

By: 03/02/2023 2:42 pm

<https://www.allotsego.com/howarth-lake-association-has-hab-update/>

Lake Association Has HAB Update

Letter from Jim Howarth

A recent article in “The Freeman’s Journal” asked, “Do Blooms Also Like It Cold?” and comments questioned what is being done to address our harmful algal blooms—HABs. The answer is, a lot.

We consider Otsego Lake to be unique—and in many ways it is. But one of the ways it is not unique is its susceptibility to HABs. Hundreds of bodies of water in the Northeast have experienced HABs recently. The causes of HABs are under study, but we do know there is no one driver or any party to affix blame to.

The Otsego Lake Association and its members have taken the lead in studying and dealing with HABs.

Doug Willies, a member of OLA’s Board of Directors, has been appointed by the Village of Cooperstown and our mayor to lead an effort with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. Acting through the authority of the Watershed Supervisory Committee and under the scientific direction of Dr. Kiyoko Yokota from the SUNY Biological Field Station, the group is working toward inclusion in a NYSDEC 9-Element Plan to study all aspects of HABs. The 9E Plan is also a long-term management plan for the lake and its watershed

The Otsego Lake Association is a member of NYSFOLA, the New York State Federation of Lake Associations. OLA’s publication—“The Glimmerglass Journal,” edited by Scottie Baker—won NYSFOLA’s award for the best in its class last year. NYSFOLA has invited OLA to participate in the Citizen’s Statewide Lake Assessment Program.

CSLAP is a volunteer lake monitoring and education program that is managed cooperatively with NYSDEC. OLA volunteers will be trained by using a NYSDEC curriculum and will collect bimonthly water samples throughout the lake to be sent to the Upstate Freshwater Institute in Syracuse for analysis. An idea of the rigor to be applied to this process can be seen at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/81849.html>. It is hoped that the information gathered and analyzed from this program will help us to learn more about, and perhaps predict, HABs.

The SUNY Oneonta Biological Field Station is a key asset for Otsego Lake. Scientists, including OLA’s scientific advisor Dr. Kiyoko Yokota, are studying all aspects of the HABs. OLA supports the BFS through volunteer labor and financial support.

OLA volunteers are involved in every aspect of our lake’s health—from lake clean-up days, to supporting the boat washes, to sponsoring the Volunteer Dive Team. Paul Lord, from SUNY’s faculty and a member of OLA’s board, has led these efforts.

Lastly, OLA volunteers are working through a wide variety of actions, including slowing erosion and sediment loading by building lake front buffer strips, posting placards at boat launch sites, and promoting youth lake awareness through library book donations.

I urge your readers to go to <https://otsegolakeassociation.org/>. Learn about OLA, read past issues of "The Glimmerglass Journal" and join OLA. Our mission is to educate, advocate, and actively participate in protecting the health, well-being, and beauty of Otsego Lake. These actions are more important than ever now.

Jim Howarth
Co-president, Otsego Lake Association