



Chautauqua Current No. 41

Chautauqua Lake & Watershed Management Alliance, Inc.

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Figure 1. Chautauqua Institution President Dr. Michael Hill offers introductory remarks at the recent Chautauqua Lake Water Quality Conference. Photo by Jay Young.

INSTITUTION HOSTS CONFERENCE, LAKE READIES FOR JULY 4

By Jay Young

Chautauqua Lake & Watershed Management Alliance

CHAUTAUQUA—There has been a lot of Chautauqua Lake activity in the past few weeks leading up to the July 4 holiday. On June 22 Chautauqua Institution hosted its third consecutive Water Quality Conference at Chautauqua Golf Club, which brought together scientific researchers, local interest groups, and members of the public. Several in-lake maintenance programs led by Alliance members have also made significant strides recently in advance of Independence Day.

Institution President Dr. Michael Hill delivered the morning's opening remarks, while Institution Chautauqua Lake Project Manager Toby Shepherd introduced the day's speakers and solicited questions from the audience throughout the event. Dr. Courtney Wigdahl-Perry of the State University of New York at Fredonia began the day with a presentation on research related to harmful algal blooms. Specifically, Dr. Wigdahl-Perry and her students are looking to identify relationships and trends between water temperature, lake stratification, and the different types of microorganisms that live in the lake's waters. Following each presentation questions were pulled from the audience and fielded by each researcher.

Dr. Harry Kolar and Dr. Allison Hrycik of The Jefferson Project were next on the dais, where they outlined the continuing research program taking place in partnership with the Institution. The Jefferson Project is now in its fifth year of work on the lake, and is planning to return its updated vertical profiler monitoring platforms to the water in 2024. This year those platforms are expected to be placed nearer to the narrows at the center in the lake than in the past. The program has also been significantly expanded by the addition of six tributary monitoring stations built with funding from the Ralph C. Sheldon Foundation.

The last two presentations of the morning shifted focus to the lake's plant and herbivore communities. Claire McMahon briefed those in attendance on results from the 2023 lakewide plant survey conducted by SUNY Oneonta. This included discussion of trends of plant growth over time, and monitoring of invasive species. Melanie Rooney of Rooney's Aquatic Biologists outlined her research on populations of several species of insects in the lake, in particular those that feed on invasive Eurasian watermilfoil.

In addition to the question-and-answer periods, the public was also able to meet with representatives of several lake and watershed organizations during the conference. Stations were set up by groups including the Chautauqua-Conewango Consortium, Chautauqua County, the County's Soil and Water Conservation District, Chautauqua Lake Association, Chautauqua Lake Partnership, the Alliance, and the Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy. More information on the conference is available at chq.org/chautauqua-lake-conference/.

The Alliance Lake Management Committee met at The Lawson Center in Bemus Point on June 24 to discuss current lake conditions, data, and management programs. This was the same day that CLP-coordinated herbicide treatments occurred targeting invasive Eurasian watermilfoil with ProcellaCOR. More details on treatment areas can be found on CLP's website at chqlake.org/.

Last week CLA was operating full crews including shoreline cleanup crews, and was also working with Town of Chautauqua Mobitracs to remove plant debris. The previous week limited shore crews were added to the three main CLA work groups. Throughout the season CLA will be posting workplans and updates online at chautauqualakeassociation.org/ and on Facebook. CLA watercraft stewards are now stationed at public launches where they will work with boaters to clean vessels in order to prevent the spread of invasive species.

On that topic, the CWC is continuing its invasive species monitoring and rapid response program. The first volunteer kayak paddle took place out of McCrea Point on June 19, mainly targeting invasive water chestnut, and the second paddle was held on June 24 launching out of Celoron. Visit chautauquawatershed.org/aquatic for a list of upcoming paddles and please remember to report any sightings of new invasive species.

We encourage anyone interested in learning more about these programs taking place throughout the summer to contact our Members directly and visit the Alliance website for related information. The July 4 holiday is the perfect time to get out enjoy all that the lake and our local communities have to offer. As always information on upcoming events can be found online by visiting the County Visitors Bureau website at tourchautauqua.com/. Happy Independence Day!