

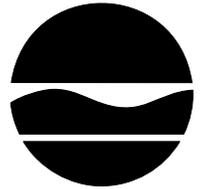
# New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

## Office of Natural Resources, Region 3

21 South Putt Corners Road, New Paltz, New York 12561-1620

Phone: (845) 256-3092 • FAX: (845) 255-4659

Website: [www.dec.ny.gov](http://www.dec.ny.gov)



Alexander B. Grannis  
Commissioner

August 13, 2008

Dear Riparian Property Owner and/or Wawayanda Resident:

We are writing to update you concerning the Department of Environmental Conservation's efforts regarding the restoration of Ridgebury Lake and Catlin Creek. On Tuesday, August 5th, 2008 the Department began the process of restoring Ridgebury Lake and Catlin Creek downstream to the Route 6 crossing by treating these waters with the fish toxicant CFT Legumine to eradicate Northern Snakehead (*Channa argus*). As you know, northern snakehead is a highly invasive non-native predator fish that has the potential to prey on and compete with fish native to New York. It had become established in the headwaters of Catlin Creek, including Ridgebury Lake. As many of you have witnessed first hand, this has been an enormous undertaking, one that has resulted in significant impacts including a temporary loss of the fish population and the temporary disruption of the peaceful atmosphere of the waterfront lands you cherish. The sacrifices you have made to allow us to take aggressive action to eradicate this invasive species and prevent it from spreading throughout the state are greatly appreciated.

The Department took the following actions to restore the impacted waters:

### August 5, 2008

All of Ridgebury Lake and portions of Catlin Creek and adjacent ponds downstream to point behind the Wawayanda Town Hall and the Town's Highway Department were treated.

### August 6, 2008

DEC staff resumed treatment of Catlin Creek downstream from the Highway Department, including wetlands adjacent to the creek down to and including Hyde Pond, as well as the remainder of Catlin Creek above the Route 6 crossing. Treatment of all waters with the aquatic pesticide CFT Legumine was completed by 5:00 PM on Wednesday, August 6th.

After the treatment of the headwaters of Catlin Creek was completed, DEC staff collected and removed all fish that were casualties of the treatment process. While we will not have final results for some time, below is a brief summary of what information was collected:

- **Northern Snakehead Fish:** Over 220 Northern Snakehead were found throughout the treatment area, from Ridgebury Lake downstream to Hyde Pond. Most (over 200) were juvenile fish, clearly demonstrating that Northern Snakehead were successfully breeding and reproducing in Catlin Creek. A variety of adult fish were collected as well, the largest being a 31 inch long fish weighing over 11 pounds from Ridgebury Lake.
- **Other Fish:** Approximately 8 tons of fish were removed during our post treatment collection process, the vast majority coming from Ridgebury Lake. By far the greatest percentage of fish, by weight were common carp. In addition, largemouth bass, crappie, shiners, bullhead and yellow perch were collected. All were transported to the nearby NYS Department of Transportation facility on Route 6 where they were composted.

- **Water Quality Sampling:** During and after the treatment process the Department has been sampling the waters in the treatment area for the presence of Rotenone, the active ingredient in CFT Legumine. To be effective, CFT Legumine was applied at a rate of 4 parts per million (PPM). Water samples have been taken at several locations in the treatment area as follows:

<b>Rotenone concentration in Parts Per Million (PPM)</b>				
Location	Date (2008)			
	August 6	August 7	August 8	August 11
Ridgebury Lake		0.400	0.250	0.125
Catlin Creek	2.500	0.115	0.065	0.015
Hyde Pond	5.500	0.280	0.050	0.020
Catlin Creek @ Rt 6		0.095	0.095	0.008

Rotenone is not toxic to fish at levels at or below 0.05 PPM. We anticipate Rotenone to breakdown to where its presence is below that level in Ridgebury Lake later this week. Once we confirm that level, we will undertake a test with a small number of live fish before reintroducing previously captured fish into Ridgebury Lake as described below.

Prior to our treatment the Department took important steps to restore a healthy and productive fishery. During the week of July 28<sup>th</sup>, the DEC staff erected a series of five holding tanks behind the Town Highway Department to serve as a temporary home for live fish collected from Ridgebury Lake. On Thursday, July 31<sup>st</sup> and Friday, August 1<sup>st</sup>, DEC staff collected approximately 1,400 fish, including bass, crappie, yellow perch, bullheads and shiners, to be held and used to restock Ridgebury Lake once the lake water is determined to be safe for fish. While being held, the Department is also testing some of these fish for disease to ensure the lake is restocked with disease free fish. Once safe, the reintroduction of these fish will help accelerate natural restoration processes. This fall the Department will host a meeting with riparian owners to provide information regarding additional restoration options, including restocking of hatchery-raised fish, with a goal of developing a restoration plan for Ridgebury Lake.

While fish restocking efforts may begin later this month, the following activities will continue to be prohibited in the affected waters until September 5, 2008 (as posted):

- Swimming and bathing
- Fishing and/or fish consumption
- Livestock watering
- Irrigation or spraying of agricultural crops
- Use of treated surface water for human consumption
- Use of treated surface water for domestic purposes

While many local residents had significant concerns with our approach, everyone remained courteous to DEC staff, and many allowed the Department to occupy their private lands during and after the treatment process despite their reservations. The Department is especially grateful for these accommodations. While the success of our efforts are not yet proven, the Department acted to address this significant challenge and threat to this area.

We will be posting additional information on DEC's website at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/about/607.html> , including some pictures illustrating many of the steps in the process.

On behalf of the Department I wish to thank you all for your tolerance, patience and understanding, and for the assistance provided to aid our efforts. We look forward to your continued involvement as we continue our restoration effort. If you have additional questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at the number above or Regional Fisheries Manager Michael Flaherty at 845-256-3066.

Sincerely,

William Rudge  
Natural Resource Supervisor

cc: W. Janeway, NYS DEC  
M. Flaherty, NYS DEC  
P. Duke, NYS DEC  
T. DeChillo, NYS DEC  
M. Knudsen, NYS DOH  
E. Sims, OC DOH  
J. Razzano, Wawayanda Town Supervisor