

Students build, install cribs in Great Sacandaga Lake

Ongoing research project benefits several fish species

By Michele Kelley
Contributing Writer

Broadalbin, N.Y. — As ice clung to the shores of Great Sacandaga Lake this past winter, students in the science research class at Broadalbin-Perth Jr./Sr. High School, in Fulton County, were hard at work — not behind desks, but with saws and hammers in hand.

Under the guidance of science teacher Brian Henry, students constructed and recently deployed 40 wooden “fish cribs,” submerged structures that are designed to enhance the aquatic habitat in the lake’s southern basin. The project marks the beginning of a five-year effort to build 20 artificial reefs and deploy a total of 200 cribs.

“This project has been kicked around for more than two decades, so we are excited to finally make it happen,” Henry said. “The goal of my science research class is to provide my students with meaningful, hands-on experience not found in the traditional classroom, while also helping to improve the fishery of the lake we all love.”

The class partnered with the Hudson River Black River Regulating District to deploy the fish cribs, which were lowered into more than 30 feet of water to ensure they remain well below navigational depth. The cribs, made from rough-cut hemlock, are intended to provide shelter and a breeding habitat for a range of fish species.

The project builds on years of fieldwork by Broadalbin-Perth’s science research program, which has also collaborated with the Great Sacandaga Lake Fisheries Federation and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation on a long-term study of the lake’s walleye population.

Students have been tagging and releasing walleyes to collect data on migration, growth, and survival rates — work that has earned the class of high school students a reputation for conducting graduate-level research.

With the new reef structures in place, students will use underwater drones to monitor fish behavior and population changes. Their goal is to determine whether the cribs are successfully creating new and sustainable habitats for local fish species.

“It’s a living experiment,” Henry said. “We’re not just building the structures — we’re also collecting and analyzing the data to understand their impact. It’s authentic research with real ecological value.”

The findings could guide future conservation efforts across the region while giving students a rare opportunity to engage in meaningful, applied science.

For the students, the construction, deployment, and monitoring of the fish cribs is a hands-on experiment that goes far beyond the classroom. For the fish and other aquatic organisms living in the Great Sacandaga Lake, it may be the foundation of a healthier and safer home.



Students at Broadalbin-Perth Jr./Sr. High School in Fulton County worked in the classroom school yard (top left) and on the shores of Great Sacandaga Lake (top right) to construct wooden fish cribs which were eventually loaded onto a barge (above) and submerged in over 30 feet of water. The five-year project will involve constructing over 200 fish cribs to create 20 artificial reefs to help improve fish habitat in the lake.

Photos provided

NY RECREATIONAL PROPERTIES

16 acres Secluded Recreational Land with Pond and Camp Sites. \$79,900 Woodhull, NY Steuben Co. Call Dan Heisey 607-661-0029	45 acres Cabin with Stocked Pond for Great Hunting and Fishing. \$194,900 Cameron, NY Steuben Co. Call Garrett Hamilton 607-661-5835
64 acres Excellent Hunting Land with Trail System and Pond. \$141,900 Limestone, NY Cattaraugus Co. Call Travis Thurston 585-386-6413	32 acres Private Recreational Land with Ponds and Trails. \$238,000 Cassadaga, NY Greene Co. Call Scott VanRoy 518-369-0487
78 acres Great Hunting Land with Trails & Lots of Wildlife Signs. \$159,900 Buffalo, NY Allegany Co. Call Travis Thurston 585-386-6413	94 acres Hunting Land with Pole Barn and Hunting Blinds. \$274,900 Canadota, NY Allegany Co. Call Girard Kelly 585-466-3446
49 acres Secluded Cabin with Pond, Timberland & Tree Stands. \$174,900 Greenwood, NY Steuben Co. Call Dan Heisey 607-661-0029	73 acres Cabin with Large Pole Barn and Woodlands with Trails. \$374,900 Barker, NY Niagara Co. Call Travis Thurston 585-386-6413



NEW YORK LAND QUEST
Selling All Types of Real Estate Is Our Business
Greater Than 20 Years of Experience
585-466-3446
nylandquest.com

Representing Buyers and Sellers
buyournyland.com
sellournyland.com

Dogs used to sniff out invasive spotted lanternfly eggs in Ohio

Associated Press

Cleveland, Ohio (AP) — The spotted lanternfly, a leaf-hopping invasive pest first detected in the U.S. a decade ago, has steadily spread across the East Coast and into the Midwest with little getting in its way.

But now researchers are deploying a new weapon to slow it’s advance — specially trained dogs with the ability to sniff out the winged insect’s eggs before they hatch.

Since late last year, four of the dogs have been scouring parks in the Cleveland area in search of egg masses hidden around trees, shrubs, park benches, landscape rocks and bridge pillars. Each egg mass can produce 30 to 50 spotted

lanternflies.

So far, the dogs have uncovered more than 4,000 of the masses, meaning they’ve helped eradicate as many as 200,000 of the sap-sucking bugs that damage grapes, fruit trees, hops and hardwoods, said Connie Hausman, senior conservation science manager at Cleveland Metroparks.

In just a few hours in April, the dogs found about 1,100 egg masses at the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo, Hausman said.

Not just any dog can go out searching, she said.

“They all have wonderful noses, but they’re not all eligible,” she said. “They had to pass tests to prove their service.”

The dogs were trained through a research project led by a group at Virginia Tech University, which is setting out to slow the spread of the insects that are native to eastern Asia and recognizable for their distinctive black spots and bright red wing markings.

The four working in Cleveland owned by local residents already had scent training before they worked with Virginia Tech to hone their noses to detect the spotted lanternflies.

Once they spot a new mass of eggs, the dogs get a treat from their handlers who scrape away the mud-like masses.

After being discovered in Pennsylvania in 2014 the spotted lanternfly was confirmed in 2020: in New York State when populations were found in Staten Island, and Ithaca. They expanded to the New York City region, Long Island, the lower Hudson Valley and a new population was discovered near Binghamton in 2021.

Spotted lanternfly is an invasive insect pest from Asia that primarily feeds on trees of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) but can also feed on a wide variety of plants such as grapevine, hops, maple, walnut, and fruit trees. The insect can negatively impact the agricultural and tourism industries and may impact New York’s forests. They lay their eggs on vehicles, firewood, outdoor furniture, and stone, which are inadvertently transported to new areas, causing the insect to spread.



A widely-feared invasive species, the spotted lanternfly is now in several U.S. states, including New York. In Ohio, researchers are training dogs to locate SLF eggs.

Stock photo

FISH STOCKING FOR YOUR POND OR LAKE

Delivery of live fish and pond care products in your area.

- 10 species of fish available! Including bass, bluegill, catfish and more
- Algae prevention
- Fountains
- Aerators
- Docks
- Installation



Alex@midatlanticstocking.com
www.midatlanticstocking.com
(607) 592-1376