

Cooperstown Crier
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Lake group seeks mud-flow evidence

By JIM AUSTIN
Cooperstown Crier

The Otsego Lake Association is hoping some photographic evidence will help them demonstrate to local officials the threat mud flows pose to the lake.

Association president Paul Lord said last week that he has been authorized by the board of directors to pay a bounty of \$250 each for up to three good quality color aerial photographs of mud plumes in Otsego Lake taken during 2008.

Lord said the association is aware, from member reports, that mud continues to flow into Otsego Lake from upland portions of the Village of Cooperstown, and the Towns of Otsego, Middlefield, and Springfield. Each year one million pounds of mud flows into Otsego Lake and people don't seem to pay much attention, he said. The silt entering the lake settles on the bottom and can interrupt the breeding of lake trout, Lord explained. It also can choke out native plants and create an environment that stimulates the growth of milfoil, an invasive aquatic weed that has caused problems in the lake.

Matt Albright, of the Biological Field Station, said last week that those are very valid concerns with sediment loading in the lake. Some of the problems come from farming activities, but also from development as people encroach on stream banks. Albright said it's sometimes tricky to get good photos of mud flows because during and after a rain, conditions for flying and photography are not always good. But the flows are easy to spot where streams enter the lake, he said.

Lord said one source the association is concerned about is the sediment basin for Willow Brook above the village along Glen Avenue. "The sediment basin is full and not doing its job," he said.

Albright agreed that the basin is nearing its capacity, and will need to be excavated to remove the mud and silt it has trapped, but the fact it is full is an indication it has been working.

He said sediment loading is a problem that is being addressed gradually through programs like the Farm Service Agency's Conservation Reserve Program. The cost share program will help establish best management practices on agricultural lands, including stream crossings and planting buffer strips.

Tony Capraro, of the NRCS, which works on the Conservation Reserve Program with the Farm Service Agency, said those buffer strips take up nutrients and block sediment that would otherwise find its way downstream to the lake.

He said the Otsego Lake watershed is eligible for the enhanced program, which means a 90

percent cost share as opposed to the normal 50 percent. More information about the program is available from Bill Gibson at the Farm Service Agency at 547-8131.

To obtain additional information about mud flow photos, or to collect a bounty, Lord may be contacted at (607) 435-4989 or at lordp@usa.net.

- See more at: <http://www.coopercrier.com/local/x1525018738/Lake-group-seeks-mud-flow-evidence#sthash.J3KBhHEp.dpuf>