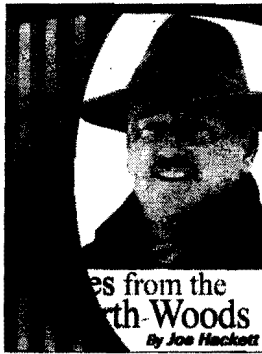


ADIRONDACK OUTDOORS

Invasive species? It won't happen to me

American society is becoming increasingly global, due to the instant communications and the ever-increasing mobility that has become necessary to satisfy the global marketplace. Never in the history of mankind has a society been so adept at redistributing species across the face of the earth. The threats and challenges presented by this steady redistribution have the potential to become one of the greatest environmental challenges of the years ahead.

Unfortunately, the burgeoning global marketplace and the steady acceleration of global climate change have accelerated the pace of non-native species redistribution. For nearly a decade, the earth's average temperature has experienced a steady rise. Although climate scientists have pronounced 2010 as the "warmest year on record," it is a title that will likely be handed down regularly over the



next few years.

It seems that nearly every week brings another announcement regarding the discovery of a new "invasive species," a Spiny Water Flea in Sacandaga Lake, a Round Gobi in the St. Lawrence, or alewives in Lake Champlain. The pace of redistribution is alarming, whether it is the arrival of rock snot in Kayaderosseras Creek or the challenge of preventing Asian "flying" carp from reaching the Great Lakes, the march moves inexorably forward.

Unfortunately, the results of this steady invasion will result in the alteration of our ecosystems, and of our way of life. It will be a factor in our lifestyles and in our economy, and it will change the way we live and the places where we play. Unfortunately, current efforts to halt the onslaught of invasive species have proven to be woefully inefficient. With few laws, and the lack of adequate funding or enforcement mechanisms, the future of our "home waters" is in jeopardy.

Lock it up and throw away the key

Despite continued efforts of DEC, numerous advocacy groups and the public at large, the introduction of invasive species will surely continue.

They will arrive via container ships and in shipping containers. They will be introduced to our lakes and streams via bait buckets, bilge water, live wells, boats, canoes, kayaks, trailers and fishing equipment. They will be spread



An example of rock snot, a non-native invasive species.

from the wheel wells of automobiles or in the empty boxes of tractor trailers. They will be smuggled in to sell to collectors, while others will be escapees from an aquarium. They may be hitchhikers on a traveler's shoe or stuck to the wing of a duck.

The sooner we realize that we can't contain them, the sooner we can begin efforts to eradicate them.

Action taken

The town of Harrietstown in Franklin County, which encompasses the Saranac Lakes, the St. Regis Lakes as well as a major portion of the St. Regis Canoe Area and the Raquette River, recently announced a proposed town law that is intended to address the threat of invasive species.

A hearing on the proposed law will be held at 6:50 p.m. on Oct. 28 in the board room of Harrietstown Town Hall. The Town of Harrietstown Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Law, if enacted, will require all boaters to inspect their equipment and boats for signs of invasive plants or animals.

The town law, which is intended to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species in local lakes, ponds and rivers will also prohibit the planting or introduction of invasive species into, on or around the shorelines of any water body in the town. Violations of the proposed law, which will be enforced by the state Department of Environmental Conservation, can result in a fine of up to \$250.

Several Adirondack communities, including the town of Webb, and the village of Lake Placid, already have similar laws on the books. There have also been several proposed laws drafted on the state level to prevent the spread of aquatic invasives.

In fact, numerous states including New York, have already enacted similar regulations to restrict the movement of firewood, for the purpose of containing the spread of invasives such as the Emerald Ash Borer. Regulations currently exist in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Maryland. Other States, including South Dakota, Missouri, West Virginia, New Jersey and Vermont.

Taking matters into your own hands

Invasive species, especially of the aquatic type, will continue to pose the greatest immediate threat to our local forests and lakes. They will infringe on our abilities to enjoy such traditional outdoor activities as hunting, hiking, boating and fishing.

If there is any hope of combating this threat, it is up to each of us to be conscientious. We will have to take matters into our own hands. We will have to inspect and disinfect. We will have to respool and retool. Most of all, we will have to consider our grandchildren with every outing, for they are the ones that will inherit our treasured traditions, or not!

Rock snot, which has already been found in Saratoga county, is one of the most feared aquatic invasives. The single cell algae, which can carpet a stream with a wool like covering, can be transported with any moisture. It can be found on the felt soles of wading shoes, on a damp streamer fly that was tucked away safely in a flybox or even on a flyline coiled deep on a reel.

Alaska has banned the use of felt bottom wading shoes on state waters beginning in 2012, and Trout Unlimited (TU) has asked fishing equipment manufacturers to end the production of felt-soled waders and wading shoes by 2011 to help stop the spread of aquatic nuisance species in America's rivers and streams.

Despite the best intentions of industry executives, fly guides, river rats and a host of advocacy groups and government interests; there is only one sure method to ensure invasives don't spread. It is up to individuals to inspect, collect and clean their own equipment with no excuse. It is a selfish task, which when employed, will benefit everyone. For the sake of your great-grandchildren, take matters into your own hands today!

Joe Hackett is a guide and sportsman residing in Ray Brook. Contact him at brookside18@adelphia.net



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