

Board may have solution to end lake infestation

Contributed by Matt Dalen
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The town Planning Board and the Three Lakes Council may have found a solution to the problem of how to legally remove an invasive plant from a cove on Lake Waccabuc before it spreads to the rest of the lake. The plan, which had been derailed by a question of ownership of the lake bottom, will come before a public hearing next Tuesday, March 10, at 7:30 at the Town House.

Because the board will not be able to determine who owns the lake bottom without an expensive and lengthy title search — going back to land records in the 1600s — board Chairman P.J. Rossi said that the opinion of the board's lawyer was that, if the council received letters of permission from each homeowner around that section of the lake, that would satisfy the board's legal requirements. The board traditionally requires permission of the legal owner of a property before doing work there, but because of a border dispute between New York and Connecticut in the 1600s, there does not appear to be a legal owner of the bottom of Lake Waccabuc.

The proposal, brought by the Three Lakes Council, would involve sucking up approximately two acres of lake bottom in order to attempt to remove every root and leaf of the *Egeria densa* plant, also known as Brazilian elodea. The plant, brought into the United States as an aquarium decoration, can spread from small cuttings, and grows extremely fast. The council found it in the cove last year during a plant survey of Lake Waccabuc, and says that, at the moment, it is confined by currents and winds to Waccabuc Cove, on the north side of the lake.

The council hopes to remove the plant in the spring, before boaters and swimmers start to use the lake and before the plant can start growing again.