



Oneida Lake Association
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Greetings!

Special Alert!

Perhaps by now you have heard of the fish spearing incidents that recently occurred in Scriba Creek, adjacent to the Fish Hatchery. The Oneida Lake Association Directors have been monitoring the situation closely from the very beginning. Although we are still gathering information about these incidents, we want to carefully review with you the facts we have learned.

On Saturday(4/2), two individuals who identified themselves as Native Americans were spearing the walleyes that were congregating in Scriba Creek, just a few yards upstream from the Hatchery. DEC Environmental Conservation Officers quickly showed up and issued tickets, as well as confiscated the fish.

On Tuesday (4/5), a larger group came to the creek. Six or seven individuals were in the water taking walleye with spears, while at least that many individuals were also waiting on the stream bank. This time, several state troopers as well as DEC ECOs arrived. After considerable discussion at the scene, the officers contacted their superiors in Albany. The leadership in Albany then instructed the officers at the scene to let the individuals go, without issuing any tickets. The Albany leadership is trying to quickly develop a policy to deal with these issues.

The OLA Board is extremely concerned about this practice. Clearly, spearing unlimited walleyes during the closed season while they are spawning, in the very shadow of the Hatchery, is a serious threat to the health and welfare of the species.

The Board of Directors certainly stands in strong opposition to this practice. I can assure you that we have already contacted officials at DEC, both in the law enforcement division and those in policy making positions, voicing our opposition. In fact, just hours ago I had a conversation with a high ranking DEC official who assures me that they are working on "a path forward" to deal with issues such as these. The present course for the OLA

is to remain keenly vigilant regarding the facts. Your Board leadership will stay in very frequent contact with DEC as their policies are developed. In my phone conversations with them, I emphasized the importance of transparency during these critical discussions. I also made a formal request to have the OLA actively participate in any discussion that directly concerns Oneida Lake and its tributaries. Our contact at DEC states that "We are handling this very complex situation, involving representatives from the Nations. We also have the utmost care for the Fishery."

We have also stated to DEC leadership that our issue is NOT with First Nation members. Rather, we remain steadfastly opposed to harvest practices (by any individual, group, or nation) that negatively affect the health and welfare of the fishery. We hope you share this same belief.

The OLA Board will meet on Monday (4/11) to continue our discussions of this issue. We will keep you, our valued members, up-to-date as substantive information becomes available.

In response to numerous requests from our membership, I am providing the phone number for the Commissioner of the DEC:

518-402-8545

We thank you for your continued support.

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\$8 annually

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Memorials and contributions to our program are most welcome.

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



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

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