

Lake Iroquois Association
2016 Annual Report

In recent years the Lake Iroquois Association volunteers have gathered data on nutrient levels in tributaries, written grants to remediate streams to reduce storm run off, run a greeter program, and numerous other initiatives. These efforts continue and are aiding in improving the water quality of Lake Iroquois. However, this year much of our energy has been focused on reducing the infestation of Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM) in the lake.

EWM is a destructive invasive plant. It spreads easily by rooting from fragments and forms dense thickets that choke out native species and destroy fish spawning areas. For the past several years, the LIA has been researching ways to combat milfoil in the lake. We have learned that once introduced it will not go away completely, but it can be reduced and controlled. However, this takes consistent effort and funding over many years.

After more than a year of research and preparation, we developed a five year plan to tackle the milfoil problem. This plan is a multi-pronged approach which includes diver-assisted suction harvesting (DASH), careful use of herbicides, bottom barriers, plus spread prevention and education of lake users. The first step was taken this summer by conducting diver-assisted suction harvesting (DASH) of milfoil on the lake. Supported by grant funding and LIA membership dues, we were able to hire AB Aquatics to bring in their DASH boat and crew to harvest milfoil. The fishing access area was cleared first since boats entering the lake and churning through milfoil can fragment it and facilitate its spread. Milfoil can also clog boat propellers and can be carried on the boat to other water bodies. The DASH boat worked for two weeks and was able to clear a channel at the fishing access. While helpful for certain areas of the lake, we learned that DASH is too slow and expensive for an entire lakewide solution. We have, therefore, applied to the state for a permit to use a low dose herbicide to more fully address this problem.

Even as we worked on the milfoil problem, the LIA continued its many other projects this year. We once again sponsored the greeter program at the fishing access, supported by a grant from the state. We also received a grant from the Lake Champlain Basin Program to set up a boat wash station at the fishing access. This will be operational for the 2017 season and supports our efforts to further prevent the spread of invasives into and out of our lake. We continue to work with the Lake Iroquois Recreation District, the surrounding towns, and the state departments of Fish and Wildlife and Environmental Conservation on water quality issues and best management practices to enhance the health of the lake ecosystem.

Other projects included volunteers continuing to monitor the lake for blue-green algae outbreaks. We are happy to report that there were none this year. We also continue our education and outreach efforts with the regular publication of our newsletter, *The Lake Iroquois Monitor*, maintenance of our web site, www.lakeiroquois.org, the creation of our Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/lakeiroquois/>, and public meetings to discuss lake issues and gather feedback on the milfoil plan. In addition, we maintain our work on reducing nutrient levels in the lake. We have applied for an Ecosystem Restoration grant to remediate a lake tributary that is a high sediment and nutrient contributor to the lake. We also are researching other methods so reduce nutrients coming into the lake.

2016 has been a very busy year at the lake and we are looking forward to an even busier year in 2017. As an all-volunteer organization the LIA is grateful to the many people who have worked hard and given so much of their time to benefit all who use this valuable resource. And as always the support and help of the town has been invaluable in helping us to meet our goal of enhancing and improving the water quality of Lake Iroquois for all users.

Submitted by Pat Suozzi, President, Lake Iroquois Association



DASH boat on Lake Iroquois harvesting milfoil. August 2016