



Oneida Lake Association
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Save the Date!

The OLA Board of Directors is thrilled to announce that we will be fully returning to an in-person Annual Membership Meeting on April 26, 2023. We will meet in the **Central Square High School Auditorium**. Mark your calendars! You won't want to miss this event!



Our theme for this year is **Preserve, Protect, and Provide**. Your host, Captain Tony Buffa, will present a terrific program of speakers and awards.

Once again, we will bring you speakers from the Fish Hatchery, the Cornell Field Station at Shackelton Point, DEC Law Enforcement, and much more. We will also present our Conservationist of the Year Award.

And, as always, join us to participate in our annual raffle give-aways. We have some terrific prizes lined up for you. We will be giving away prizes for the kids, as well.

Don't miss it!

News from DEC

DEC recently initiated a Big Panfish Initiative (BPI).

According to the DEC website, baseline survey reports and the first year report card are now available. "The BPI study began in 2021 and is being conducted to determine if the size quality of sunfish (bluegill and pumpkinseed) and crappie fisheries can be improved through the use of conservative harvest regulations.

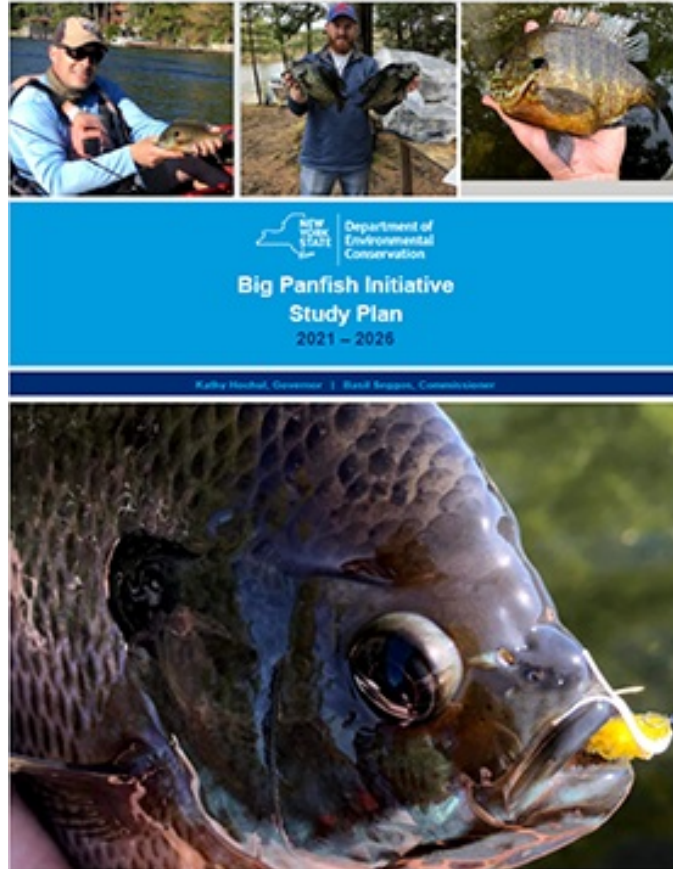
See [Sunfish and Crappie Management in New York State](#) for the program update and more information.”

“2022 sampling data is currently being analyzed and updated report cards should be available later this Spring.”

Check out the following links!

[BPI Study Assessment 2021 Interim Report \(PDF\)](#)

[BPI Study Report Cards \(PDF\)](#)



Through the Ice

A few days ago (February 15), I witnessed an ice fisherman go through the ice as his 4-wheeler was towing his shanty back to shore in Lower South Bay (across from Aero Marina). The Air One helicopter was quickly on the scene, as well as numerous Fire Department rescue personnel on land, on both the south shore of the bay and north of the incident at the marina.

The chopper pilots did a remarkable job of bringing the craft down to within inches of the ice. As the fisherman was standing near his partially sunk hut, the pilot deftly slid the copter nearby. Soon the prop wash was sliding the fisherman backwards, and he had to crawl on his hands and knees into the chopper. Within seconds, the copter lifted off and brought the man to safety. It was a brief, but dramatic, rescue. And thankfully, everyone made it out alive.

I posted the event on social media, as a way to inform our members (and others) about the current condition of the ice. My post included only the

facts, with no editorializing. (Here's what happened. Here's a video).

Of course, the social media spark immediately caught fire. Comments towards those who chimed in moved from "Thank goodness everyone's OK" to "He should pay for the rescue." And then to "He's risking other people's lives" to "No, you idiot, that's what they're paid to do." And then very quickly to "You're an @**hole" as well as numerous other name-calling, belligerent episodes.

It was amazing how quickly an informative post degenerated into insults, name calling, false accusations, and know-it-all attitudes.

In Memory of Ricky Paone

The OLA remains humbly grateful for the many donations we receive in memory of a loved one who has passed. We truly appreciate that you keep us in your thoughts in that time of grief.

Recently we received a great many donations in memory of Ricky Paone. We want to thank his many family members and friends by paying tribute to Ricky's memory.

We thank Rick Kovacs, one of Ricky's long-time friends, for providing us with the following memories:



As an avid open water and ice fisherman, Ricky loved Oneida Lake walleye and perch fishing, as well as trout fishing every spring in Naples, NY!

Growing up in Canastota, Ricky has been fishing Oneida Lake since he was a young boy. He eventually bought a place on the water in Lakeport some 25 years ago and spent the last 19 years living there with his longtime companion, Donna Woodard. In the 1990s he opened up his own tackle shop on Route 31 in Lakeport called Paone's Oneida Lake Bait and Tackle. His signature hair jigs were always tied with red thread and the addition of silver tinsel flash. They were well known if you were an Oneida Lake walleye fisherman! He taught generations to fish and tie lures, and he shared his knowledge with so many others!

Anyone lucky enough to fish with him throughout the years shared in so many great times on the lake, catching fish and enjoying so many laughs with his remarkable sense of humor and his love for fishing and entertaining!

There are many stories we recall about Ricky, but this one always stuck out, and we still laugh about it years later! Ricky, his son-in-law (Nick Wehrin), and I were walleye fishing one day a few years ago on Ricky's Crestliner boat and catching several walleyes, which already was an incredible day on the

water. But anyone that ever fished with Ricky knew his sense of humor made trips even better! This day we were stopped and boarded by the DEC and after checking all of our fish onboard, one DEC agent says to Ricky, “Can I see your life preservers?” Ricky quickly points out that they were all out in the open, strapped to the back of his fishing seats. And in the same breath, Ricky turns and says to the agent. “Don’t worry about having to get them off the seat. If my buddy here falls in (and he points to me, the big guy), I will throw him the whole seat!” The three of us never laughed so hard in our lives! We couldn’t stop laughing even as they pulled away! That memory of not only a great day of fishing but his incredible sense of humor truly sums up a typical day on the water with Ricky Paone.

At the end of the day he loved cleaning and cooking fish and shared his success with everyone around him. If you were a family friend or neighbor, you were treated to fresh walleye and perch throughout the years on many occasions. He was an incredible sportsman and even a better person. He was loved and will be truly missed by everyone that’s ever been fortunate enough to know him and spend time with him on or off the water!

The Mission of the Oneida Lake Association is to protect the fisheries, wildlife, and natural resources of Oneida Lake by promoting science-based conservation and management through education and outreach, in partnership with our members and local communities.

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 Lake environment.



[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!

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