

“Our Glimmerglass”



A Newsletter from the Otsego Lake Association

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Spring 2015

Board of Directors: David Sanford, Paul H. Lord, Scottie Baker, Carl Good, Martin Tillapaugh, Joseph W. Zarzynski, Pati Grady, Michael Richtsmeier, Bob Sutherland, Wayne Bunn, and Shannon O’Neill. Directors represent the Towns of Middlefield, Otsego, Springfield, the Village of Cooperstown, a Student Director, and two At Large. Officers and Support: Mickie Richtsmeier (President), Scottie Baker (Vice President), David Sanford (Treasurer), Wayne Bunn (Acting Secretary), Joseph W. Zarzynski (Newsletter Editor), Kiyoko Yokota, Ph.D., CLM (Technical Advisor), Martin Tillapaugh (Legal Advisor), and Tim Pokorny (Webmaster)

Dear Friends of the Otsego Lake Association,

I’ve recently been impressed with the strength of commitment for the preservation and love for Otsego Lake as demonstrated by neighbors regarding the DOT project and shoreline north of Five Mile Point. It has shown the power of organization, education, and advocacy. It has reminded me of the terrific community in which we live, but also the need to stay informed and the importance of not taking the “status quo” for granted. While it is easy to be indifferent because we feel that we as individuals cannot stem the tide, **we can, as a group, make a difference.**

The great challenge is to not assume that threats to our lake, be they man-made or transmitted in nature, will simply go away. We have seen the need for vigilance and advocacy with regard to one threat to the lakeshore. We should be equally as concerned with threats to the health of the lake from steep slope development, storm run-off, contamination, and invasive species.

This is the reason that I hope you will join me in supporting the Otsego Lake Association. We have consistently been in the forefront of focusing attention on lake issues. We provide a forum for concerns, disseminate scientific information, and promote fellowship among like-minded individuals and organizations. We have a talented, diverse board that generously gives hours of volunteer time.

Our most recent initiative is installation of a boat wash on Fish Road adjacent to Lake Front Park. This is taking fruition due to the long awaited state regulations regarding the transport of aquatic material (see Paul H. Lord’s update in newsletter)

and the many hours of work led by OLA members. We will underwrite the expense of the boat wash and continue to support the inspection program, no wake zone buoys, and numerous other educational incentives, but we can only do this with the continued support from members through dues and donations. We need your help more than ever!

There is strength in numbers. Solutions can be found to the challenges that face us. Please enjoy our newsletter, come out to our activities, talk about OLA proudly and often, and use the enclosed membership form! Let's work together to preserve and protect "Our Glimmerglass."

Thank you in advance for your support,
Mickie Richtsmeier (President)

New York State Invasive Species Legislation In Effect March 10, 2015

By Bob Sutherland

Invasive species are having a detrimental effect upon the state's natural communities by out competing native species. This is diminishing biological diversity and changing our native ecosystems. To reverse this trend, new regulations were developed by the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), in cooperation with the Department of Agriculture and markets.

The invasive species regulations were adopted in July 2014 and became effective on March 10, 2015. These regulations are expected to help control invasive species by reducing the introduction of new species and the spread of existing invasive populations. The regulations include a list of prohibited species that are unlawful to knowingly possess with the intent to sell, import, purchase, transport, or introduce. There is also a list of regulated species that could potentially become invasive but which are legal to possess, sell, buy, propagate, and transport.

Furthermore, there is a list of all terrestrial, aquatic, and wetland plants, both those prohibited and regulated, including images on the DEC website: "Prohibited and Regulated Invasive Species List." Check this out before heading to the nursery this spring. Some plants, like Japanese Barberry, have amnesty until 2016 to allow growers to sell existing inventory.

NEW Boat Transport Law Awaiting Implementing Regulations

By Paul H. Lord

We celebrated, on September 2, 2014, when Governor Cuomo signed the new Aquatic Invasive Species spread prevention bill. The new law differs from previous regulations in that it applies to "all public waters," not just New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) waters and requires that boats and floating docks be cleaned prior to launch. A copy of the law is posted on our OLA web site. The DEC didn't know how the bill might look when passed or if the bill would be signed and, so, did not have implementing regulations prepared. The new law is for launching only and differs from existing DEC regulations. The DEC is currently developing draft regulations to implement the new law. The new regulations will contain "a suite of spread prevention actions that watercraft operators can take before launching. They will be released for public comment, likely in early summer, and are expected to take effect in the fall." The

OLA has obtained permission from the Village of Cooperstown to build a steam cleaning station in Lake Front Park to help implement the law on Otsego Lake.

“We Love Our Lake” 2nd Annual July 4th Decorated Boat Parade

By Scottie Baker

Start your engines, charge your batteries, unfold your sails, and dust off your paddles and oars for the second annual OLA sponsored boat parade on Saturday, July 4, 2015. The event is a fun-filled, all-inclusive, informal gathering of viewers on shore and boats of all types and sizes on the water (power, paddle, row, and sail).

There are no rules or fees. Rain or shine! All creative ideas are encouraged. *Anodontoides*, the Biological Field Station research vessel, will again be captained by Paul Lord to transport judges and prizes. Committee members—Scottie Baker, Elaine Bresee, Wayne Bunn, Tom & Kathy Chase, Maryann Dietz, Pati Grady, Bradley Goodyear, Jeff & Mason Reynolds, and Mickie Richtsmeier—will meet in May to firm up details on the program. Stay tuned to the OLA website for more information.



(Photo credit: Michael Santulli)

Delaware Otsego Audubon Society (DOAS) Spring Waterfowl Count

By Becky Gretton

Spring passed for winter on April 4, when the Delaware Otsego Audubon Society sponsored the annual count. A hearty group gathered at the Cooperstown Village docks and continued up the lake in a clockwise manner, thankful for dock bubblers and some naturally open water, with Clarke Pond the final Otsego Lake destination. An unusual duck species, the Eurasian wigeon, was keeping company with an American wigeon: a unique opportunity to study both! Other waterfowl species included ring-necked, wood and black ducks, bufflehead, hooded, common and red-breasted mergansers, greater scaup, American coot, mallard, northern shoveler, and Canada goose. An immature bald eagle flew from a carcass on the ice, a few great blue herons persevered, and a Cooper’s hawk with kill flew over us at the Biological Field Station.

Three other wetlands were visited with four additional duck species observed as well as American pipit, Wilson’s snipe, snow goose, and rusty blackbird. The expert leaders freely shared their knowledge with a diverse group. Please consider joining us next year!!

Proudly Wear Your OLA Shirt!

By Scottie Baker

If your OLA shirt is a bit worn or you would simply like a new color, step right up! Our popular T-shirts are now available in many colors with adult and children sizes. As always, each shirt has the Otsego Lake map on the back and our colorful logo on the front. Don't forget our long sleeve OLA denim shirt for those cool days.

Your favorite khaki washed twill cap with the embroidered OLA logo is available



in two new colors! The carry all OLA bag has the same classic look, but a new wider bottom holds even more goodies. New, ultra cozy fleece blankets in several colors round out the summer's cool merchandise for sale.

For more information, see (www.otsegolakeassociation.org). To make a purchase, telephone Scottie Baker (607-547-5356) or attend an OLA event.

(Photo credit: Tim Pokorny)

UPDATE ON NYS ROUTE 80 EMBANKMENT

By Wayne Bunn

The New York State Department of Transportation's (DOT) initial plans to stabilize a failing embankment along NYS Route 80 just north of Five Mile Point called for the removal of two seasonal camps and one cabana followed by the installation of crushed stone rip-rap extending out into the lake similar to what they have already done in several locations along Route 80. After intense public and municipal pressure, the DOT Commissioner announced in a January 2015 letter to State Senator James Seward (who was extremely helpful in bringing this issue to the attention of DOT) that the new plan would now involve a concrete retaining wall (in lieu of the rip-rap) with an aesthetic treatment incorporated to blend in with the environment. The OLA extends a huge "Thank You" to all lakeside property owners, concerned citizens, local government officials (Village, Town, and County), and Senator James Seward who all challenged DOT's initial plans and never gave up on preserving and protecting the shoreline of Otsego Lake. The following is from Caroline Sever for the group "Friends of Otsego Lake and Route 80":

Dear OLA Members,

It's such a pleasure to give you some good news about Otsego Lake and to thank you for helping preserve the lakeshore and history. As you may know, the New York State Department of Transportation rewrote their plans for repairing the retaining wall⁴

north of Five Mile Point. The new plan, shown to property owners in March 2015, calls for a retaining wall that spares the properties and shoreline. Work has begun (see photo below) and should be completed by the time you read this.

The Otsego Lake Association was an important voice asking DOT to rethink their initial plans – runoff, loss of shore, lack of landscaping – all concerns that fell within OLA’s mission and pointed out the need for alternatives. Thanks to the outpouring of community concern, NYSDOT changed their three-year plan to replace three properties and the entire shore with a rock slope extending 40 feet into the lake. The 1300 feet of slopes already along Otsego Lake’s west shore have proved to be unstable and an eyesore.



Route 80 construction on April 18, 2015.
(Photo credit: Wayne Bunn)

The OLA went to considerable lengths to express concerns and to recommend alternatives reflecting your goals. Friends of Otsego Lake and Route 80 is encouraged by DOT’s willingness to change plans and even more encouraged by the way the community came together, finding common ground and speaking out. Please take a moment to reflect on the success of your work. Working together you’ve made a difference for this treasured area. That’s not something you get to celebrate every day.

The Hidden Diversity of Algae

By Kiyoko Yokota, Ph.D., CLM

I am an aquatic ecologist, who can also be categorized as a phycologist (fai-co-lo-gist). Yes, many people confuse the word with “psychologist.” I was once almost listed as a psychologist on a university employee web site – it was good that the web writer sent me a draft! “Phyco” means algae, therefore a phycologists is someone who studies algae. Algae has a unique place in the world of living organisms, which is typically organized in a tree-like fashion or as the “tree of life”, based on how they are related to each other. Tolweb.org, for example, has a comprehensive tree of life with beautiful illustrations and photographs mated with high quality text.

But there is no one branch or area of the tree where you can find all algae. Why? Because what we call “algae” is a very diverse collection of organisms from different groups. For instance, this is the only major group of organisms that encompasses both prokaryotes (no membrane-bound organelles within cells) and eukaryotes (membrane-bound organelles present) and the transitions from unicellular (single cells) to colonial (made up of a single type of cells) and multicellular (made up of different types of cells) body plans. Below are some representatives that you may find in Otsego Lake.

Microscopic algae or phytoplankton (phyto = plants; plankton = suspended in water)

1) Cyanobacteria or blue-green algae—These are considered the most ancestral form of cells that can carry out photosynthesis to use sunlight and carbon dioxide dissolved in water to make food (sugar). They are prokaryotes and have no membrane-bound organelles within the cell such as nucleus and mitochondria. Most cellular machineries are more or less floating around inside the cell. They are viable as single cells, although many form colonies that could become visible to naked eyes. Some can produce toxins, and when there is an overpopulation on cyanobacteria or blue-green algal bloom, many municipalities close beaches as a precaution even before the water test result comes back (which can take days to weeks).

2) Green algae (chlorophytes)—Green algae can also be found as single cells or colonies, but they have more sophisticated and efficient organization within cells – different functions are compartmentalized within membrane-bound organelles (eukaryotes). Large colonies of green algae are often mistaken as cyanobacterial blooms, but they are typically short lived and do not pose health concerns related to toxins.

3) Diatoms (bacillariophytes)—Diatoms have silica-rich, glass-like valves as the outer cell surface. As these valves can resist decay for a long time, researchers can retrieve diatoms from sediment samples and make inferences about what species flourished so many years ago, etc. Many climate change research, for example, analyze species composition of diatoms over time, and make inferences about growth conditions at a given time including water temperature, as different species grow optimally under different conditions.

Macroscopic algae—Locally they include Muskgrass (*Chara*), Stonewort or Brittlewort (*Nitella*), and Starry Stonewort (*Nitellopsis*). They are algae rather than “plants” as they do not have vascular (tube-like) tissues as you find in real plants to transport water and nutrients. As macroscopic algae live immersed in water, there is really no need to have these vascular tissues!

Identification—The University of New Hampshire has a user-friendly web site called “phycokey” (<http://cfb.unh.edu/phycokey/phycokey.htm>) that helps you identify commonly encountered algae and other aquatic organisms in the U.S. Northeast. And as always, if you suspect an invasive species or something cool or unusual, staff (including myself) at the SUNY Oneonta Biological Field Station (607-547-8778) are here to help! Fresh samples (in plastic bags or containers) are always nice, but high quality photos can also be useful if fresh samples are unavailable.

Contact Information for the OLA:

Otsego Lake Association

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