

## 2015 OLA Board Discussions and Adventures

***Here's a quick roundup of some of what your Oneida Lake Association Board of Directors worked on in 2015, and some things to look forward to in 2016. Check us out at [oneidalakeassociation.org](http://oneidalakeassociation.org) to see the latest!***

**Oneida Shores Launch Kiosk:** County Parks is allowing OLA to use one panel of the existing park kiosk next to the launch for lake education and OLA outreach. The kiosk display will be modified this winter. Periodically the materials behind the cover will be updated and rotated. Thank you Parks!

**Web Cameras:** Two private cameras viewing the lake were linked on the OLA website to enable the public to view 'live' lake conditions. BOD spoke with three additional private entities as well as Oneida Shores, Town of Sullivan, and Cornell regarding establishment of new cameras viewing from the eastern, southern and western shores for planning safe recreation. Planning continues so that at least 2 cameras are likely to be added in 2016.

**Waterfowling:** BOD again participated in the Region 7 season setting recommendations, advocating split season dates that would coincide with peak migration periods. The lake will remain in the NE zone. Cornell reported that the protected black tern population nesting this past spring was a disaster due to an early high water event that wiped out nests. Cormorant and gull competition continues to be a concern at the few tern nesting sites.

**Highway Cleanup:** Directors volunteered for annual spring and fall cleanup of the I-81 off ramp. This year OLA expanded its efforts to include the Bartel Road Park-n-Ride and Angler Access Trail.

**Water Chestnut:** BOD continues to conduct volunteer weed pulls annually in late July, and maintains a presence on the CNY Water Chestnut Task Force working with related PRISMs, NYSDEC, and The Nature Conservancy. Once a date is set for 2016, OLA members will be contacted by email to participate

**Fanwort:** Alerted in August of its presence in upstream Kasoag Lake, OLA-BOD promoted to several agencies and interested parties OLA's support of the Kasoag Lake Association's permit to treat its waters. In 2016 OLA will support The Nature Conservancy and PRISM efforts to inspect and monitor Fish Creek. NYS has an opportunity to stop this invasive species before it becomes established elsewhere in the Oneida Lake and Lake Ontario drainage basins. The BOD will help identify volunteer observers to be trained this winter and spring, and strive to keep the State proactively working on fanwort elimination.

**Fish sales and fish poaching:** various incidents have been raised and discussed. BOD contacted all Town Justices and County DA's expressing its concerns regarding enforcement of the Environmental Conservation Law.

**Cornell Fisheries and Aquatic studies:** BOD has consulted with, and will continue to review annually, the progress and findings of fish populations, species diversity changes, water quality, insect, avian and algal investigations.

**Constantia Fish Culture Station:** The Hatchery remains one of the OLA's prime concerns every year March-May. NYDEC budgets, staffing, and physical changes are actively monitored. Again this year the staff did a wonderful job netting, egg stripping, rearing, and stocking.

**Cormorant Management:** BOD maintains contact with NYSDEC which has assumed Federal Depredation Permit harassment activities that OLA has endorsed for nearly two decades.

**New East End Boat Launch:** OLA-BOD met with NYSDEC, NYSDOT, and NYSCC representatives to review options for a small boat launch on Canal property off Cove Road. NYSDEC now has a use permit from Canals, and is seeking funding priority to enable Operations to modify or redesign a layout for the

proposed launch. Two locations on the east of the - now closed – bridge are in contention. OLA will continue to monitor progress of planning, design, and construction budgeting discussions.

**Water and Stream Gauges:** NYS Canal Corporation, University at Albany Department of Atmospheric and Environmental Sciences, and the National Weather Service have used post-Hurricane Sandy FEMA funding to install new monitors in key drainages that enable water quality parameter as well as flow reporting. This Flood Warning and Optimization System will provide accurate information to safely manage decision making in flood prone areas, and can be integrated with Cornell water quality information of concern to Oneida Lake community.

**August Outreach:** 75 government representatives participated this year in the annual event, down significantly due to budget cuts, obligations, and vacations. BOD will evaluate protocol for the 2016 meeting at which OLA concerns, opportunities, and mutual programs are highlighted in a diverse regional audience. Agencies and legislators were reminded of our interest in an interagency task to annually (as-needed) address the location, marking, and removal of trees washed into the lake, presenting navigation hazards. NYSDEC was also asked to muck out the South Shore Launch before the Labor Day boat-removal season. Separately we spoke at length with Ken Lynch, Region 7 Director DEC on a number of Oneida Lake issues.

**Bulletin Content:** With retirement of long-time editor and former Director Jack Henke, this year's Bulletins were late. The Bulletin Committee has been enhanced, and is preparing the March issue. Look for current interest content, summaries of various lake characteristics, and a series that highlights each Volunteer Fire and Rescue unit around the lake.

**Facebook and the Web:** OLA opened its first ever social media page and has 428+ followers. This and a new initiative to use emails will enhance communications. Several new Q&A were posted, along with PDF'd Bulletins, some new references, video cam links, articles on algae, and the talks from the Annual Meeting.

**Other Outreach:** BOD is discussing a variety of grade and high school opportunities to use the lake as a teaching tool and learning experience that integrates reading, writing, math, science, and fun "wet" skill sets. BOD provided comments on Cleveland Pier rehabilitation (revised plan was funded by Governor's CNY grant program in December). NYSDEC and Parks were advised in the spring of several tree hazards in South Bay, with a request to coordinate with other agencies for removal of these and future hazards. BOD relayed concern with the Jewell access point; NYSDEC remediated its site for this winter's fishing. BOD participated in NYSDEC's Habitat Assessment Survey conference calls regarding blue green algae blooms and the need for improved, timely, and accurate information exchanges.

**Shows:** Participating at 4 shows in 2015, the BOD members will staff Membership tables again January – April 2016 at 3 sports shows (State Fair, Oneida Kallet, and Turning Stone). The Annual Meeting has been confirmed at Cicero North Syracuse High School April 27, 2016. Tentative themes may be some variation on Oneida Lake History and Fisheries and/or invasive species trends and importance.

**Membership:** President in April issued a challenge to Members and Directors to double membership since membership has stagnated at half the historic number. A college scholarship proposal was discussed, but endorsement depends on membership growth, as do some other initiatives to promote the lake and Association. BOD does not think a dues increase is warranted.

**Directors:** The BOD added Ryan Asmus, Mike Baretta, Gina Duggleby, and Matt Kazmierski to fill 2014 vacancies. Regrettably veteran BOD members Bill Schriever, Tom Guifre, and Parker Stone resigned.

**Annual Meetings:** About 275 members attended the 2015 annual meeting, and heard one of the OLA's most cohesive and integrated series of talks. The 2016 meeting is scheduled for April 27 at CNS-HS.