



Oneida Lake Association
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Greetings!

Scriba Creek Incidents: An Important Update

Those of you who attended our Annual Meeting in April and those of you who follow our newsletters know how very concerned your OLA Board is regarding the spearing incidents in Scriba Creek. Throughout the entire history of OLA, we have been very vocal and very open about our opposition to spearing or netting fish or taking walleyes during the spawning season.

We have been in frequent contact with DEC officials to express our concern. Most recently, on June 14, we were invited to participate in a Zoom call to further discuss this issue. On the call were five representatives from DEC, including the Deputy Commissioner of Natural Resources, Katharine Petronis. Representing OLA were President John Harmon and Directors Matt Snyder and Rip Colesante.

As a public service to our members, we are providing a summary of what we discussed on that call. We know that, as a member of the OLA, you care about our lake as much as we do.

Jacqueline Lendrum, DEC Director of Fish and Wildlife, opened the meeting by acknowledging that the events of April were very disruptive, difficult, and unwanted by all in DEC and the angling community. She thanked OLA for helping communicate the facts with the public. Jackie and Katie went on to share that DEC is engaged in ongoing "consultations" with the leaders of the 9 Native Nations recognized by the state of New York. The purpose of these consultations is for DEC and the Nations to understand each other's objectives and concerns and to come to a common understanding of the definition of "conservation."

President Harmon then gave a statement on behalf of OLA and all Oneida Lake anglers, emphasizing the following three points.

1. What happened April 3-7 must never happen again. Although we are

focusing on the future, we must not let events of the past repeat themselves. Ever. He also clarified that spearing walleyes in Scriba Creek is NOT OLA's line in the sand. Our line is a big loop around Oneida Lake and its tributaries: No spearing. No netting. No out of season fishing. No over limit harvest. No commercialization of harvested game fish.

Harmon restated that our position is NOT targeted toward Native Americans. Rather, the current laws in place should apply to everyone, regardless of nationality.

2. The citizens of NYS have an extremely low tolerance for selective enforcement of laws (any laws!).

3. The DEC statement that was provided to us speaks of exploring the possibility of identifying “locations and species of abundance,” in order to allow for “expanded harvest” by Native Americans. This policy is extremely alarming! Of course, Oneida Lake has a robust population of walleyes. We accomplished this goal through decades of careful research and management. Such a policy would clearly target our lake for “expanded harvest,” which is another way of saying unrestrained fishing, spearing, or netting. The policy also states that this “expanded harvest” would be allowed when it would be “beneficial to the overall health of the environment.” Your OLA Directors ask: Who would make that determination? For the past several decades we have relied on scientists at Cornell University to provide such guidance. Will they be asked for their input? And if it was scientifically determined that expanded harvest would be beneficial, then wouldn't that apply to all citizens?

The meeting then moved to Questions and Answers, led by Directors Snyder and Colesante.

1. OLA: What are the plans to prevent similar incidents going forward? DEC: This is part of the consultation with Nation leaders. There is not much in the way of specifics yet, but they pointed out that Commissioner Seggos, in his memo to law enforcement officers (November 2021), did specifically call out a prohibition on fishing near hatcheries or spawning beds.

2. OLA: What's the current status of these negotiations? DEC reported that they were near the beginning of a multi-month process. Fishing and hunting were only part of the agenda items.

DEC hopes to have the consultations conclude with new agreements between NYS and the Nations by the end of calendar year or sometime into 2023. Fishery issues currently under discussion (statewide) with the Nations include overall quantity they are allowed to take; take locations; time of year; species-level impact; and learning more about the Nations' fisheries management practices and their definitions of “take” and “conservation.”

3. OLA: Under what authority is DEC making new rules or policy, without going through the normal channels of public comment, environmental impact assessment, and regulatory transparency? Director Snyder asked the DEC officials to explain under what authority DEC can negotiate away the natural resources and rights of

New York Citizens in order to negotiate fishing rights with the Nations? DEC staff on the call explained that in the interpretation of Commissioner Seggos and the DEC's Office of General Counsel, DEC has the authority to negotiate with the sovereign nations under past treaties and Commissioner's Policy #42, which authorizes and guides interactions between DEC and the Nations.

https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/permits_ej_operations_pdf/cp42.pdf

DEC staff admitted that interpretations of treaty law are complex and are often in conflict with each other, and that they don't understand the treaty rights all that well yet. They are trying to decipher them, and they are sticking with the interpretation that they can conduct these negotiations in the meantime.

There was further discussion of the difficulty of interpreting treaty law, and DEC staff reported that the agency will continue its consultative process while its efforts to legally clarify New York's treaties and definitions are ongoing.

We closed the meeting with a joint commitment from DEC and OLA to continue discussions with each other.

Clearly, this issue will need more discussion, as well as continued active participation on the part of the OLA. Nevertheless, the OLA Directors remain unwavering in our commitment to protect our lake.

To advance this effort, at the most recent meeting of the OLA Board of Directors (June 13), the Board unanimously passed a resolution stating our position. We have sent this resolution to the DEC officials who participated on our Zoom call. Please see below.

We will continue to engage with this issue. We will not stop advocating for fishery protection, and we will regularly update OLA members as we have more information to share.

As always, the OLA welcomes your input on this difficult issue.

president@oneidalakeassociation.org

***June 2022 Board Resolution: To Protect Oneida Lake Waters,
Land, Fish and Game***

Whereas:

The waters, land, fish, game, and other natural resources of Oneida Lake are irreplaceable assets, of great value to all people;

Whereas:

Oneida Lake's public waters and land, fish and game, and other natural resources are held in the public trust, for the benefit of citizens of the State

of New York and the United States of America, by State and Federal governments that have the obligation to protect these shared assets and make them accessible to the people;

Whereas:

The Oneida Lake Association, Inc. (OLA) is a non-profit membership organization founded in 1946, for the express purpose of protecting and enhancing Oneida Lake and its natural resources, with a special focus on the passage and enforcement of hunting and fishing laws;

Whereas:

Throughout its long history, OLA has represented the interests of members by staying focused on its founding mission, and continuously advocating for laws, policies, and enforcement actions that protect Oneida Lake and its natural resources;

Then be it resolved that:

The Oneida Lake Association vigorously opposes any law, regulation, administrative action, or any other act or decision; by any government, non-governmental organization, or other entity or agency; that interferes with enforcement of hunting and fishing laws or other conservation laws, or otherwise creates conditions detrimental to Oneida Lake and its natural resources;

And be it further resolved that:

OLA insists that State and Federal governments and all their agencies fulfill their obligations to the citizens of the State of New York and the United States of America, by fully protecting Oneida Lake and its natural resources, on behalf of all people who benefit from the Lake.

Adopted unanimously by the Oneida Lake Association, Inc. Board of Directors and duly entered into the minutes of the Board's regular meeting of June 13, 2022.

New OLA Website Design

In the next couple of weeks you will see a new look for the OLA website. It will pop up using the same web address you are using now. You will find a cleaner, crisper look.



All of your favorite content will still be there, including archives of our many publications. We are in the process of eliminating a number of dead links which eventually plague all websites.

We thank Tom Bailey for his excellent work on our website.

**New Video Release:
Estimating Walleye**

Abundance in Oneida Lake



Check out the latest video from DEC that offers viewers an opportunity to learn about DEC and Cornell University's long-standing partnership to monitor and manage the Oneida Lake walleye population. As part of a study to estimate walleye abundance in the lake, Cornell researchers conduct a large-scale mark and recapture effort every three years in conjunction with the Oneida Fish Hatchery's annual egg collection.

Visit DEC's YouTube channel to [watch the video](#).

<https://youtu.be/EuMXz4KaPOA>

DEC: "Through this collaboration, we've been able to keep our finger on the pulse of the walleye fishery in Oneida Lake which has surely contributed to its success."

For a complete look at the latest update from DEC, click the link below:

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/NYSDEC/bulletins/31b4893>

Contact Update!

We are always pleased when our members reach out to us with a question or a comment. We welcome your continued contact. **We are writing to let you know that our info@oneidalakeassociation.org address is no longer viable.**

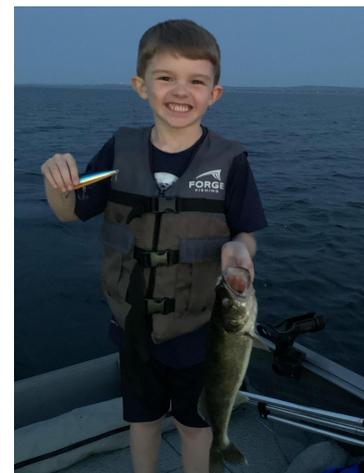
However, you can still reach us at our preferred address:
president@oneidalakeassociation.org

You can also write to us at oneidalakeassociation@gmail.com

Keep the messages coming! We especially enjoy your photos!

Teach a Kid to Fish . . .

One of the most enjoyable aspects of our Annual Membership Meeting is the chance to give away fishing gear to the youth in attendance. At our most recent meeting, we gifted Calvin with a sampling of fishing tackle that he could use on the water. Here, he is pictured with a beauty of a walleye that he caught using a Rapala Husky Jerk provided by OLA. Nice catch, Calvin!





2nd Call for Volunteers to Help Pull Water Chestnuts!

As you know, water chestnuts are a highly invasive species in our lake. Left uncontrolled, they can quickly take over a large area of the shore line, choking it with weeds.

Once again, OLA Director Patricia Cerro-Reehil is heading up a team of volunteers to conduct a weed pull.

The OLA will hold the first of its seasonal Water Chestnut Weed Pulls on Thursday, June 30th @ 9 am. Bring your own boat/kayak, and meet at the Oneida Lake Marina.

For more information contact Patricia at:

pcr@nywea.org

There will be a second weed pull at Metzger's Pond, on the north shore of the lake. This pond drains into Oneida Lake at the Fish Hatchery, posing the threat of migrating chestnuts. Join us there, too! Saturday, July 9th @ 9 am. Meet at the corner of Kibbie Lake Road and Knapp Road in the Town of Constantia.

FREE FISHING WEEKEND!

Reminder, this weekend (June 25 and 26) fishing in NYS is free! No license required!

All other fishing regulations still apply!



Pay your dues, and HELP PROTECT ONEIDA LAKE!!!!

\$8 annually

Recruit your neighbors and friends TO JOIN US!

Donate

Memorials and contributions to our program are most welcome.

OLA is a 501(c)4 organization serving and protecting the Oneida



[Website](#) [Who We Are](#) [What We Do](#) [How to Help](#)

OLA is a 501(c)(4) not-for-profit organization.

The Oneida Lake Association is a member of the New York State Conservation Council <http://www.nyscc.com/> and the New York State Federation of Lake Associations <http://www.nysfola.org/>.

Please remember to obey all laws, rules, regulations, and codes of ethics as they pertain to boating, fishing, hunting, and the management of Oneida Lake and its tributaries.

[Report environmental violations.](#)

1-844-DEC-ECOS (1-844-332-3267)

Edited by John Harmon and Matt Snyder

Send us your notes and articles for use in future ENews!