



## Chautauqua Current No. 32

Chautauqua Lake & Watershed Management Alliance, Inc.

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### Finishing Touches

### New Work Caps Off Lake Season



*Figure 1. Pictured above, Alliance members gather in Ashville Bay to kickoff a new pilot removal of invasive starry stonewort. Lake equipment from left to right includes a Mobitrac, shore conveyor, and two skimmer vessels.*

*By Jay Young*

*Chautauqua Lake & Watershed Management Alliance*

The last Chautauqua Lake Association machines were removed from the water earlier this month to be prepped for winter as a busy 2023 maintenance season came to a close. In total, Alliance Members ran nine different programs this year, as part of a coordinated work plan aimed at improving lake and watershed conditions. All told, 434 truckloads and around 8,680,000 pounds of material were removed over the course of the season from May to September. Those totals include near-shore work done in joint operations with Town of Chautauqua Mobitracs, which were estimated to have removed around 1.5 million pounds of material through September. Work reports from throughout the year can be found on the CLA's website at [chautauqualakeassociation.org/](http://chautauqualakeassociation.org/)

Cooperation between CLA machines and Mobitracs took another step forward in 2023, as several groups helped to complete a pilot removal of invasive starry stonewort on September 26-27. The first test of its kind on the lake, Mobitracs and two County-owned skimmers operated by CLA were used to gather patches of the invasive algae from a 1.5-acre field in Ashville Bay. Around 30 tons of material were collected in 15 skimmer loads over those two days and offloaded to a CLA truck via a new conveyor recently purchased by the County. Material was then composted at an upland farm owned by Town of North Harmony Supervisor Rob Yates. This pilot test was led by Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy Director of Conservation Twan Leenders via an Alliance grant and funding from the County. Project evaluation is currently underway with the Department of Environmental Conservation, which will assess how this new method might be scaled up to address other areas of starry stonewort. Special thanks to Ashville Bay Marina for their participation in this work. Other management options along with combined approaches are also being considered. The Chautauqua Lake Partnership is working with Solitude Lake Management, North Carolina State University, and DEC to evaluate chemical management options. Diver-assisted suction harvesting is another possible removal method, which has been routinely used to address the algae in Keuka Lake.

CLP also worked with lakeside municipalities and Solitude to perform two herbicide treatments of other invasive species this year. On May 25 areas in the Town of Ellery, Village of Bemus Point, Town of Ellicott, and Village of Lakewood were treated with Aquathol K to control curly-leaf pondweed. Areas of Ellery, Lakewood, and the Town of Busti were treated with ProcellaCOR EC to control Eurasian watermilfoil on June 15. Maps of those treatment areas can be found on CLP's website at [chqlake.org/](http://chqlake.org/).

Leenders and the CWC also continued their Aquatic Invasive Species Early Detection Program in 2023. In addition to mapping the spread of starry stonewort and organizing its removal, the program managed water chestnut in the Chadakoin outlet via hand-pulling. Around 250 plants were removed from the outlet during a large pull in September. CWC staff and volunteers also mapped detections of other invasive species such as brittle naiad during these volunteer paddles, and are continuing to catalogue this information using the iMapinvasives platform. In addition to the detection and removal of known populations of invasive species, a key to combating the spread of problem weeds is prevention. CLA staffed watercraft stewards at the lake's public launches throughout the summer, collecting boat traffic information and encouraging users to clean, drain, and dry their vessels. These programs are key to reducing future management costs by intercepting new species before they cause issues in the lake.

Data collection and research continued to work in parallel with this year's management efforts. Alliance staff once again equipped machines with GPS units, managing data collection as part of the Chautauqua Lake Aquatic Data Mapping program. Staff also performed monthly sonar surveys to track the season's plant growth. NC State and SUNY Oneonta, partnering with CLP and CLA respectively, returned to the lake this year to catalog the individual species and densities of plants in our waters. CLA also partnered with researchers to perform a survey of invertebrates in the ecosystem. Those reports will be made available to the public through the Alliance website when they are released. Other updates related to water quality and harmful algal blooms will soon come from The Jefferson Project, which is continuing to work with other researchers and Chautauqua Institution thanks to funding from the County and the Ralph C. Sheldon Foundation. By integrating these many different streams of information, using common databases to increase efficiency and accessibility, we can better explore the relationships between lake conditions and our management actions.

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