

Lake Luzerne residents battle invasive marine plant

Updated: 8/27/2007 8:59 PM

By: Jessica Mokhiber

LAKE LUZERNE, N.Y. - Lake Luzerne Councilman Robert Shiel loves his lake. He said, "You can see the beauty of the Lake. Without that, Lake Luzerne wouldn't be the same. It wouldn't be the same town."

It's this love of their lake that prompted Lake Luzerne residents to start combating milfoil -- an invasive marine plant that's not native to the Adirondacks -- but is taking over almost all of its waterways.

Shiel said, "It's unsightly. It makes it difficult for boats and kayaks to move around in the Lake. In time, if not corrected it would overly infest the Lake."

Beach Manager James Lashway said, "A lot of the swimmers don't like swimming into it. It feels creepy."

So, in June, volunteers started placing barriers on the floor of the lake in sections intended to kill the milfoil, which can grow as much as an inch a day. The barriers block out the sunlight, and keep the milfoil from growing. Volunteers are taking those barriers out for the season, and said, while this is a lot of work, they're starting to see results.

Resident Mark McLain said, "You can see a huge difference. You couldn't fish here. These people could not fish last month because of the milfoil that was there. Now they can fish there."

Love of the lake

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Town Supervisor Gene Merlino said, "Personally, when we started this project, I was 100% for it, but I had my doubts that it was going to work, but after seeing the volunteers, and all the work that went into it,

and what really came out out of it, I'm so pleased. We're going to keep it going for next year."

Shiel said, "We've killed all the vegetation underneath the mats. The only problem is it will reoccur in these areas."

So, the barriers will have to be placed on the floor of the lake next spring for the summer season, but after seeing the progress, the town is on board with continuing the project for years to come.