



OCTOBER 2023

MILFOIL REPORT

Program Overview

Eurasian watermilfoil is a non-native invasive species that forms thick mats in shallow areas of a lake, quickly growing and spreading, killing off native aquatic plants that fish and other underwater species rely on for food and shelter. The plant threatens the diversity and abundance of native plants as well as the ecological balance of lakes and ponds, which in turn adversely affects recreational opportunities.

The Skaneateles Lake Association (SLA) created a Milfoil Control program that has reduced the species' coverage on Skaneateles Lake to a level now requiring "maintenance" control.

The SLA Milfoil Control program consists of a lake survey each fall to locate and document large growth patches of milfoil, and then the following spring, Aquatic Invasives, Inc., is hired to "cover" those patches with benthic mats constructed from geotextile material. Each mat is left on a milfoil patch for a minimum of 8 weeks to insure complete elimination.

THE MILFOIL CONTROL PROGRAM COSTS ~\$200K ANNUALLY AND IS FUNDED BY SLA MEMBERSHIPS AND OTHER SOURCES, INCLUDING \$30K IN FLOWPA* FUNDS ADMINISTERED BY ONONDAGA COUNTY.

SLA's overall commitment in preventing and addressing invasive species through Milfoil Control, the Boat Launch Steward Program, and Hemlock Tree Protection represents more than a \$300K annual investment for Skaneateles Lake and its watershed. This work could not be possible without dedicated members, the SLA Legacy Fund, public funding, and other donors.

**Finger Lakes-Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance*

Cover photo: SLA Lake Ecology Co-Chair Dr. Bill Dean, Board President Dr. Paul Torrissi, and SLA Board VP Dr. Buzz Roberts



Since 2007, SLA has conducted the most robust, continuous effort of milfoil control in the Finger Lakes.

Data-Driven Decision Making

SLA's Dr. Robert Werner research and education boat ("The Bob") surveys the lake waters using sonar with GPS along with visual verification from rake tosses to locate milfoil growth. Large growth patches are then mapped and analyzed.

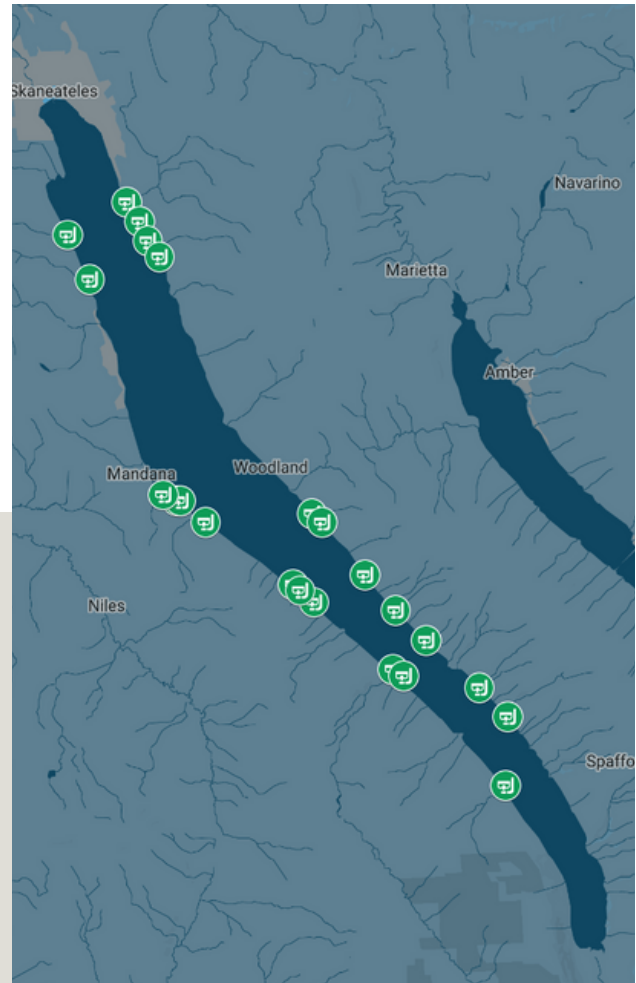
The matting sites for the following year are prioritized by area size with highest priority going to the largest patches with density of 70% or more. Other factors such as lake depth, slope and stability of lake bottom and boat launch activity are decision factors in matting locations as well.

2023 at-a-glance:

- Matting began on May 15, 2023
- 322 total mats were placed
- Mat sizes are approximately 12' x 60'
- That last set of mats were retrieved on October 18, 2023
- The survey covers 35 miles of shoreline
- The survey was completed in 55 hours over 11 days

2023 Matted Locations

Matting was completed this summer at the following areas:



The mission of the Skaneateles Lake Association (SLA) is to promote the protection of the water quality of Skaneateles Lake and environmentally sound regional management of its watershed.

Contact:
Frank Moses, Executive Director
Skaneateles Lake Association
Frank.moses@skaneateleslake.org