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Milfoil removal project gets under way

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Photos



A crew works to remove milfoil from Lake Placid.

Photo courtesy of the Shore Owners' Association of Lake Placid

LAKE PLACID — The effort to clean up milfoil in Lake Placid got under way this week. The cleanup is expected to take two weeks and will cost the Lake Placid Shore Owners Association \$125,000, including a five-year monitoring and spot removal program, according to SOA President Mark Wilson. This year's cleanup alone will cost the group about \$63,000.

The invasive aquatic plant, which could threaten to push out native species and clog water intake pipes, was discovered last month in Paradox Bay. Last week, the Lake Placid Village Board voted to close the village boat launch to help facilitate the cleanup. The board also plans to enact a "no wake" law in the bay that would restrict speed limits to five miles per hour.

Aquatic Invasives Management, LLC (AIM) has been hired to do the cleanup job. According to Wilson, each morning workers set up a perimeter curtain around the core milfoil bed. Divers then hand-harvest the plant and the roots and let it float to the surface where another team rakes up and collects the plants. On shore, a village highway department truck acts as a collection bin. After the two-week removal process, the milfoil will be hauled to the Lake Placid

Community Garden for composting. After Labor Day, AIM will conduct a second survey of the bay to round up any remaining milfoil plants that were too small to detect the first time.

According to Andrew Lewis, co-owner of AIM, the team of eight divers and two surface workers have taken care of the high-density beds of milfoil and have switched to a low-density collection tactic.

"Divers are now gathering the small fragments that are still there," Lewis said. "They have settled on the bottom, but are not rooted yet."

Lewis, whose crew has worked on Upper Saranac Lake, Brant Lake and Minerva Lake, said the process so far has gone exceptionally well. AIM is asking Lake Placid shore owners and others who are on the lake regularly to keep an eye out for floating fragments of milfoil in other areas of the lake.

"This is a really good example of a good reaction to finding it," Lewis said. "It was very thick, but confined to this one area. It's not as bad as a lot of things we've seen."

Wilson said the SOA will lead a fundraising campaign to help pay for the cleanup.

“(The SOA will ask) anyone who uses the lake for business, recreation or a source of drinking water — in short, everyone in our community — to help out,” Wilson said in an e-mail. “We will also ask government officials and agencies at local, county and state levels to help us in our long-range stewardship efforts to prevent further introduction of invasive plants into the lake.”

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