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The Onondaga County Legislature awards its Gold Seal Award to Skaneateles Lake Association

The award acknowledges the SLA's work to preserve and protect Skaneateles Lake, the source for drinking water for over 200,000 people in Syracuse and several western suburbs.

May 5, 2026 – SKANEATELES, NY – The Onondaga County Legislature awarded the [Skaneateles Lake Association](#) (SLA) its Gold Seal award at a ceremony today at the Onondaga County Courthouse Legislative Chambers. The Legislature's highest honor, the Gold Seal award acknowledges the SLA's leadership in safeguarding the lake's water quality and its proactive, science-driven efforts to understand and mitigate Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs), which first started plaguing the lake in the summer of 2017. Established more than 50 years ago, the SLA is the only volunteer-based, nonprofit dedicated to preserving and protecting Skaneateles Lake.

The Gold Seal award is presented selectively by county legislators to recognize extraordinary civic contributions that strengthen the community and advance public wellbeing. Recent public presentations of the Legislature's Gold Seal and related honors have highlighted efforts in public health, community service, and collaborative regional initiatives.

"The Skaneateles Lake Association exemplifies what community leadership looks like. Their commitment to protecting one of Central New York's most important natural resources is tireless, science-based, and deeply collaborative," said County Legislator Gregg Eriksen. "This Gold Seal award reflects the Legislature's gratitude for their work and the impact it has on residents, visitors, and future generations."

"We are honored to receive this recognition from the Onondaga County Legislature. Protecting Skaneateles Lake is a responsibility we share with our partners, volunteers, and supporters across the watershed. This award underscores the importance of continued vigilance, innovation, and community engagement in the face of growing environmental challenges," said Frank Moses, the SLA's executive director.

Via its Five-Year Lake Protection Plan, the SLA works to protect and preserve Skaneateles Lake via these protection programs:

- **Invasive Species Management:** Since 2006, the SLA has successfully managed a robust [Milfoil Control](#) program to mitigate invasive plants, like Eurasian milfoil, by laying specialized

benthic mats over patches of this invasive weed. In addition, the SLA's Boat Launch Steward Program has stewards at the lake's three public launches to inspect watercraft, which prevents the introduction of aggressive species like Hydrilla.

- **Water Quality Monitoring:** The association actively works with research teams from SU, [ESF](#) and Cornell to research and monitor Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs). By tracking nutrient loading and water clarity, they provide early warnings and data to help mitigate toxin risks for people and pets.
- **Watershed Preservation:** The SLA works to protect [Eastern Hemlock trees](#) from the deadly Hemlock Woolly Adelgid by providing treatment to infected trees to homeowners in the Skaneateles watershed. These trees are critical "keystone" species that stabilize shorelines and filter runoff, preventing excess nutrients from entering the lake.
- **Community Education:** Through their "[Lake Friendly Living](#)" initiative, the SLA encourages residents to reduce pesticide use, manage stormwater, and maintain septic systems to minimize their environmental footprint. By combining scientific research, hands-on remediation and public advocacy, the SLA ensures that Skaneateles Lake remains "clear and pure" for recreational use and as a sustainable water source for future generations.

About The Skaneateles Lake Association

First established in 1969, the Skaneateles Lake Association is a 501(c) non-profit that dedicates 100% of its efforts to preserving and protecting Skaneateles Lake. One of only six unfiltered water sources in the entire country, Skaneateles Lake provides drinking water to more than 200,000 people in the city of Syracuse as well as residents of Skaneateles, Jordan, Elbridge, Salina, and DeWitt, but it is under constant threat from climate change, development and invasive species. Subsequently, the SLA works to protect the lake from invasive species and harmful algal blooms; preserve the watershed's hemlock forests, which are critical to maintaining the overall health of the lake; and educate the public on lake-safe gardening, farming and septic-tank maintenance.

Established, supported and led by a volunteer force of community members, the SLA has been protecting Skaneateles Lake for over 55 years. To learn more about the SLA's proven, results-oriented efforts and programs and to join our growing community of lake protectors, go to <https://skaneateleslake.org>.

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