

LAKE FOAM

By R. G. Werner

Over the last several years there has been a visible increase in the amount of foam on Skaneateles Lake. The foam accumulates along the shore and in bays after windy days. If you try to pick up the foam you will find that it is stiff and sticky, not unlike beaten egg whites or meringue. As you might expect, the foam is of considerable concern to residents around the lake.

The Skaneateles Lake Association is also concerned and has collected samples for certified analysis to determine the source of this material. Preliminary results are in and we wanted to share this with you.

Fundamentally, foam occurs when bubbles are trapped underwater and the surface tension is flexible enough to prevent the bubble from bursting when it reaches the surface. The flexibility of the surface tension is a function of the concentration of surfactants in the water. Surfactants are naturally occurring compounds like soluble organic matter or man-made products such as detergents.

Dr. William Sawyer, a member of the SLA board and a forensic toxicologist has ordered the test and reviewed the results of the chemical analysis of the foam and has concluded that:

“Based upon the above analyses, it is highly probable that the anionic surfactants measured are from natural degradation of biological matter within the lake. No objective evidence of any anthropogenic contaminants was detected.”

Apparently, this phenomenon has been noted in Canandaigua Lake, Cayuga Lake and Oneida Lake to name just a few in our area.

This summer we will continue our efforts to understand what is behind the unusually large amounts of foam. We will try to stay on top of this and keep you informed as we learn more.

SKANEATELES LAKE STEWARDS

by Buzz Roberts

Skaneateles Lake Association's Invasive Species Monitoring Stewards started working Memorial weekend. They are inspecting boats at the state launch on West Lake Road from 8am to 6pm week days and weekends from 5:30am to 6:00pm. The town launches at Mandana, Town of Scott, and the Glen Haven launches are covered on weekends from 8:00am to 4:00pm. With boat owners permission, stewards remove any plant or animal material from boats and trailers. They also educate the boating public on having boats “clean, drained, and dry” prior to launching.

The goal is to prevent additional invasive species from entering the lake. **The major current threat is from Hydrilla - a prolific invader.** \$500,000 has been spent trying to eradicate it from the Cayuga Lake Inlet and along the shoreline of southern Cayuga Lake with chemical treatments. \$300,000 has been spent to remove it from tributaries to the Erie Canal in Tonawanda, New York. The state of Florida spends \$40 million a year just to “mow” the hydrilla infested lakes to allow boating.

A proposed DEC regulation will require all boats being launched at DEC sites to be free of vegetation and to have their bilges and live wells drained. The first violation will be met with a warning, the second with a fine. Our DEC state launch will have an area marked at the far corner of the parking lot for drainage should any boat arrive without previously being drained. In addition, on weekends the Town of Skaneateles parking attendants at the entrance of the state launch will inform boaters that bilges and live wells have to be emptied prior to proceeding to the inspection area. In turn, the SLA stewards will let the parking attendants know when the parking area is full.

Our stewards this year will be Robert Frank, Tom Halstead, Olivia Hamlin, Erica Tardiff, Will Thomas, and Matt Walford. They all have an avid interest in the environment and are dedicated to preserving the clear, pure waters of Skaneateles Lake.



Standard signs being posted at launch sites around Skaneateles Lake.

“The Times They are A-Changin”

A Message from President Paul Torrisi

Many of us can recall the hit song by Bob Dylan in the early 60's "The Times They are A-Changin." It was a catchy ballad with poignant lyrics about how our society and mores were changing and no one could stand in the way and stop it!

Well, let's hope we can do something about our "changing environment" and particularly the impact of invasive species on our lakes and woodlands!

Who would have thought 35-40 years ago when I first started sailing, canoeing, and swimming on beautiful Skaneateles Lake we would have to worry about the looming invasion of Zebra Mussels, Eurasian Milfoil, Asian Clams, Hydrilla, Water Chestnut, Round Goby, Asian Carp, etc., etc.!! The Lake had been clear and pristine for as long as anyone could remember, but now "The Times They are A-Changing!"

We've been putting up with Zebra mussels for a couple of decades and through the efforts of the Skaneateles Lake Association and "over a million dollars" these past several years we've been trying to control the potentially devastating impact of Eurasian Milfoil on the pristine waters of Skaneateles Lake. Most recently the SLA has initiated the Lake Steward Monitoring Program at boat launch sites around the lake in an effort to educate the boating public about the ever increasing threat of aquatic invasive species and to try to limit the introduction of existing and new species into the lake. Will

this be enough to keep our waters clean and pure, now, and for future generations?

This month the Lake George Association with approval from the Lake George Park Commission is starting a program of mandatory boat inspection and decontamination at all the boat launch sites around their lake. Beginning May 15th one will need to have their boat inspected at one of 6 regional inspection stations. If it passes inspection as "Clean, Drained, and Dry" then the boat is sealed to the trailer and one can continue to the launch facility. If it does not meet the "Clean, Drained, and Dry" standard it will be directed to a high-pressure hot water decontamination unit for cleaning before the boat is sealed to the trailer. The launch sites around the lake are responsible for checking for seals, removing them from boats and then re-sealing the boat to the trailer as you leave the lake. If you don't go anywhere else-and your seal stays intact-you can just keep launching without additional inspections. If, however, you take your boat to another waterbody and then return, you will have to go through the inspection process again. So, if you want to save time and get right out on the water the key is to arrive "Clean, Drained, and Dry!"

It remains to be seen if this Lake George approach is the optimal way to control the spread of aquatic invasives or not. However, the advantage they have is the Commission set up years ago join-

ing together all the municipalities and counties around the lake as "one voice," so that regulatory policies are the same over the entire lake.

It's becoming increasingly obvious that a similar situation needs to be established on Skaneateles Lake for any future policies to be effective lakewide. A "consortium" of sorts needs to be created effectively uniting the 5 municipalities, 3 counties, and the City of Syracuse together with the State to speak with one voice.

Kudos to Skaneateles Town Supervisor Mary Sennett and the Town Board for organizing the first meeting held on March 20, 2014! Representatives from the towns of Skaneateles, Spafford, and Niles were present along with representation from the City of Syracuse, Cornell Coop Extension, and the SLA. Much was discussed but even more importantly a unifying spirit was initiated. With further meetings in the near future one can only hope that this "snowball" effect will keep rolling so that we can truly have a consortium and accomplish sound and reasonable policy to continue to keep our lake "clean and pure" because the "times are surely changing" and we cannot afford to allow the continued invasion of potentially destructive species to enter Skaneateles Lake.

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WHERE DO WE STAND WITH MILFOIL?

by R.G. Werner

Late last summer we surveyed the lake looking for patches of milfoil. We do this each year after the crews have finished laying down the benthic matting. This way we can identify areas that will need attention the following year. We used a new system last summer from ciBioBase with a sonar/gps mapping capability. This includes a sophisticated software package that allows for measurement of the area and volume of weed patches.

The results were very encouraging. Excluding the very large infected area on the shelf at the south end of the lake we have identified only 2 acres of milfoil that will need attention. This is very good news. We estimate that this is about 5% of what was there when we began the project.

The large patch at the south end of the lake is more problematic. The bottom is silt for the most part and it is difficult for the divers to work on a silt bottom. Deep silt causes divers working on the bottom to sink into the silt creating significant turbidity, reducing visibility to zero which makes it impossible to lay matting or pull out vegetation by hand. We are not giving up on this, however. We first plan to identify patches that have a limited amount of silt and mat them first. By progressively working our way into the larger patch we hope to reduce the reproductive capability of the milfoil and hopefully over time we will be able to reduce the milfoil enough so that other species might be able to return and occupy that space.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

The Finger Lakes Land Trust is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. To date they have been able to conserve more than 16,000 acres of scenic open space lands including lands with public access in the Skaneateles area. Their efforts complement the work of the Skaneateles Lake Association. For additional information on the celebration events planned, please visit www.fllt.org.

Skaneateles Lake Association, Inc. Membership Registration Form

Name _____ E-mail Address _____

Street _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

(Enter winter contact information below, if different.)

Street _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Family: \$100 Individual: \$50 Other: \$ _____

Milfoil Boat Sponsor & Membership: \$1,000 Milfoil Boat Co-sponsor & Membership: \$250

Lake Steward Sponsor and Membership: \$175

Please make checks for your membership dues and any donations payable to the **Skaneateles Lake Association, Inc.**
Mail your membership application and check to: Skaneateles Lake Association, Inc., P. O. Box 862, Skaneateles, NY 13152
You may also join SLA, pay your dues, and make donations at: www.SkaneatelesLake.org