2024 Aquatic Invasive Species Report for the Town of Caroga to the Fulton County Soil and Water District

Caroga Invasive Species Prevention Program

The Caroga Program helped promote the safe use of area lakes for recreation while preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species into lakes in the Town of Caroga region. The program provided inspection stations at the Department of Environmental Conservation's launches at the West Canada Lake Fishing Access site and Easta Caroga Campsite and the Town Decontamination Station which provided inspections and decontaminated watercraft with suspected aquatic invasive species with a heated high-pressure wash.

The program was implemented through a partnership with the Town of Caroga and the Adirondack Watershed Institute which provided supervision, trained stewards, data collection, equipment, facilities and supplies and the Canada Lakes Conservation Association (CLCA) which provided volunteer stewards to expand hours at the West Lake Boat launch. In 2024 19 volunteer stewards provided 293 hours of time to help inspect boats. The Fulton County Soil and Water District is a partner in this program and provided the decontamination equipment and technical assistance.

Dates of operation: May 24 – October 12 (20 weeks)
Boats inspected: Total- 3,246 (West Lake Launch- 2,427; Caroga DECON station; 294; East Caroga Campgrounds- 525)
Number of visitors: 5,170 provided with education
Visitors showing spread prevention awareness: 96%
Decontaminations performed: 271
AIS intercepted: 7
AIS Present in Waterbody: Eurasian watermilfoil and zebra mussels
Watercraft Inspected Originated from 127 different waterways. The majority of these waterways were known to have at least one invasive species present.

The Town has formed a Lakes Management Committee which meets at the beginning and the completion of the boating season to help improve efforts to keep the lakes clean. The committee includes representatives from the Town government and all of the area lake associations. This season this group has helped provide education to the growing number of short-term rentals which often bring out of state boaters into the Town unfamiliar with the invasive species rules.

This season the Town also convened a special training program lead by AWI to educate volunteer and paid stewards and lake association representatives with a firsthand demonstration of watercraft inspections and decontamination. Over 20 volunteers from several area lakes participated in the training.

In 2024 the Town and CLCA were able to obtain a 3-year grant from the NYS DEC. This year the project spent $21,422.59 on invasive species prevention. Volunteer Stewart time was able to help match the cost of the program and the Town was only $1,610.41.

The Town of Caroga Diver Assisted Aquatic Species Harvesting (DASH) program and ProcellCOR Deployment.

The Town implements a Diver Assisted Aquatic Species Harvesting (DASH) program to remove Eurasian Milfoil from the East and West Caroga Lakes.

This year the Town was able to obtain a DEC grant to fund pilot testing of the use of Procella COR herbicide help reduce the presence of milfoil in the Caroga Lakes.

The ProcellaCOR Pilot on East and West Caroga Lake was successful. The initial objective was to cover approximately 20% of East Caroga and 5% of West Caroga, With the coaching of the APA and DEC to increase our pilot resulted in almost 50% of East Caroga with West Caroga staying at 5% due to the invasive Species Milfoil was primarily isolated to one section.

In both lakes there was some over application due to currents and wind which some additional milfoil destruction above the 50 and 5%. With what the divers pulled in the non-treated areas and the ProcellaCOR, both lakes East Caroga Lake for this year has been almost 100% Milfoil free.

In order to apply the ProcellaCOR, the Town had to complete a lake assessment to map out the weed beds to be treated. These areas will be assessed again to determine the impact of the treatment. Water quality indicators are also being monitored. The emphasis now is on monitoring the lakes to visualize the long-term effects i.e., how long the ProcellaCOR will prevent growth, which is expected to be 4-5 years in the Pilot locations and less where the current, winds and diffusion were effective. With a lower concentration in the non-treated areas, it will shorten the longer-term results.

Total combined expenses in 2024 for the DASH program and ProcellaCOR deployment in 2024 were $117,973.46.

The total expenditures for all Aquatic Invasive Species programs for 2024 combined was $139.396.05