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No. 2 of 2012: Fight expands against invasive species

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DEREK PRUITT

Asian clam survey members with the Lake George Association look for signs of clams at Fischers Marina in Queensbury on Thursday, Sept. 13, 2012. The association group was working with the Lake George Asian Clam Task Force to collect data on the invasive species. (Derek Pruitt - dpruitt@poststar.com)

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December 29, 2012 10:30 pm • [JON ALEXANDER--jalexander@poststar.com](#) [\(0\) Comments](#)

LAKE GEORGE -- The battle against invasive species created bedfellows in 2012 between traditional foes, local governments and environmentalists, and for a time, pitted New York against Vermont.

Aquatic invasives have been present for two decades in the region's waters.

But it was in 2012 the issue came to a head, after the Park Commission endorsed what would be one of the most aggressive strategies against invasive species in the state: a mandatory boat inspection and decontamination program in Lake George.

"We're ahead of the curve," said Bolton Supervisor Ron Conover recently about his community's commitment in the war on invasives.

The Park Commission expected to officially adopt the new program in November, but the plan stalled after Department of Environmental Conservation officials panned the idea.

Negotiations are ongoing between the two regulatory agencies, officials said.

Warren County supervisors are mulling mandating boat washing in all area lakes and rivers. DEC needs more time to "review" the plan, said Mike McMurray, the department's representative on the Park Commission.

But invasives also created new divisions in 2012.

A bicounty civil war of sorts broke out early in 2012 over Eurasian milfoil eradication efforts in Schroon Lake.

Warren County officials blasted the Schroon Lake Association's methods and the competence of the organizations lake manager, Steve LaMere.

The lakeside towns of Horicon and Chester then decided to hire another firm to harvest milfoil in the southern section of the lake.

The two harvesting groups worked well together this summer, several officials said, even assisting each other on occasion.

U.S. Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., called in July for the immediate closure of the Champlain Canal, a tourist draw in Washington and Essex counties, because the invasive spiny water flea was discovered in the waterway, which will provide a highway for the species' introduction into Lake Champlain.

New York officials refused and said other action could be taken.

But soon after, the water flea was discovered soon after throughout Lake George, which is naturally linked with Lake Champlain by the La Chute River.

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