



Lake Iroquois Association

PO Box 569, Hinesburg, VT 05461

Research, education, and action for a healthy lake

LAKE IROQUOIS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL REPORT 2020

We are pleased to be able to report that once again this year, Lake Iroquois has shown a highly significant decrease in phosphorus levels. This is an indication that the hard work of the Lake Iroquois Association (LIA) and its volunteers, along with the work of the surrounding communities to reduce nutrient and sediment flow into the lake, is having a real, measurable impact. Lake Iroquois has now moved from being a eutrophic waterbody (one that has excessive levels of nutrients) to one that is mesotrophic (containing a moderate level of nutrients). While the lake will always have naturally occurring nutrients, which are needed to maintain the aquatic life necessary to a healthy lake, our goal is to eliminate, to the extent possible, human caused nutrient increases and allow the lake to be at a natural level. Detailed data and information on how the data is collected can be found on the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation's Lake Scorecard at <https://www.lakeiroquois.org/water/lake-data-maps>.

2020 has been another busy year for the LIA. This past spring, the LIA-Pine Shore Road Restoration and Erosion Control Project, a collaboration of the LIA, the Pine Shore Road Association, and the Town of Hinesburg, and supported by a grant from the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (VT DEC) Ecosystem Restoration Program and completed in 2018, was reviewed to determine its implementation success. We were honored to receive the highest rating possible – optimal – indicating that the project is above and beyond the baseline requirements for functionality. We also published the 4th edition of our Lakeshore Property Owner's Manual, which provides extensive information on lake-friendly best management practices that help to maintain and improve the lake's water quality. In February, we launched our new, completely re-designed website. It provides extensive information and data on Lake Iroquois and its watershed along with the many activities around the lake. In March, we developed an integrated pest management plan for controlling invasives, especially invasive Eurasian Watermilfoil. As part of that plan, we submitted an application for the use of the herbicide ProcellaCor on a small portion of the lake in an effort to reduce this widespread infestation so that in the future, we will be able to control it using mechanical means. We continue to work on a holistic plan for the entire Lake Iroquois watershed and to that end we have submitted a pre-proposal in partnership with the Lake Iroquois Recreation District, the Lewis Creek Association, and the Winooski Natural Resources Conservation District for funding to assess the watershed and create a Watershed Action Plan.

Our Greeter and Boat Wash Program, which we have operated for over 10 years, had another successful year. The purpose of this program is to prevent other invasives from entering the lake. The greeters also provide information to lake users on safety and best practices to protect water quality while using the lake. The greeter program operates from Memorial Day to Labor Day and this year the number of boats inspected more than doubled from 2019. This program, with its hot water boat wash, has become a model for other greeter programs in the state. It is supported by an Aquatic Nuisance Control grant from the VT DEC, the dues and donations of LIA members, and the towns of Williston, Hinesburg, and Richmond.

Due to the pandemic, several of our data collection programs were suspended but are expected to resume next year. The LaRosa Partnership Program grant that supports our tributary sampling was not funded this year due to diversion of state funds needed for COVID-19. We also were unable to conduct an aquatic plant survey or carry out any Diver Assisted Suction Harvesting of milfoil – again due to COVID-19 restrictions. However, we fully expect that these programs will be back in operation for the summer of 2021.



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In other good news, we once again had a loon pair successfully nest and raise two young on Lake Iroquois this summer. What a pleasure amid so much concerning news to watch our loon family swimming around the lake. The LIA works with the Loon Restoration Project under the Vermont Center for Ecostudies to maintain the loon nesting platform and to place signage protecting the nesting area. Our members also contribute to our *Loonwatch* spreadsheet to record loon activities as a contribution to the Project's data collection efforts.

Even as 2020 wanes, the LIA is already planning new projects and activities for 2021. Our newest project is our first annual **Ice-Out Contest**. Tickets will go on sale January 1st, 2021. Watch our website, our Facebook page, Front Porch Forum, and local news outlets for more information. Other projects in the works for 2021 include continued efforts to seek grant funded projects that reduce sediment flow into the lake and a renewed effort to increase lakeshore property owner participation in the Vermont Lake Wise program.

Christopher J. Conant
President