



2020 Volunteer Asian Clam Survey Report

2020 was the sixth year of the Volunteer Asian Clam Survey. The purpose is to identify if there are any locations in Upper Saranac Lake/ Fish Creek Ponds where the invasive Asian Clams were present. Second to prevention, our best defense against Asian Clams is early detection for the greatest chance of eradication. Currently there are no known infestations of Asian Clam in the Upper Saranac Watershed.

Left unchecked, Asian Clams can reproduce exponentially and cause negative ecological impacts including algae blooms.

Concentrations of Asian Clams have the potential to negatively impact the tourism economy, reduce property values and hamper recreational activities. Asian Clams have successfully been established in Lake George since 2010. With such close proximity, and its biological characteristics, Asian Clams could easily inhabit the waters of Upper Saranac Lake.



Survey Implementation:

The 2020 survey was slightly scaled back due to COVID-19 pandemic with required social distancing limiting the number of participants. Despite this, twenty volunteers joined the effort in protecting the watershed. The Survey was conducted at the convenience of the volunteers during the month of August.

Volunteers signed up to survey one of the ten predetermined selected sites. These sites were designated based on the clam's desired habitat, proximity to potential entry points and limiting infringements on private land owners.



The Survey work included sieving through sandy areas of the assigned sites at 20-30 foot intervals, in a similar manor as panning for gold. If anything appearing to be an Asian Clam was found, the surveyor contacted the Lake Manager for identification. Each site varied in the number of samples required to be taken to complete the Survey. The smallest of the sites only required 15 samples, while the largest needed over 250 samples.

Survey Results: All ten of the predetermined sites were surveyed this year. Within the ten locations, just under 700 sediment samples were sieved and over 15 hours were dedicated to identify the presence of Asian Clams. **Fortunately, no Asian Clams were found in 2020.** There were reports of native Finger Nail Clams, also commonly known as Pea Clams discovered in three of the sites. In the case of Asian Clams being found, the Upper Saranac Foundation would implement the protocol outlined in the *Upper Saranac Lake Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention and Preparedness Plan* for eradication.

In Lake George there are a total of 28 separate locations throughout the lake, exceeding 120 acres of lake bottom having Asian Clam. The Lake George Park Commission estimates that control and eradication efforts cost upwards of \$60-\$80,000 per acre. Given this estimate, the cost of treating with an attempt of eradicating the Asian Clam would be cost-prohibitive and logistically beyond the ability for Lake George to successfully manage. In one of the highest density locations, Asian Clam density's averaged between 50-75 clams per sieve sample.



The Upper Saranac Foundation would like to thank all those who volunteered their time and efforts for the Survey. The Foundation will continue the Volunteer Asian Clam Survey as an annual event. Similar efforts for prevention and early detection of other aquatic invasive species have also been implemented by the Upper Saranac Foundation. These efforts are intended to assure water quality of Upper Saranac Lake for future generations.

Photo: Lake George Park Commission

Asian Clams sieved from Lake George