

Chautauqua Lake & Watershed Management Alliance
201 West 3rd Street, Suite 115
Jamestown, NY 14701
716-661-8900

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 19, 2020

Contact: Vince Horrigan
(716) 661-8918

INTRODUCING THE JEFFERSON PROJECT TO CHAUTAUQUA LAKE

The Chautauqua Lake and Watershed Management Alliance (Alliance) is pleased to announce that The Jefferson Project at Lake George, a state-of-the-art program for water quality and Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) research, will be introduced to Chautauqua Lake in 2020. In partnership with the Chautauqua County Government and Chautauqua Institution, the Alliance has finalized the arrangements to bring The Jefferson Project Team from Lake George to Chautauqua Lake later this month.

The Jefferson Project is a collaboration of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, IBM Research, and The FUND for Lake George, which employs a sophisticated technological approach to studying fresh water, with a goal of understanding the impact of human activity on fresh water, and how to mitigate those effects.

The initial phase of the project will involve the deployment of two Vertical Profilers and Acoustic Doppler Current Profilers with attached weather stations in the North and South Basins of Chautauqua Lake. These sensors track water conditions from the surface to the bottom every hour, quantify water circulation patterns, and monitor local weather conditions. The sensor network data will be integrated with survey data, including water chemistry and algae data that will be collected for advanced analysis of the physical, chemical, and biological characteristics of the lake and their effect on HABs. In addition, the team will be creating sophisticated computer models of the local weather, runoff, lake circulation, and food webs. Logistical support including housing for the research team and project space will be provided by Chautauqua Institution and other Alliance partners as the details are finalized. This initial phase of The Jefferson Project at Chautauqua Lake is expected to be completed by November when the profilers are removed from the Lake for winter storage.

The Jefferson Project will join other Chautauqua Lake HAB initiatives led by the State University of New York at Fredonia, Bowling Green State University, and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers HAB Interception, Treatment, and Transformation System (HABITATS) pilot program to address the HAB problem in Chautauqua Lake.

“This is a true game changer in terms of a comprehensive scientific approach to understanding the causes of HABs and mitigating their impact on Chautauqua Lake,” said Vince Horrigan, Alliance Executive Director.

“We are honored to help host The Jefferson Project and to support their collaborative research and data collection initiatives that will definitely bolster our region’s science-based approach to Chautauqua Lake Conservation,” said Michael E. Hill, President of Chautauqua Institution.

“We are thrilled to welcome The Jefferson Project to Chautauqua Lake bringing with them years of expertise and state-of-the-art technology, which will help us understand the causes and mitigate the impacts of HABs. Chautauqua County is proud to be a part of this collaborative partnership between the Chautauqua Lake and Watershed Management Alliance, Chautauqua Institution, and The Jefferson Project,” said Chautauqua County Executive PJ Wendel.

Initiated in 2013, The Jefferson Project has created “The World’s Smartest Lake” at Lake George by combining an advanced sensor network, cutting-edge science, and high-performance computer models.

“We are delighted to bring our technologies and expertise to the Chautauqua Lake community to help better understand the drivers of HABs, predict their occurrence, and inform decision makers regarding sustainable lake protection,” said Dr. Rick Relyea, Director of The Jefferson Project and Director of the Darrin Fresh Water Institute at Rensselaer.

“We will be applying a constellation of leading-edge technology elements of The Jefferson Project at Lake George to Chautauqua Lake. These will help us better characterize the lake and the conditions leading to HABs and provide us with a significant advantage to address the environmental challenges facing the lake today,” said Dr. Harry Kolar, Associate Director of The Jefferson Project and IBM Fellow.

“We are thrilled to be bringing our science to solutions model for protecting Lake George to the challenges at Chautauqua Lake,” said Eric Siy, Associate Director of The Jefferson Project and Executive Director of The FUND for Lake George. “Through this new and powerful partnership we will continue leading by example in working to solve the intensifying problems facing our precious waters, now and for generations to come.”

For more information regarding this program or the Alliance, please contact Vince Horrigan at (716) 661-8918.

For more information regarding The Jefferson Project, please contact Dr. Rick Relyea, Director of The Jefferson Project and Director of the Darrin Fresh Water Institute at Rensselaer at relyer@rpi.edu; Dr. Harry Kolar, Associate Director of The Jefferson Project and IBM Fellow at kolar@us.ibm.com; Eric Siy, Associate Director of The Jefferson Project and Executive Director of The FUND for Lake George at esiy@fundforlakegeorge.org; or visit their website at <https://jeffersonproject.rpi.edu/>.



Photo 1. One of two Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute-built vertical profilers that will be installed on Chautauqua Lake in late-August (Source: Rick Relyea).