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LAKE GEORGE LAND CONSERVANCY HOSTS TOWN MEETING

(Bolton Landing, NY) – The Lake George Land Conservancy and the Town of Bolton are working together to combat the spread of Japanese knotweed and other prevalent non-native invasive plant species in the region. At a meeting scheduled for August 16th at 7:00 pm at the Bolton Town Hall, staff from the Lake George Land Conservancy will speak to town and other Lake George residents about the aggressive plants and discuss proper removal methods. Key to the program is the cooperation of the Town of Bolton to allow residents to get rid of plant material removed from their property for free, by taking it to the town's transfer station for incineration.

Town of Bolton Supervisor, Zandy Gabriels, agreed to offer this opportunity for residents after speaking to the Conservancy about the importance of getting residents on board with invasive control efforts.

“Educating landowners and others who have an interest in protecting the native landscapes around Lake George is essential to keeping tabs on the spread and development of established invasive plants.” said Sarah Small, the Lake George Land Conservancy's program assistant and coordinator of its Terrestrial Invasive Plant Program. “Many people don't realize that the huge, spreading plant in their yard or along the roadside is invasive and requires special control efforts. This meeting will be a great first step in reaching out to all of the citizens in the Lake George watershed.”

The Conservancy has fielded several calls this year by regional residents regarding persistent pests. Most calls concerned Japanese knotweed, a bamboo-like plant that can grow to ten feet high and become living fences along roadsides, streams, and between homes. One such resident, Gary Filippelli, complained of the massive entanglement of plants on his wife's property which includes a house once used as a gift shop. Frustrated with his progress in removing the knotweed, Filippelli contacted the Conservancy for advice in how to handle the plant.

“It is terrible,” Filippelli said, about the Japanese knotweed congesting the banks surrounding his wife's property. “You can exhaust yourself pulling the stuff out.” He has good reason to try to remove it. His wife, Irene O'Connor, had her store burglarized twice. “The plants act like a screen, making it easy for someone to break in. It's a safety concern. Now we just use the space for storage. We don't want to risk another break-in.”

Beyond their negative ecological impacts, non-native, invasive plants can create huge economic losses, by negatively affecting agricultural and range lands, navigation, power generation, recreation and water supplies, and public health and safety.

The Conservancy is also hosting in-the-field training sessions to learn how to identify those persistent pests, how to get rid of them, and next steps to keep them at bay. Sessions, which are free and open to the public, will be held from 9 am to 1 pm on August 13, at Gull Bay Preserve in Putnam, and September 24 at Pilot Knob Preserve in Fort Ann. Designed for the average landowner or concerned citizen, the sessions will provide information on best management practices and aim to spread the word about these aggressive plants. To register for a training session, call Sarah Small at 644-9673, or email ssmall@tnc.org.

The top five terrestrial invasive plants for the Lake George watershed, as identified by the Lake George Land Conservancy because of their ability to be especially detrimental to the health of our public lands, roadsides, waterways, and backyards, are: common reed, garlic mustard, Japanese knotweed, purple loosestrife, and shrubby honeysuckles. The Conservancy recently published an educational brochure on the top five invasives that is available to the public upon request. The public also is encouraged to call the Conservancy with questions and for further information about invasives, volunteering opportunities, and the upcoming training sessions.

The Lake George Land Conservancy began its Terrestrial Invasive Plant Program in 2003, and continues to expand its active inventory and removal efforts as well as its education and outreach program.

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Since 1988, the Lake George Land Conservancy has been working to preserve the world-renowned water quality of Lake George and the rare plants and animals within the lake's 150,000-acre watershed by permanently protecting natural lands.