



Oneida Lake Association
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Greetings!

Volunteers Needed



Helpers collecting water chestnut from Big Bay. The invasive, non-native plant will root in sheltered, low-energy embayments and shorelines. Removal of the entire plant before seeds are released can be an effective method of controlling its population.

(Photos by Scott Shupe)



VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED to participate in the scheduled Friday, July 14

waterchestnut weed pull. Two locations will be covered, hopefully by a dozen or so individuals at each site: Poddygut - BigBay (*meet at the west end of Shaw Road, off Toad Harbor Road*) and the east side of Lewis Point (*meet at the restaurant parking lot beyond the gate*). Please contact OLA if you are available to help with a canoe or kayak. Director Carl Ford Cford113@yahoo.com will represent the OLA team for a pull on the east side of Lewis Point. Director Gina Duggleby gduggleby@cssd.org will represent the OLA team for the pull west of Shaw Road.

Friday JULY 14 – meet at 0800, sign in and hold a safety briefing, be on the water at 0830, and hopefully be done by 1100 before it gets too hot. (Bring water shoes, shades, sunscreen, hat, cotton gloves, water, PFD, and watercraft.)

Old News

On May 28, 1987 after a sleepless night, Saratoga Springs resident Jerry Ferris set his sights on New York's largest inland lake, Oneida Lake, hoping to become the first person ever to swim its length. <http://syracusepoststandard.ny.newsmemory.com/?token=HESmcGYL84D4JdwK9x4nbA==>

On May 29, 2017 on Jeopardy, the category was Largest State Lake? Yes, Oneida Lake!!!!

We have previously asked members and other anglers and creekside landowners to be alert and report sturgeon spawning areas to the Cornell Biologic Research Station on Shackleton Point (Tom Brooking, Teb1@Cornell.Edu). NYSDEC recently asked the same, and provided additional insight regarding management issues for this protected species that is showing signs of recovery in our waters. Please open this link and review comments: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/press/110313.html>

Here is an example of what has converted Oneida Lake from a eutrophic to mesotrophic lake. And a reason why people do not swim as they used to prior to the 1990's invasion. It is hard to swim with water shoes on, a necessity when walking on the rocks. The thin shells of quagga and zebra mussels are like razors when broken.

Note also, on this rock that came up on an anchor, the grey clay that underlies the lake bed. Termed 'thixotropic', it has the consistency of toothpaste, and is derived from rock flour washed into the lake from glacial outwash 8,000 years ago. Photo by Scott Shupe



FISHERIES

Last month we reported that the Constantia Hatchery suspended the Paddlefish program, but continues its Lake Sturgeon and Round Whitefish programs. Here are a few notes about another native hatchery program in our drainage. While these three species are not native to Oneida Lake, Atlantic Salmon are.

The Fish Creek Atlantic Salmon Club <http://www.fishcreeksalmon.org> had a very successful year raising and stocking salmon this spring (it lost last year's production due to icing of its inflow system). A shipment of 47,500 eggs from Maine a few days before Christmas 2016 was placed in two incubators. The eggs were tended each day by Club members and dead eggs removed. After hatching and absorption of the yolk sac the young fish (alevin) were moved to the hatchery tanks in mid-April.

The fish are checked each day and given a small amount of fish food to assess a 'feed response' (actively going after food). When this begins, feeders are set up over each tank and adjusted to deliver food several times during the day. By the end of May, the fish (now fry) had been tested and certified disease free, which is the green light for stocking. On Saturday May 27, approximately 35,000 Atlantic salmon fry were released in the East and West branches of Fish Creek, and Point Rock Creek and Furnace Creek, both tributaries to the East branch. At this point we have taken care of the fish for the last 5 months, now they are on their own.

The release of our fish followed releases of fry raised by Camden Middle School and Immaculate Heart Middle School in Watertown. CMS released its fish in Mad River by the school and IHC released its fish in Lindsey Creek in southern Jefferson County. The Fish Creek Atlantic Salmon Club and Trout Unlimited have collaborated on these efforts with schools for the last four years in a Trout Unlimited initiated program called Trout and Salmon in the Classroom. Students learn about the life stages of fish, fish habitat, and how various environmental factors affected the salmon. Eggs, delivered to the schools by the Fish Creek Club and incubated in an aquarium, are cared for by the students until ready to be released. Club members helped the students release their fish. This included gathering insects from the creek (stonefly and mayfly nymphs, crayfish, etc.) to illustrate natural food choices for the young salmon.

Raising and releasing salmon has been the mission of this club for the last 20 years. In this effort, the club has benefitted from the support of Harden Furniture, Department of Environmental Conservation, Camden Rod & Gun Club, and Spey Nation among others. New members are always welcome. *If you wish to donate to the effort, contact the club or OLA. Remember that salmon caught outside legal trout season, e.g., ice fishing, must be returned to the water.*

In the early 1990's a research effort by SUNY ES&F was funded by Niagara Mohawk. Habitats were examined and *S. Salar* stockings were made in Fish Creek, Mad River, 9-mile Creek, and a few others. Fish were found successfully rearing in all waters, especially 9-mile with its exceptional macroinvertebrate forage source. Tug Hill waters have great quality, but a less productive food source for Atlantic fry. ESF and the Fish Creek Atlantic Salmon Club continue some efforts, and NYSDEC does stock the Salmon River, but thiaminase concerns in the big waters holding non-native alewife will generally preclude foreseeable good numbers of this valuable native salmonid.

Anglers are encouraged to check websites and learn to identify the fish, as distinguished from the similar brown trout. This catch-and-release of a 23" fish was thought to be an Atlantic salmon. Caught off Sylvan Beach on lead core line trolled in 20 FOW by OLA member Jack Cook from Cleveland in late May, this beauty is probably a brown trout, based on the shape of the spotting and a square tail. **Atlantics have a slightly forked tail, X-shaped spots, a single line of vomerine teeth, and the upper jaw of its 'short' face does NOT extend past the back of the eye.** <http://www.fishcreeksalmon.org/atlantic-salmon-id.htm>
http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/species/nonnative/invasive/images/atlantic_salmon_identification.jpg
http://www.maine.gov/ifw/fishing/species/identification/salmon_browntrout.htm



Constantia Sturgeon Reports are now coming in from waters such as Fall Creek on Cayuga Lake and several Massena-Ogdensburg tributaries to the St. Lawrence River that lake sturgeon from the 'class of 1995' are now spawning! Cornell documented that their classmates living in Oneida Lake have been spawning for 3 years.

The fish (*see Tom Brookings' article on the OLA webpage*) have been growing faster in Oneida Lake than in any other American lake. So 'our' guys and gals matured a bit faster than the other waters into which the juveniles were stocked. Oneida Lake holds fish about 6 feet long and weighing 100 pounds! And these fish are still "kids", with a life expectancy of another 50 years or so!!

Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS) has been confirmed in Cayuga Lake, affecting round goby. To help prevent the spread of the disease, fishermen are reminded that they should always follow the baitfish regulations as noted on the DEC website at www.dec.ny.gov or in the fishing regulations guide. For instance, you may not use goby or rusty crayfish from Oneida Lake as bait, and they cannot be transported. Only release baitfish into the water body it was taken from. Never discard any unused baitfish that is bought commercially into any body of water. In addition, anglers should not move fish from one water body to another. Do not dispose of fish carcasses or by-products in any body of water. Inspect, drain, dry and disinfect boats and gear before moving your boat to another body of water.

If you witness any number of dead or dying fish (usually 100 or more), contact the nearest DEC regional office or the Rome Fish Disease Control Unit at 315-337-0910. Contact people there are Andrew Noyes and Geoffrey Eckerlin.

Cornell's new limnologic workboat collecting water samples June 13, 2017. The craft was purchased with a grant through NSF, demonstrating good use of our Federal funds. Photo by Scott Shupe



Greetings OLA members and friends, from Devon Dunbar, Watershed Volunteer Coordinator at the Onondaga Environmental Institute

OEI's summer boat stewards are having a great time talking everyone up at the boat launch! Everyone has been very friendly and supportive of their mission to help stop the spread of aquatic invasive species at Oneida Lake! Rachael and Rebecca spend their time at the launch during the busier times of the week - predominantly on the weekends - and take the time to carefully inspect trailers and watercraft for any aquatic invasive species. They are very knowledgeable and happy to answer any questions you may have about them. The season is really starting to pick up and be in full swing, so be sure to stop by and say hello if you're out at the launch!

In other regards to our boat steward program at OEI, we have enlisted a few volunteer assistant boat stewards for the summer, but are still looking for more! Assistant boat stewards will aid Rachael and Rebecca at the launch, and can even have their pick of whether they'd rather spend their time at Oneida Lake or at Onondaga Lake. We have scheduled a training for all people interested in becoming a volunteer assistant boat steward. The training will be from 9:30am to 11:30am on Friday, June 30, 2017 at Onondaga Lake Park Marina in Liverpool. This is for all potential volunteers - no matter which location you prefer. If you are interested in this awesome volunteer opportunity, please do not hesitate to contact myself at dndunbar@syr.edu or Amy Samuels at asamuels@oei2.org for more information.

We can't wait to hear from you and get the chance to meet you all.

Help OLA function. Memorials and contributions to our program are most welcome. Donations help offset our non-mail expenses, and to offset a dues increase. **OLA is a 501(c)4 organization serving protection of the Oneida Lake environment.**

Donate



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/>.

Report environmental violations. Please remember to obey all laws, rules, regulations, and codes of ethics as they pertain to boating, fishing, hunting, and management of Oneida Lake and its drainage basin. Be civil.

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