

Alliance will lobby for lake protections

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By CRISTINE MEIXNER

Editor

PISECO -- "I personally believe this is one of the most serious threats we have ever faced in the Adirondacks, and time is not our friend."

That is what Fred Monroe told the Adirondack Lakes Alliance Friday. He was talking about aquatic invasives, which as supervisor of the Town of Chester he has been battling in Loon Lake.

The alliance was created so lake associations could share information and resources and advocate for their needs. About 50 people showed up for the meeting at the school here, including representatives of probably 20 lake associations, state agencies, Hamilton County, Paul Smith's College, Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program, The Adirondack Council and more.

Monroe is no stranger to the concept of strength in numbers. He is a founder of the successful Adirondack Association of Towns & Villages, created to represent regional concerns on the state level.

"We're the folks who have been on the ground: in the water, doing the diving, developing the maps... working to keep our waters safe and clean," ALA Executive Director Ed Griesmer said. "The one group not well represented is the lake associations; networking is sort of foreign to us."

The ALA divides the Adirondack Park into five regions, with two directors from each. Region D is Fulton and Hamilton counties; Bryan Rudes of Piseco is a director.

REGIONAL APPROACH

Griesmer said the ALA would advocate for a regional approach to combating aquatic invasives. Monroe agrees a regional strategy would work best and be less expensive than lake by lake.

"A large number of invasive species surround the Adirondacks," he said. "It is inevitable they will get into the Adirondacks if nothing is done."

There are already aquatic invasive species in the park, Monroe said, but the worst is yet to come if Asian water clams, quagga mussels, zebra mussels and/or hydrilla find their way here.

Loon Lake has spent over \$400,000 dealing with one invasive (milfoil) in one lake, Monroe said, adding, "The best strategy is prevention, but there is a very short window in which to act."

WASH STATIONS

With aquatic invasives hitching rides from lake to lake on boats and their trailers, the ALA feels the best prevention would be regional inspection and boat wash stations on the travel corridors.

The group is suggesting 20 boat wash stations at an estimated cost of \$500,000.

"We think it can be done," Monroe said. He showed slides of a mobile high pressure, hot water wash station at Loon Lake. Stored in a shipping container, it is operated from within the unit.

"Lake associations, shoreline property owners, towns, counties, the state through a matching grant program, sportsmen clubs, should all contribute," Monroe said.

The alliance will hold a regional meeting once a month for the next four months and a summer conference. It hopes to reach a consensus and take action before the time to be proactive runs out.