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NEWS RELEASE

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A program to manage Eurasian Watermilfoil in Lake George, spearheaded by the Lake George Park Commission, eliminated more than 670,000 plants in 2010. 93% of the 183 sites where nuisance milfoil has ever been found in the Lake were clear of all milfoil at the conclusion of 2010.

The Commission uses hand harvesting to selectively remove invasive milfoil or smothers dense beds of the plant by covering large areas with bottom barriers. "There has been significant progress the past few years especially in reducing the number of dense beds. We have stayed at this for a long time but can now say that an ecological and economic disaster has been averted," said Bruce Young, Commission Chair.

Eurasian Watermilfoil, left unchecked, grows into a dense tangle of floating stems and leaves that stops water-based recreation and produces a foul stench. Lake George is home to a rich diversity of 48 native rooted-plants which form elaborate colonies providing enormous benefits for fish and water quality. By its intense growth, milfoil crowds out native plants, reducing biodiversity and forever altering the ecology of lakes.

"Weed beds of decaying material, the consequence of a failure to effectively manage milfoil, would have unimaginable consequences for the marine and tourist economy that drives our region," Mr. Young said.

The 2010 results are summarized in a report that has been posted to the Commission's website www.lgpc.state.ny.us. The results indicate that the number of dense beds requiring future management has been steadily reduced in recent years. In 2010, for the first time, more bottom barriers were removed than added indicating that the program has reached a significant level of control.

The Lake George Park Commission has been the lead agency for the management effort for 25 years providing most of the funding from annual user fees paid by local boat and dock owners. Since 2006, State Senator Elizabeth Little has secured annual allocations of State funds from an invasive species program established that year. "It takes a tremendous effort to achieve a result like this," said Senator Betty Little. "I'm pleased to have been able to play a small role in securing funding. The battle continues, but this level of success has implications

beyond Lake George as other communities and organizations will no doubt look here to learn how to successfully fight invasive species that threaten water bodies throughout the state."

The management program has also received significant financial support over the years from the Fund for Lake George, Inc.

In 2009, the Fund for Lake George, Inc. started supplemental hand harvesting, searching large areas between known sites. These efforts are coordinated with the Commission's broader efforts and in 2010 the Commission provided \$30,000 to finance a portion of the costs for the supplemental program. The report summarizes the results of both efforts.

The Lake George Association, Darrin Freshwater Institute and the Lake George Watershed Coalition are significant partners in the milfoil management efforts, as well.

The Eurasian Watermilfoil Management Program is part of a much larger strategy in invasive species management, spread prevention and public education. Governmental and non-governmental organizations centered on Lake George or otherwise focused on invasive species have formed extensive partnerships and pooled expertise and resources.

Currently, the Asian Clam Rapid Response Task Force, one such partnership, is formulating a plan to effectively respond to the recent discovery of Asian Clams in the Lake. The Commission's web site has a link to information on the Task Force plans and participating organizations.

Invasive species are now generally recognized as the most significant threat to the Lake. The Lake's superior water quality, the signature characteristic for which Lake George is world renown, is in large part a function of complex biological interrelationships. Invasive species have the potential to alter these relationships, the web of life in the Lake, and thereby destroy the Lake's most attractive qualities.