

Yaphank lake drain begins

\$2.5M plan aims to restore public recreational use

BY DEON J. HAMPTON
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Brookhaven Town officials on Monday started draining Lower Yaphank Lake as part of a \$2.5 million project removing sediments and nonnative plants to restore the lake to recreational use. "These lakes were used for kayaking and fishing, and they will be again," Brookhaven Town Supervisor Edward P. Romaine said during a morning news conference at the lake. "Our job is to restore the health of the lakes that have been invaded by nonnative aquatic plants."

The draining and dredging operations developed from a 2009 Suffolk County feasibility study to eradicate several Brookhaven lakes from invasive species, town officials said.

Canaan Lake in North Patchogue was drained this summer and Upper Yaphank Lake in 2013. The town's department of recycling and sustainable materials management will perform the work at Lower Yaphank Lake, which includes dismantling an old dam.



Chad Trusnovec, left, with board from Lower Yaphank Lake dam, and Councilman Michael Loguercio.

"These lakes are the identity of our community," said Chad Trusnovec, vice president of the Yaphank Taxpayers and Civic Association. "Yaphank was built around these lakes. This has been a long time coming and I'm very excited."

Officials estimate the Lower Yaphank Lake project will cost between \$2 million and \$2.5 mil-

lion and is expected to be completed in May.

The project timeline includes scraping the lake bottom this winter to remove nutrients that feed the invasive plants, Romaine said. On Monday, the first boards were removed from the dam to increase water flow from the lake into the Carmans River.

More than 40 local residents

attended the news conference on the side of the road near Yaphank Avenue and Main Street in Yaphank.

"We look forward to seeing people kayak and canoe, fish and ice skate in the winter," said Linda Petersen, president of the Yaphank Taxpayers group. "It's a wonderful amenity to have in Brookhaven."

Let officials know if you see this pesty beetle

BY SABRINA ESCOBAR
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Federal agriculture officials are encouraging Long Island residents to check their trees for signs of the Asian longhorned beetle, a pest that has killed more than 8,000 trees on Long Island over the past 20 years.

While the beetle itself is not harmful to humans or pets, infested trees are dangerous, as beetles and larvae burrow into the tree, creating tunnels that can cause branches to fall off and affect the tree's stability, said Rhonda Santos, public information officer for the Asian Longhorned Beetle Eradication Program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

"This is one of the worst insects in the United States," she said. "It's really the poster child of bad insects."

The USDA has designated August as Tree Check Month be-



Asian longhorned beetles bore tunnels into trees, creating danger.

cause this is when the beetle is most active, Santos said.

The inch-long beetle, which is native to China but was first found in Brooklyn in 1996, is usually seen on tree branches during cursory tree checks. Homeowners should look for other signs of beetle infestation, such as dime-sized exit holes in branches and bark, sawdust-like

material on the ground around trees and in branches, and yellow-colored leaves before fall or branches falling off healthy looking trees. The beetles infest hardwood trees, including maple, birch, elm, ash and poplar.

"Homeowners can just quickly look at their tree and find that it's infested and save a lot of time," said Nicholas Bates,

urban forestry educator at the Cornell Cooperative Extension in Nassau County.

Santos said people should be careful when moving firewood or solid wood packing material near infested areas, as the beetles can survive in dead wood until they find another live host.

Residents who think they have seen a beetle should take a picture of the insect or capture it, and call the program hotline at 866-702-9938 or complete an online form at AsianLonghornedBeetle.com, officials said.

Once a suspected infested tree has been reported, program officials will check it and remove it at no cost to the homeowner, and help them in reforestation efforts, Bates said. Removing the tree is the only way to ensure eradication because pesticides don't penetrate the trunk, where larvae live, Santos said.

"The best thing to do is to eradicate," he said.

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THIS DATE IN HISTORY

1831 Nat Turner launched a slave rebellion in Virginia that resulted in the deaths of at least 55 white people.

(Turner was executed later.)

1858 The first of seven debates between Illinois senatorial contenders Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas took place.

1911 Leonardo da Vinci's "Mona Lisa" was stolen from the Louvre Museum in Paris. (The painting was recovered two years later in Italy.)

1912 The Boy Scouts of America named its first Eagle Scout, Arthur Rose Eldred of Troop 1 in Rockville Centre.

1959 President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed an executive order making Hawaii the 50th state.

1987 Sgt. Clayton Lonetree, the first Marine court-martialed for spying, was convicted in Quantico, Virginia, of passing secrets to the KGB. (Lonetree ended up serving eight years in a military prison.)

2000 Rescue efforts to reach the sunken Russian nuclear submarine Kursk ended with divers announcing that none of the 118 sailors had survived.