

2015-10

What is fanwort, why is OLA concerned, and what is OLA doing about it?

Fanwort (*Cabomba caroliniana*) is a plant on the NYSDEC prohibited and regulated invasive species list as adopted in 2014. Fanwort has spread in much of New England. In yet another bad example of 'bait bucket biology', and because the plant is available in pet stores and on the internet, someone likely illegally and imprudently dumped an aquarium. The OLA learned in August 2015 that the plant was found in Kasoag Lake, and that the Kasoag Lake Conservation Association (KLCA) had applied for a NYSDEC herbicide application permit to contain the noxious plant. Kasoag Lake drains via Fish Creek into Oneida Lake.



Fanwort is a submerged invasive aquatic plant that can form dense mats at the water surface. The delicate green underwater leaves are fan-like and average 2 inches across. Leaves are arranged in opposite pairs on the stem. The fact that it can reproduce from fragments is troubling. Fanwort can be a nasty, clogging plant and would likely do well in Oneida Lake. If it reaches Oneida Lake, it can then move throughout connected waters via the Barge Canal System and be spread by birds and boats - infesting NYS waters with yet another degrading invasive species.

OLA endorses early, preemptive, proactive, and efficient efforts to preclude this plant from becoming established. Lessons from other uncontained invasions (e.g., zebra and quagga mussels, alewife, gobies, and milfoil) have taught us that there is generally no economically effective, reactive means for managing such biologic environmental pollutants.

OLA supported KLCA's amended permit for treatment in 2016, and has asked state experts to act to contain, eradicate, and monitor the plant before it moves into Fish Creek for 'early detection...rapid response'. This is the Best Management Practice (BMP) for noxious invasive species. We need to know if the plant is indeed in Fish Creek and, if so, to what extent. Then how to eliminate it before it moves downstream.

At the close of 2015 NYSDEC, The Nature Conservancy, the St. Lawrence – Lake Ontario (SLELO) PRISM Oswego County, the NYS Federation of Lake Associations, and Atlantic Salmon Fish Creek Club join the extended efforts of the Kasoag Lake Association in developing a responsive program to this threat.

