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Volunteers monitor invasive species

Lake Luzerne Assoc. working to keep eye on spread of milfoil

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LAKE LUZERNE – The Lake Luzerne Association, working in coordination with the Lake Luzerne Town Board, New York State Federation of Lakes Association and local volunteers, collected water samples last week as a part of the town's milfoil removal action plan.

On July 29, a group of volunteers from the Citizens Statewide Lake Assessment Program (CSLAP) gathered on Lake Luzerne to conduct the sixth of nine rounds of water testing. The testing is help

combat the spread of the invasive plant species Eurasian milfoil, which can be harmful to a lake's native plant life.

In the Lake Luzerne Association's winter newsletter, it was announced that the town hired A&E Milfoil Contractors to address the invasive species removal for the 10th year on the lake.

"Greater awareness than ever before is being dedicated to the removal of invasive species at the local, state and national levels," the newsletter stated.

Howard Schaffer, vice president of the association, likened the removal of milfoil to mowing a lawn, a regular, recurring process. CSLAP water collection, as well as plant removal, is ongoing from June until September.

Jim Niles, town councilman and former New York State Energy Research and Development Authority project manager, has been working closely with the contractors as well as attending water collection sessions on Lake Luzerne.

Niles moved to Lake Luzerne 10 years ago, but said he didn't become seriously involved with water quality in the lake until last year.

He said he was most grateful for the collaboration and participation from the lake association.

"I am most proud of the determination and dedication of the Lake Luzerne Association. They are a private group that takes time to educate themselves and participate in the CSLAP program which

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PROVIDED PHOTO

Three volunteers – from left, Lake Luzerne Town Councilman Jim Niles, Dr. Jane Oppenlander and Mike Schaffer – are certified for the New York statewide water testing program. They are holding the water collection device, called a SECI disk, used to draw water samples from the deepest part of the lake.

Volunteers

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can only make the water quality better in our lake," Niles said. "Lake Luzerne is the pearl of our little community here."

What is CSLAP?

The Citizens Statewide Lake Assessment Program is a volunteer lake monitoring program initiated in 1985, run by the state Department of Environmental Conser-

vation and the New York State Federation of Lake Associations. The state's program was modeled after successful volunteer programs in Vermont, Maine, Illinois and Minnesota.

NYSFOLA, founded in 1983, serves 166 lake associations, as well as individual and corporate members. More than 600 volunteers participated in the program this year on 174 sites, according to Nancy Mueller, executive director of NYSFOLA and CSLAP coordi-

nator.

Mueller said the program began as a pilot with only 25 lakes and it now covers lakes in every corner of the state.

Citizen volunteers from NYSFOLA-member lake associations are tasked with collecting biweekly water quality data and samples from the lake, June through September.

Volunteers in the program often go on to get involved in town governments or associations or simply continue volunteering year after year,

once they become engaged in the improvement of their lake, according to Mueller.

"Some of the volunteers have been with the program since it started 30 years ago and we even have some second-generation volunteers now," she told *The Post-Star*.

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