

IRLWP Makes Progress on Water Quality

by Ed Robertson

The Indian River & Lakes Water Project made real progress this summer as we work at properly treating our wastewater and addressing nutrient rich runoff. We are learning, cottage by cottage, why it is especially important in our unsuitable soil conditions to properly treat the wastewater dispersed near our lakes and to grow vegetative buffers along our waterfronts. The great news is, there is overwhelming support for the Water Project from all stakeholders affected by the deteriorating water quality of our lakes. Everybody is in favor of clean water!



IRLC Clean Water Best Practices recognition plaque

Water Project representatives participated in several meetings and training sessions with state, county and town representatives, lake associations and cottage owners focused on water quality issues. Working with RCAP Solutions and Onsite Engineering, we learned how water cycles through the air, soil, creeks, streams, river and lakes in our watershed. We have learned that homes and cottages are a critical part of that cycle, as we draw clean water from lakes or wells and run it through our sinks, toilets and showers and then discharge grey and black water out our drains into soil based septic systems.

The Water Project offered free walk-around septic assessments to local waterfront residents who wished to participate and the response was excellent. Thirty-eight cottages were signed up for assessments. Without

exception, everyone who volunteered for this walk-around assessment program sincerely appreciated learning about the best technical solutions available for treating wastewater on their particular site. New systems have been installed and many more are in the planning stage. From what we have seen so far the upgraded systems being designed are simple, affordable and effective. This assessment program is the beginning for local town officials, engineers, installers and homeowners to become familiar with Standard 40, Class 1 and other systems that have proven successful in other areas of the state. The septic assessment program will continue in 2016. Appointments can be scheduled through April Frederick in the IRLC office.

Growing a dense waterfront buffer zone along the shoreline and eliminating fertilizer (nutrient) use anywhere near the lake will prevent nutrients from entering the water by runoff from developed waterfront home and cottage sites.

IRLC will be distributing recognition plaques and certificates to waterfront property owners who have implemented Clean Water Best Practices.

Another positive step for the Project this year was the outreach to area lakes that do not have a lake association. Cottage owners from Moon Lake and Muskellunge Lake are now working with IRLC to create a lake association for their lakes. Associations promote a teamwork atmosphere to raise awareness of what is happening with their lake. Associations help property owners network with lake groups and other entities locally and statewide. They can inspire residents to take action to improve their quality of life on the lake.

The Water Project is helping to fund a Lake/Pond Management Plan for Lake of the Woods/Boyd Pond that started in September. The study and plan are being done by the SUNY Oneonta Lake Management Masters Degree Program students currently creating plans for Millsite and Sixberry Lakes.

St. Lawrence University is assisting the Water Project's early efforts to promote the creation of an Indian River Watershed Management Plan with a GIS mapping project. A student majoring in Conservation Biology is teaming up with St. Lawrence's GIS Map Specialist to produce useful GIS data and mapping to help the future Watershed Management Plan Steering Committee get a better understanding of the watershed.

Donate your Boat

Help keep IRLWP Afloat

The Indian River and Lakes Water Project is in need of boats to conduct water sampling and outreach activities. If you have a small flat-bottomed boat or a small pontoon boat that you would like to donate (or sell at a bargain price), please contact us:

IndianRiverLakes@gmail.com
(315) 482-4757.

The Indian River Lakes Conservancy is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Gifts are tax deductible.



The mission of the Indian River Lakes Conservancy is to preserve the natural character of the area, with a focus on protecting clean water, fish and wildlife, and the scenic vistas along the shores of the lakes and the Indian River and to educate ourselves and the community about the natural habitat in which we live.