

Water Quality Issues Misc. – Chapter #39E

Rich Eliasch attended a Watershed Commission meeting held April 27, 2000 in the Village Hall. He would push for the SLA to be put back on the board as a voting delegate. The concerns that he brought up were; the lake level; metering; monitoring and graphic summaries, as well as the high water mark since it was eroding land along the shore because it was too high. The water level seemed to be too high in the spring and too low in the fall and it appeared to be an ongoing problem.

Vice President Roy Schneggenburger reported on efforts to stop runoff and nutrients from entering Silver Lake. He distributed pictures from tours that were taken on local farms. There was a new above ground tank on West Lake Road that held 180 day storage; True Farm on Rte. 246 had 210 day storage and Halo Farms on Rte. 39 had 2 lagoons with a total capacity of 6 million gallons of manure. There were 42,000 people living in Wyoming County and 88,000 milking cows. Wyoming County was the largest milk producing county in NYS, which ranked 3rd in the U.S. for milk production.

In 2006 Bill Soules had been watching runoff and had a photograph from a culvert of a plume going into the lake. He noted that many people were doing restoration without a sediment fence. The water quality report from Bill at the November 2006 meeting contained a statement from the county that asked the SLA to ID tributaries for funding. According to Bill the county has had such a list for 10 years as well as photos of plumes he provided. Private Drive #3 was a known problem area. Seven sediment dams proposed were cancelled due to fears that they would not be maintained. A positive was that the project done on Grove Road was showcased by the county.

For the first time (2001) it was stated the unofficial word was that zebra mussels may have been found in Silver Lake. The DEC would investigate this issue at Silver Lake Marine. The DEC had confirmed that zebra mussels were in both ends of Silver Lake.

Bill stated that the Secchi disk showed 12-15 foot clarity. Jerry asked why the lake was so clear. Bill answered that it was from the zebra mussels. Bill Soules thanked Bayne Johnson for his help during the summer, as he gave the water quality report at the September 2006 meeting. He continued saying that every rock in a weed bed that was protruding had a zebra mussel colony on it.

In 2011 it was noted that the zebra mussels were making a comeback in Silver Lake. Having brick or block pavers suspended in 6' of water was used as a "block" to attract zebra mussels to observe their activity. Bill planned to use this process. He began setting up test sites that year (2011). Mick Griffin noted that zebra mussels seemed to show a dislike for aluminum, Bill noticed that they loved PVC pipes. They also loved steel. The zebra mussels were rarely found on aluminum.

In a report shared with the board showed input from around the lake that there was a large decrease in zebra mussels. The SLA would put this study in the newsletter. It added that about 89% of pumpkin sunfish consume zebra mussels and that it made up 50% of their diet.

New business that was brought before the board at the September 2003 meeting was the algae problem around the lake. Mary Kay Barton reported that people did not want to pay dues because it did not appear that the SLA was doing anything about it. Pat Urschel of Broadbooks Tract brought a bucket of algae that was by his dock to the meeting, several pictures were also presented. It was thick, moldy, smelly and impassable for boats, motors, people, and there were questions regarding its impact to health. Henry Gabryszak urged the SLA to pursue the health and safety concerns and clean up this issue fully with the municipalities and other authorities. Bill Soules had contacted Matt Sanderson, biologist for Region 8 DEC, who said an herbicide on Waneta-Lamoka Lakes was used after a very extensive permit process. Conesus Lake was in a pilot program to treat 2.5 acres with a chemical called Aquathol. Bill also brought in County Water Technician Reckahn to tour the lake. Rich learned that there wasn't enough oxygen in the water to support fish life at the northwest corner of the lake. Lorraine continued with a report on the Austin/Shearman Tract residents' lobby of the

Castile Town Board on conditions there which included poor drainage, algae, and dead fish floating on the algae cover. One of the unusual features of the algae was a coating on the fibers. Reckahn could not distinguish if it was hazardous algae or not. Several directors believed the cause was farm runoff. Annette Payne asked the town of Castile about dredging and using some of our tax money to improve the flow of the water in the inlet and outlet. She was told by Councilman Stan Klein that it would cost millions and it would not happen due to the fears it would release heavy metals from the old industries there. Bayne Johnson of Private Drive #3 added that the blue algae blooms were investigated by the SLA under the leadership of Elaine Cook and there should be a report on it. Bill recalled that in the spring the lake was clear to 8-9 meters (24-27 feet). It was at 1.8 meters and the report showed phosphorus. There were very little rain-free days so chemicals did not have time to penetrate the soil. Lorraine said that farms in the watershed were targeted for cleanup by the Watershed Commission and entered into financial partnerships to contain them as well as to comply with CAFO (Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations) regulations that spelled out how much, when, and where, nutrients were put onto fields. People on the lake were still using chemical fertilizers and herbicides on their lawns and gardens. The DEC attended the meeting and said that algae were typical of all WNY lakes noting it was the 5th wettest summer on record.

A resident on Lakeview Avenue in the SL Institute spoke on the lake conditions. She had a child with allergies but with the turnover of the lake, the allergies were more intense. She had many visits to the doctor's office and the asthma was considerably worse with rashes that were appearing. She then gave a detailed report on blue/green algae blooms. Bayne Johnson suggested that an article be put in the directory concerning this annual event. Jerry Kelly added that the SLA needed to take serious action. The SLA should have the Wyoming County Representative and DEC come to our spring meetings.

Tom Kaufman reported that the water temperature was 78 degrees. Algae notifications would be emailed out by the Department of Health if it would become an issue. Monitoring was ongoing. Kelly Paganelli suggested getting emails so that members could be notified quickly if there was an algae problem. Sampling was done every two weeks and would be sent to the State Department of Health to test for harmful algae. If there was a problem, the SLA would be emailed right away. 2 weeks ago surface samples from a non-toxic bloom were sent in and it was returned as safe. This was done to test the system.

At a meeting held in 2011 Bill Soules told the board that the handbooks on algae blooms were available and would be handed out with the packets. The algae blooms were caused by high temperatures, shallow water, and lack of wind. Cutting weeds could make the issue worse by leaving organic material on the bottom of lake where algae can grow. Mats would help around dock areas. Do not drink the water if it was an off-color or even use it in watering vegetables. Skin contact could cause a rash. It would be best to keep pets out of the water; they could ingest algae. Also, the pets should be rinsed off so that grooming does not cause ingestion. Bill sent an algae sample in for testing. He would get computer pictures of different algae to put on the website so people would understand what was happening in the lake.

Bill Soules shared news of Viro Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS) that had been found in area lakes that included Conesus Lake, which impacted pan fish, not humans. It was noted it could be found in bait fish minnows. Bill recommended writing a notice on SLA letterhead to take to area bait sellers and the State Park launch. Conesus Lake Association had 38 dead or dying walleye that tested positive for it.

Bill added the Lake was shocked again and found no Walleye reproduction. In 2004 the lake had a full range of ages & sizes. The past two years there were no young fish. There were many dead fish at North end of lake of all species. The board was concerned why this happened. Bill Soules said the DEC had no concern unless there was a "massive kill". Explanations could be high heat, early spawning, and/or hook & release.

At a 2011 meeting Dick Swanson read the Water quality Committee report from Bill Soules. It reported that there was a fish kill that had a large number of dead Blue Gills & Sunfish. He contacted the DEC, but they were not concerned at the time. Some fisherman observed Bluegills with a fungus on them. Tom Kaufman noted an article on the freeze-thaw cycle that would create fungus and kill issues. He observed dead fish also. Many reported of this from the South end of the lake.