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In your opinion: County must take action on invasives

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The Otsego Lake Association and other local environmentally focused nonprofit organizations have been working tirelessly to prevent exotic, invasive species from entering Otsego Lake. Annual public forums have detailed the threats to our water quality. Practical solutions have been implemented by recruiting and training lake stewards to monitor launch sites, inspect boats, and counsel boaters. The Cooperstown Biological Field Station and its Volunteer Diver Team constantly monitor Otsego Lake.

We, as volunteers, have done our very best, but it is not enough. Legislation is crucial to unequivocally prohibit the transportation of live material from one water body to the next.

While the state has passed legislation mandating clean boats, the legislation leaves it to the state Department of Environmental Conservation to develop regulations that may take a year or more. Our request for legislation is patterned after legislation successfully adopted in the Adirondacks area. We need to require that boats are cleaned of all mud and living materials and drained of all water prior to movement from a water body across our county roads.

In 2013, the membership of the Otsego Lake Association unanimously passed a motion urging our county to support legislation to prohibit the transportation of living material from one body of water to another. If our lakes' fragile environmental balance is not safeguarded, there will be potential ramifications on property values, drinking water, tourism and recreation.

We understand that this legislation has not even been advanced for consideration to the full board. We urge our county legislators to consider the consequences and to move quickly to enact legislation.

Mickie Richtsmeier