hauler. 3) Document where the various parts of your system are located. 4) Seriously consider replacing steel tanks that are older than 25 years. 5) Consider adding an alternative system: composting, chemical or incinerating toilets. Local septic laws and regulations are generally out of date and are no longer sufficient to protect us from ourselves – particularly from nutrients, not necessarily bacteria. Minimal compliance, when there are better solutions with greater setbacks and/or increased capacity, should not be acceptable. We are all responsible for a cleaner lake. When it is time for repair, consider the long term, not the short.

More will be posted on this subject and discussed at upcoming Lake Association meetings.