



Chautauqua Current No. 38

Chautauqua Lake & Watershed Management Alliance, Inc.

April 22, 2024



Figure 1. Alliance Project Manager Taylor West uses a GoPro camera to take underwater video of plant conditions near Bemus Point.

Lights, Camera, Action

Lake Season Startup

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Chautauqua Lake & Watershed Management Alliance

Memorial Day may still be a month away, but work on and around Chautauqua Lake has already kicked off this spring. Many important off-season developments have happened over the past several months, and we at the Alliance along with our members look forward to sharing those with the public as 2024 moves along.

A second straight mild winter left the lake clear of ice cover much earlier than usual, opening up opportunities for early season use. Last week Alliance staff performed our first sonar survey of the year, mapping plant growth at areas along Bemus Bay, the narrows between the ferry and bridge, and in Stow. Staff also used an underwater camera at select points to document plant communities. A main target of this survey and a lot of early season plant management is invasive curly-leaf pondweed, which has an early growing season and typically dies off in late June/early July. Last Tuesday saw a decent amount of boating activity, primarily from anglers, in and around Bemus Bay thanks to good weather. Water temperatures were mostly in the low 50s. Boaters are encouraged to be on the lookout for debris this time of year, as a significant amount of floating logs were spotted during the survey. The lake level

was also quite high last week following large amounts of rain. Many residential docks were out or in the process of being constructed, and many were weighed down due to the high lake level.

An herbicide treatment may take place as early as this week, using Aquathol K to target invasive curly-leaf. The treatment program is led by the Chautauqua Lake Partnership and the lakeside municipalities that secure permits, and will be directed by Ready Scout LLC pending DEC approval. Treatments are anticipated to occur within the Town of Ellery, Village of Bemus Point, Town of Busti, and Village of Lakewood.

Chautauqua County Executive PJ Wendel, who serves on the Alliance Board, has helped secure new resources and called for more proactive and unified management of early-season plant growth (like curly-leaf). Coordination is ongoing on this front, as service providers look to identify hot spots of growth now before plant conditions become a nuisance. The Alliance's Lake Management Committee is scheduled to meet today to plan and discuss the year's coordinated workplan and lake conditions. The Chautauqua Lake Association has been busy preparing its fleet of equipment for another year of service on the lake. Work is expected to begin in May with the harvesting of plants and the cleanup of dangerous logs and debris.

Our lakeside communities have also gotten to work early this year with the cleanout of the Vukote canal in Busti on April 4. The canal, which is often filled with debris during the spring, was cleared by the Town Highway Department after coordination between Alliance members. New and expanded lake maintenance programs will also be coming online soon as summer approaches. The Town of Chautauqua will return its Mobitracs to the lake, working in concert with CLA's near-shore cleanup efforts, and the Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy will renew its invasive species early detection program. We thank all the member organizations who help to prepare the lake for use, and the generous and diverse group of funders that make this work possible.