

Skaneateles Lake Watershed Wave Reviews

Take a stake in your lake!

Flip through for tips on how to join the community wide efforts to protect the water quality of Skaneateles Lake

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*Brought to you by the City of
Syracuse Department of Water
Ben Walsh, Mayor*

Coming Together in the Watershed: Protecting Water Quality and Combatting HABs

CCE Onondaga

The Skaneateles Watershed Education Program works to protect the water quality of Skaneateles Lake, a treasured resource that serves as the primary drinking water for 200,000 homes from Skaneateles to the City of Syracuse. The City of Syracuse has funded this program since its inception in 1996.

Through educational workshops, events, trainings, publications, and stakeholder coordination the program connects residents, municipal officials and watershed stakeholders of all ages with information and opportunities to implement evidence-based best practices for protecting water quality.

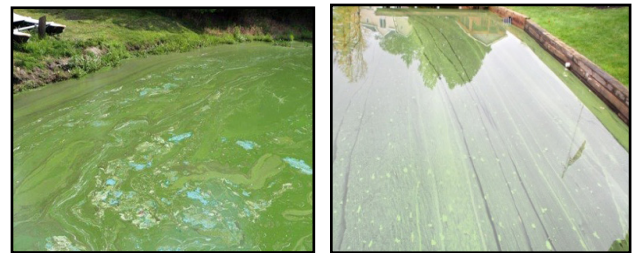
Complex scientific developments and evolving technologies can feel intimidating, and it can be difficult to keep up or know how to get involved. However, there are agencies, professionals, and organizations in the Skaneateles Watershed that can help connect you to resources to take environmental action on your property, in your home, and in your community. Helpful contacts and resources can be found in this newsletter.

What is a watershed?

A watershed is an area in which all water above land and underground flows to a common place, like a river, lake or ocean. Everyone lives in a watershed. Water quality of Skaneateles Lake is affected by all of our decisions and actions on, above and below the land within a watershed. We can't control everything that affects water quality (i.e. rainfall and weather), but it is important that we take steps to control what we can.

Harmful Algal Blooms

Summer of 2017 was the first record of a confirmed harmful algal bloom (HAB) on Skaneateles Lake. Though less widespread than the 2017 bloom, in summer of 2018 there were several small, localized blooms confirmed on the lake. Most algae are harmless and are an important part of the food web. However, some species of algae, like blue-green algae (cyanobacteria), can form blooms on surface waters and produce toxins that can be harmful to people, pets, wildlife, and water quality, reducing the recreational, economic, and aesthetic value of a lake. Avoid swimming, boating, fishing or other contact with water that looks like it may have a bloom. The resident's guide inside provides a few examples on how to help prevent the occurrence of HABs and improve water quality in the community.



HABs may have the appearance of green pea soup, green and white spilled paint or streaks, and generally are found near the shore. Photos by NYS DEC.

Cornell Cooperative Extension
Onondaga County



NYS DEC Skaneateles Lake Water Quality Update

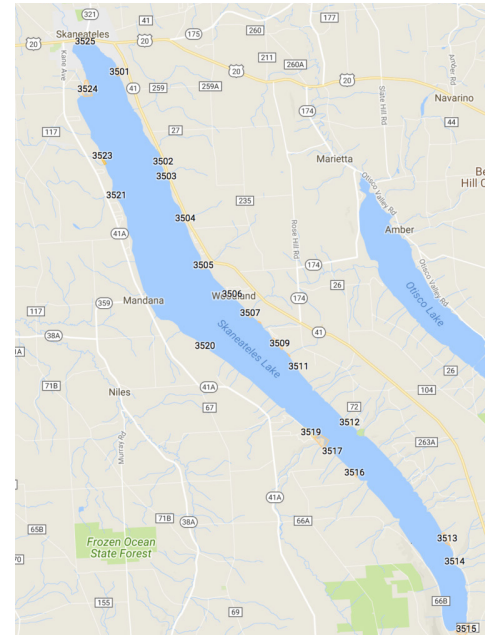
Aimee Clinkhammer- Finger Lakes Water Hub, NYS DEC

NYSDEC's Finger Lakes Water Hub was established in 2017 by Governor Cuomo and the state's Water Quality Rapid Response Team. The Hub's role is to better understand, protect and address the water quality issues confronting the Finger Lakes.

We worked with the Skaneateles Lake Association (SLA) to establish a HABs Surveillance Program in 2018. Volunteers were trained to survey preselected shoreline locations for HABs and collect samples when HABs were present. This valuable partnership expanded existing monitoring, surveillance, and outreach efforts on HABs on Skaneateles Lake. Furthermore, as part of the Governor's HABs Initiative, two water quality sensors were installed in the lake this summer. Real-time water quality data in the open water and at the pier in the village can be accessed at: <https://ny.water.usgs.gov/maps/habs/>. Although HABs in 2018 were not as widespread as in 2017, there were several small, localized HABs reported from July through October on Skaneateles Lake.

We are also excited to continue NYSDEC's Citizen Statewide Lake Assessment Program (CSLAP) on Skaneateles Lake. CSLAP is a partnership between NYSDEC, NYS Federation of Lake Associations and lake associations/residents who help monitor and collect critical lake data. Citizen scientists on Skaneateles Lake collected surface and deep samples at two locations on the lake 8 times between June and October. Results from CSLAP efforts in 2017 have been published in a Finger Lakes Regional Report is available on NYSDEC's website at: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/77854.html>. The 2018 results will be released this winter.

We look forward to continuing to work with the Skaneateles Lake community on monitoring and protecting Skaneateles Lake.



The map above depicts the different zones throughout the watershed where SLA volunteers collected samples for the HAB surveillance program (4-digit numbers scattered around shoreline). Map created and provided by the Skaneateles Lake Association.

Soil and Water Conservation District Update

Mark Burger, Executive Director Onondaga County Soil and Water Conservation District

The Skaneateles Lake Watershed Agricultural Program (SLWAP), with funding from the Onondaga County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) and partnerships with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Onondaga County (CCE), the Skaneateles Lake Association (SLA), and SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (SUNY ESF) will be planting Vegetated Riparian Buffers at a pilot project site in the watershed this fall. The SWCD will provide funding to purchase the trees and shrubs. Volunteers from the SLA, and SUNY ESF, and Skaneateles High School will do the plantings under the training, direction and oversight of CCE.

This project will benefit the watershed by helping to create buffers that stabilize stream bed and banks and help to filter out nutrients and sediment from entering the water course and ultimately the lake. For students from SUNY ESF, this project will enable the students at the school to have an opportunity to make a positive impact improving the quality of their drinking water supply in the City. For SLA volunteers and watershed residents, this project will not only help them to protect their drinking water supply, but will also incorporate them into the long-term process of watershed protection through continuing education and stewardship volunteer opportunities. To learn more about this new project, please contact Shannon Fabiani at slf226@cornell.edu or 315-424-9485 x232. Thank you.

7 Actions for Better Water Quality: A Resident's Guide

Shannon Fabiani, CCE Onondaga

This guide was created to help residents take action on their properties, in their homes, and in their community that will benefit water quality, improve the environment, and even help save you money!*

On your Property



1. Inspect septic tank every 3 years, have it pumped every 5 years.

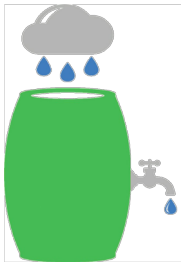
2. Use less (or no) fertilizers on your lawn. Always test soil first to determine application need.

Nutrients from fertilizer and a leaking septic system contribute to HABs, degrades water quality and soil health, and pose health threats to humans.



3. Bigger, better riparian buffers along shorelines and streams.

Riparian includes an area next to a stream or lake. Buffers contain native vegetation. Riparian buffers act as a barrier, their roots significantly slowing runoff and reducing the amount of nutrient and sediment deposited. Above the surface, leaves slow rate at which water is falling. Under the surface, roots keep soil in place, prevention erosion and pollution to lake.



4. Naturalize lawns and shorelines.

Keep your grass taller (less mowing too!) and add more perennials. Keep slopes gentle. In its natural state, the shoreline area is perfectly engineered to protect against erosion, from the natural slope to the native vegetation's roots. Working against nature can have drastic negative impacts like costly structural damage.



In your Home



5. Conserve your water use.

Turn off faucet when not in use, take shorter showers, use water collected from a rain barrel to wash car, invest in water saving toilets and faucets. Reducing the amount of water entering drains reducing the stress on your septic system, decreasing the likelihood of a leak and failed system and nutrient loading to lake.



6. Prevent the spread of invasive species while you recreate.

Boating and Kayaking: Follow the Clean, Drain, Dry protocol. Allow designated Boat Stewards to inspect your watercraft to prevent bringing aquatic invasive species into the lake. **While you hike or bike:** Learn to identify Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA) infestations on hemlock trees and report observations. HWA kills hemlock trees. Hemlocks hold the lake shoreline in place, which prevents nutrient and sediment loading to the lake.



7. Share this knowledge, take action, and perservere!

Attend CCE and partner workshops, trainings, and volunteer events. Utilize agency and municipal resources and guidance. Water is a shared natural resource, and the efforts that go into protecting it must be shared amongst the community for the best results!



*Actions were chosen based on potential postive impact of action, available support programs in the watershed and the NYS DEC HAB Action Plan for Skaneateles Lake.

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Skaneateles Lake Wave Reviews

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Stay connected!

Join our Water Quality List-serve to receive digital WAVE Reviews, event announcements, and more.

List serve accessible through this direct link <http://eepurl.com/bQ22XP> or by visiting our website at <http://cceonondaga.org> and searching for our 'Skaneateles Lake' landing page.

Skaneateles Watershed Residents and those looking to protect water quality in their community are encouraged to join.

Important Contacts for the Skaneateles Watershed

Cayuga County Health Department 315-253-1405
Cayuga County Soil & Water Conservation District 315-252-4171
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Onondaga County 315-424-9485
Cortland County Health Department 607-753-5036
Cortland County Soil & Water Conservation District 607-756-5991
NYS DEC Compliance (Permits) 607-753-3095
NYS DEC Spill Prevention and Response 800-457-7362
NYS DEC Region 7 Water & Wastewater- (Stormwater, Dam Safety, Flood Control) 315-426-7500
Onondaga County Health Department 315-435-3252
Onondaga County Soil & Water Conservation District 315-457-0325
Skaneateles Lake Watershed Agricultural Program 315-457-0325
Syracuse Water Department (Skaneateles) 315-685-6486

This newsletter was created by Shannon Fabiani of Cornell University Cooperative Extension of Onondaga County and Rich Abbott, City of Syracuse Water Dept. Special thank you to our partnering contributors.

Skaneateles Lake Watershed Education Program

Funding for Cornell Cooperative Extension programming in the Skaneateles Lake Watershed is provided by the City of Syracuse Department of Water.

*Cornell Cooperative Extension is an equal opportunity program and employment provider.
If you need special assistance, please contact our office at 315-424-9485.*