



Bring a chair if you wish &  
copies of photos of your own  
Lourdes Camp days  
& help make a collage for  
Lourdes Camp's 75th Anniversary

Whether you will be coming to Camp  
for the First Time, Or  
Coming Back to the Camp of Your Childhood,  
Please come.

## THE SKANEATELES LAKE ASSOCIATION

Invites Current and New Members to its

2018 Annual Meeting

Lourdes Camps • Saturday, June 30th - 5pm to 7pm

1150 10 Mile Point, Skaneateles

State of the Lake 2018 to be discussed with Q & A

RSVP via the "Contact Us" tab at [SkaneatelesLake.org](http://SkaneatelesLake.org) or by calling 315-685-9106.  
2018 Annual Membership Registrations will be accepted at the door.

## President's Message: The 2017 Harmful Algal Bloom - A Call for Action!

Paul Torrisi

Over the past couple of decades Skaneateles Lake has been stressed by several invasive species, most notably zebra mussels and Eurasian milfoil. In addition, soil erosion from its shores and nutrient runoff from its 153 tributaries has been increasingly contributing to potential nutrient loading into the lake, especially with the increasing frequency and severity of storms. Furthermore, the pressures of lakeside and watershed development have also contributed to increasing the pollution entering the lake.

Despite all of the above, Skaneateles Lake remained in relatively good shape with a AA rating and maintenance of its filtration avoidance waiver from the NY State Dept. of Health. But, in the late summer of 2017, for the first time in anyone's memory, the lake suffered a bloom of *Microcystis aeruginosa*, a toxic cyanobacteria known as a harmful algal bloom (HAB).

This persisted for weeks and was of grave concern to those drinking the water, and for recreational users of the lake. It captured the attention of the entire region because the lake

was thought to be "immune" from a HAB.

Continued degradation of Skaneateles Lake, if not slowed, will have an enormous impact on the entire region. **Property values** will be adversely affected, reducing tax revenue, and making the area less desirable for newcomers. Tourism will also be impacted, as well as shops, restaurants, country clubs, marinas and other recreational and business venues. Most importantly, the City of Syracuse (and the Town and Village of Skaneateles) will be at **risk of losing its filtration avoidance waiver**, thus requiring construction of filtration plants at an estimated cost of hundreds of millions of our tax dollars.

The HAB we experienced last fall was a real call for ACTION! SLA quickly came up with a **HAB Action Plan** for Skaneateles Lake, consisting of **4 major initiatives** aimed at substantially reducing the chances of HABs recurring; 1) Watershed Nutrient Management Work Group Co-Chaired by Bob Werner and Bill Dean, 2) Watershed Community Citizens Task Force, Chaired by Mary Menapace,

3) Watershed Governance Work Group, Co-Chaired by Bob Liegel and Rich Hole. These first 3 initiatives of the SLA Plan are discussed in more detail in this Newsletter and will be addressed again with ample opportunity for discussion at our Annual meeting on Saturday, June 30th. The 4th, initiative of the SLA HAB Action Plan, involves financing the restoration of the lake through both public and private sources. That 4th initiative is just about ready and will be announced by its Committee Co-Chair Bill Dean and Dave Birchenough in the very near future.

As far as its invasive species effort, the SLA's annual expense, now approaching \$250,000 for its milfoil control and lake stewardship programs, has been predominantly funded through the annual SLA membership, which continues to grow and currently stands at over 800 households. We are confident of maintaining these critical programs through your continued annual membership and support. Our HAB Action Plan will require another and even greater level of initiative.

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# A Report from the Nutrient Management Workgroup

Robert Werner and Bill Dean

On September 13, 2017, three members of the Skaneateles Lake Association were asked to check out what was suspected of being the start of a bloom in the lake. They took a sample from a slender yellow green streak just south of 5-mile point. The sample was sent off to SUNY ESF for analysis. Two days later the lab results were in and we were notified that this was *Microcystis aeruginosa*, the cyanobacteria that forms harmful algal blooms (HABs). From that point on, for the next 4 weeks or so we were all occupied with trying to understand this sea change in the character of our lake.

*Microcystis* is a very primitive organism that has been around for some 3 billion years. It is not an invasive species since it can be found in nearly all of the lakes on the planet. It has survived that long because of its adaptability. It reproduces quite rapidly when conditions are right. It needs warm water, plenty of sunlight, a stable water column and the proper mix of nutrients to reproduce rapidly. The conditions last summer were perfect for developing a bloom. A huge surge in nutrients entered the lake when two heavy rain events in July produced nearly 6 inches of rain. Some weeks later the cloudy days disappeared and sunny, warm, calm days followed setting up perfect conditions for the bloom. *Microcystis* has the ability to produce a toxin called microcystin that can have serious effects on humans exposed to the water. Because of this, many activities in the lake were curtailed due to the bloom.

So what can be done to prevent this from happening in the future? Of the 4 requirements for a bloom to occur: sunlight, warm water, a stable water column and the appropriate level of nutrients; the only one that we can control is the nutrient level in the lake. To that end the Skaneateles Lake Association formed four workgroups to begin attacking this problem, one of which was the Skaneateles Lake Watershed Nutrient Management Workgroup. In October, this workgroup, co-chaired by Bill Dean and Bob Werner, began assembling a group of experts representing major lake stakeholders.

The Nutrient Management Workgroup members include: Bob Werner (SLA Board – Limnologist, Co-Chair); Bill Dean (SLA Board – Biochemist, Co-Chair); Mark Burger (Onondaga County Soil and Water Conservation District); Rich Abbott (Syracuse Water District); Aimee Clinkhammer (DEC Watershed Coordinator, Finger Lakes Watershed HUB); Mary Sennett (SLA Board - Current Village of Skaneateles Trustee and former Town of Skaneateles Supervisor); Neil Murphy (SLA member - SUNY ESF President-Emeritus); Richard Wiles (SLA member - Climate Central Senior Vice President, Strategy Integration); Zack Odell (Finger Lakes Land Trust); Brian Madigan (SLA member - Environmental Consultant).

The “Nine Element Plan” was chosen as the formal basis for the future efforts of the SLA’s Nutrient Management Workgroup. A Nine Element Watershed Management Plan is a plan that details all of the concerns that a community may have with regard to water quality, invasive species, harmful algal blooms, aquatic habitat

and a myriad of other issues that may affect the lake ecosystem. It will also generate a strategy to address these concerns. Nine Element (9E) Plans are developed by people who live and work within the watershed and with support from local and state agencies. The nine minimum elements are intended to ensure that the causes of deteriorating water quality are identified, that key stakeholders are involved in the planning process, and that restoration and protection strategies are identified that will address the water quality concerns. The plan is used to gather data, build models of the watershed and lake, and using those models to predict high impact targets for action. The Plan itself will be assembled and managed by the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board. The process will be 75% funded by the NY Dept. of State. The 25% match is to be met by other sources. The Town of Skaneateles has agreed to sponsor the 9E Plan for Skaneateles Lake. Upon completion, the plan will not only provide a strategy for moving forward but will also significantly improve chances of winning grants to fund future efforts. Given the urgency, plans are being put in place to immediately begin gathering the critical data required to effectively target the key sources of nutrient runoff. Significant funds will be required and a team is now in place to address this critical issue.

We are very fortunate that while SLA was developing the 9 Element Plan, Governor Cuomo proposed the formation of 12 HAB Action Plans to address the HAB issue on 12 lakes within New York, including Skaneateles. The work on the HAB Action Plan will supplement our efforts in developing the 9E plan by gathering data and providing funds for a variety of mitigation efforts.

The SLA 9E team is working closely with the newly formed DEC HAB Action Plan steering committee to define specific actions and to ensure that there is no overlap in our efforts. Most of the members of the SLA workgroup (6 of 10) are members of the HAB Action Plan Steering Committee, which aids in preventing redundancies.

The first phase for both is to gather the key pieces of information needed to clearly define the problem. This involves not only monitoring tributaries and the watershed, but also gathering critical data to develop mathematical models of both the watershed and the lake to help understand and predict what is likely to happen to the lake under different scenarios. These models can then help determine the mitigation strategies needed to make the lake and watershed more resilient in the future. The HAB Action Plan effort is being coordinated with the 9E Plan effort to ensure that data is shared and that there are no redundancies. Once the 9 Element plan is complete we will not only have a comprehensive plan for moving forward, but it will provide us with advantages in obtaining grants for various mitigation projects that we may want to implement.

**So, although the HAB last year made us all fear for the future of Skaneateles Lake, it also has given us the stimulus and opportunity to plan and work together to protect this very wonderful and unique lake.**

## SLA EXPLORES CREATING A WATERSHED GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Richard Hole

Among the initiatives undertaken by the SLA following the harmful algal bloom (“HAB”) was the establishment of a Watershed Governance Work Group, Co-Chaired by Bob Liegel and Rich Hole to explore the creation of a governance structure for the Lake watershed. While much activity is underway to address the causes for HABs, what is missing, and what State officials have advised is critical, is an entity comprised of the governmental entities having responsibility for the watershed that can serve as the central hub for collaboration among water resource management professionals, soil and water conservation districts, elected officials, water purveyors, county and city agencies, and area research institutions.

The SLA has considered several governance models used for other lakes for use in the management of the Skaneateles Lake watershed. For example, the SLA reviewed the “Commission” model that is used for Lake George, but concluded that it was extraordinarily complex and likely would take several years to establish because State legislation to create a Commission would be needed. The SLA also examined an Inter-Municipal Organization (“IMO”), which is a model used for Cayuga Lake, but concluded that an IMO lacks meaningful structure and permanence, since it essentially is a compact among governmental entities to cooperate.

The SLA was drawn to the model used for Owasco Lake, known as a Local Development Corporation (“LDC”) established under Section 1411 of the New York Not-For-Profit Corporation Law. An LDC has a perpetual existence. It would be governed by representatives of the governmental entities within the watershed and the City of Syracuse. It does not need to be “affirmed” periodically by them and is not impacted by election changes in the leadership of the governmental entities. An LDC is tax exempt in New York and can gain federal tax exemption upon application to the IRS. An LDC can own land, issue tax-exempt bonds, receive tax-deductible contributions, and receive public and private grants.

*(continued on page 4)*

## Report from the Watershed Community Citizens Task Force

Mary Menapace

The goal of this group, chaired by Mary Menapace, is to provide Skaneateles Lake watershed residents with the knowledge base, skills and opportunities to do all they can to protect our most important community asset, Skaneateles Lake. The Citizens Task Force consists of lakefront owners, village and town residents and former town officials. We work with agencies including the Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE), the City of Syracuse, the watershed towns, and local advocacy groups such as Sustainable Skaneateles and Citizens to Preserve the Character of Skaneateles. Open meetings start in June. All are welcome to become members. Your ideas and involvement are needed for our ongoing work. “It takes a village” expands to “It takes a Watershed.”

We are sponsoring/co-sponsoring an ongoing series of public forums. The first, held in April at the Skaneateles Library, was hosted by Sustainable Skaneateles, CCE and Skaneateles Library. Ellen Folts from Amanda’s Garden Native Perennial Nursery presented on Native Plantings – Improving Water Quality. On June 6th an important forum on Drinking Water and HABs will be presented in collaboration with the CCE, the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), the Town of Skaneateles, the City of Syracuse and the Onondaga County Health Department. Future forums will include septic maintenance and drinking water wells, and more on riparian buffers, native plants and landscape planning for water quality. Let us know what you would like for other future forum topics.

Opportunities for volunteers to conduct stream monitoring and HAB surveillance will be part of this Task Force’s efforts. Both programs are being developed now with the SLA, the DEC and the City of Syracuse and will be rolling out in June. The description of the programs and schedule

for training for these volunteer positions will be posted on the SLA website (SkaneatelesLake.org) under the News/ Events tab. Use the “Contact Us” tab on our website to sign up, noting your name, the position you might be interested in and contact information.

We all have opportunities to do our part. Consider that water moves – every drop of water in the watershed eventually makes its way to the lake. To get started right now:

1. When you are planting, buy native plants. They are less maintenance, provide habitat and food for pollinating insects, are drought and flood tolerant and help prevent erosion as their roots are generally deeper. Ask your landscaper or nursery for guidance on appropriate native plants for your site.
  2. Be smart about lawncare. Test your soil before indiscriminately fertilizing as your lawn may not need it. Soil testing kits are available at the Skaneateles Town Hall. The test fee is \$7.00. Spot target specific pest treatments if you have a problem using alternatives to chemicals. Instruct your lawncare professional to do the same. Only use pesticides as a very last resort and use sparingly.
  3. Look under the kitchen sink and replace your standby cleaning supplies with safe, healthy alternatives. There are many good, highly effective and nontoxic cleaning soaps and detergents. It is also very smart to read your cleaning supply labels. Look specifically for no-VOC products. Your indoor air quality will be improved and so will the water quality of the lake.
- We hope to see and talk to many of you at the Drinking Water and HABs forum on June 6th. There will be opportunities there to learn more about programming and more specifics about the volunteer opportunities.

**SLA Board of Directors:** Paul F. Torrissi, M.D., President - Buzz Roberts, M.D., Vice President - Dessa Coling Bergen, MLS, Secretary - Richard D. Hole, Esq., Treasurer - Robert G. Werner, Ph.D., Lake Ecologist - Deborah Bobbett - William Dean, Ph.D. - Jed Delmonico - Robert DeWitt - Charles Driscoll, Ph.D. - Fran Fish - Joseph Grasso - Bill Hecht - Joseph M. Hennigan - Deborah M. Hole - Robert Liegel, Esq. - Patricia Orr - Larry L. Rothenberg, Esq. - Mary Sennett - James Tift, M.D. - James Tuozzolo  
**Newsletter Editor:** Gretchen Roberts & Fran Fish **Staff:** Paul Torrissi, William Dean, Robert Werner, Buzz Roberts, Richard Hole, Mary Menapace



# Skaneateles Lake Association, Inc.

P.O. Box 862  
Skaneateles, NY 13152

## SLA EXPLORES CREATING A WATERSHED GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE (continued from page 3) Richard Hole

The LDC for Skaneateles Lake would be known as the Skaneateles Lake Watershed Management Council, Inc. The Council's functions and responsibilities ultimately would be determined by the governmental entities, but based on input from State officials, it would play a major role in obtaining state and federal funding for the various projects that will take place around and in Skaneateles Lake to protect and preserve the Lake.

Over the next several months, the SLA intends to make presentations to each of the governmental entities on the formation of the Council. Our hope is that these stakeholders will embrace the concept and benefits of the Council and move expeditiously to form and implement it.

## SLA Watercraft Steward Program 2018

Buzz Roberts

Aquatic invasive species remain a concern for Skaneateles Lake. Hydrilla, the prolific weed that has choked southern lakes, was found last year in 25 acres of Cayuga Lake off the shore of Aurora. It had previously been found in the Cayuga Lake Inlet. Other invasive species, Zebra and Quagga mussels, are now well established in Skaneateles Lake and may be playing a role in harmful algal blooms. In 2017, 4210 boats entering the lake were inspected with vegetation removed from 132.

Last fall, thanks to a grant from the CNY Community Foundation, we were able to expand our watercraft steward program into September and October. We employed "senior stewards" to inspect boats to ensure that they were "Clean, Drained, and Dry" prior to their launch into the lake. Laurie Kenyon, Roy Truswell, John Colomb, and Al Coon all took on the fall task. This year we are going to use these stewards in May, as well, prior to the arrival of college students. Our "summer stewards" this year are Will Thomas, Jeremy Castle, Alex Frank, Anna Denhoff, and Julia Wilcox. The DEC launch on West Lake Rd. will be covered 7 days a week, with the town launches at the Mandana and Scott sites manned on weekends. The Glen Haven boat channel was dredged this past year and that launch may warrant coverage as well.

Here is an update on some of stewards. One of our first watercraft stewards, Rachael Dewitt, graduated last year from the University of Vermont. This year, until she leaves for graduate school in marine biology, she has started the SLA social network program. Dave Dubois is doing research for the National Forestry service in Oregon. Matt Wolford worked for a year in a health clinic in Uganda and its now working for a firm in Wisconsin involved with electronic medical records. Sophie Hearn is in an honors program at Cornell and will be presenting a research paper at the New York State Federation of Lakes conference at Lake George this year. Will Thomas, our longest serving steward, is in college at ESF and will be attending the Ranger School at Wanakena in June prior to serving as a steward in July and August.

### Skaneateles Lake Association, Inc. Membership Registration Form Mail to Skaneateles Lake Association P. O. 862 Skaneateles, NY 13152

Name \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
(Alternate Address)

Street \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

- Family: \$100     Individual: \$50     Milfoil Boat Sponsor & Membership: \$1,000  
 Milfoil Boat Co-sponsor & Membership: \$250     Lake Steward Sponsor & Membership: \$175