

Indian River Lakes CONSERVANCY

Protect • Learn • Enjoy • Forever

Newsletter
Winter 2020



The IRLC's 2020 Vision

The Indian River Lakes Conservancy had a great year in 2019 with your involvement and support. Thank you! Major highlights included the launch of Project WHIRL and related expanded water-focused activities, the addition of 223 acres to the Baker Woods Preserve, the completion and dedication of the fabulous all-access Beatrice Rosemond Trail in the Redwood Hill Preserve and our always-fun and educational Redwood Hill Kids' Nature Camp. These major events were supported by our usual wide array of speakers, workshops, hikes, paddles, and more. So, what is new and exciting in our "2020 view"? LOTS!

- *The State has recently launched a comprehensive St. Lawrence River Watershed Project which includes our Indian River Watershed. Our Executive Director plus IRLC Board Member Matt Biondolillo have been involved in the early stages with a focus on our Indian River Watershed.*
- *We are beginning to seek funding to convert a second trail at Redwood Hill, the "7 Oaks" Trail, to an ADA all-access trail.*
- *A special two-day Bird event led by Julie Hart, manager of the NY State Breeding Bird Atlas program. She will discuss various birding topics on Thursday evening, May 21st, and then lead a bird walk on Saturday morning, May 23rd.*
- *We are preparing for Land Trust Alliance National re-accreditation that happens every five years. Volunteer office and land stewardship help is needed!*
- *A new Kids' Nature Camp at Baker Woods Preserve will connect kids and nature near the headwaters of the Indian River.*

Oh, and we recently passed the half-way point of our Capital Campaign! We reached the \$675,000 mark after receiving a number of gifts including two \$50,000 gifts, \$10,000 per year for 5 years from each donor. WOW!

Thank you to all our donors, and thanks for helping us help you nurture and protect this special place!

Sincerely,



Elliott Hillback, Chair of the Board



What a CSLAP Program can do for Your Lake

by Nancy Mueller

“Citizen Science” is a relatively new buzzword that has been used a lot in recent years, but in New York, citizens have been collecting lake data for over three decades. The Citizens Statewide Lake Assessment Program (CSLAP) is a collaborative effort between the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the New York State Federation of Lake Associations, Inc. (NYSFOLA). CSLAP was initiated in 1986 to provide water quality data for sound decision making, to identify water quality issues, and to engage and educate lake residents, local officials and lake managers.

CSLAP volunteers come from NYSFOLA lake associations and are trained by professional staff to collect water samples, perform field tests, and provide standardized observations about lake conditions and use impairments. DEC and NYSFOLA provide the volunteers with the equipment and supplies to conduct bi-weekly sampling from late May through the end of September.

Over 260 lake associations and 1600 volunteers have participated in the program since its inception. At the end of each sampling season, DEC provides a report for each lake summarizing the season’s water-quality results, comparing it to prior years, and identifying potential management strategies.

CSLAP is a cost effective means to collect important water quality information related to public health and safety, recreational use, aquatic invasive species, and aesthetic

impairments. For lakes that are new to the program, this provides baseline data to allow the evaluation of present and future changes in water quality conditions. The program also has many lakes that have been in the program for over 30 years, making it an important source of long-term lake data. This enables trend analysis which is increasingly useful during this time of rapid climate change and invasive species infestations.

Funding and/or permitting for lake management projects frequently requires supporting water quality data. CSLAP is a valuable way for lake associations to obtain the required data through a program with an accepted Quality Assurance and Assessment Plan that utilizes a certified laboratory.

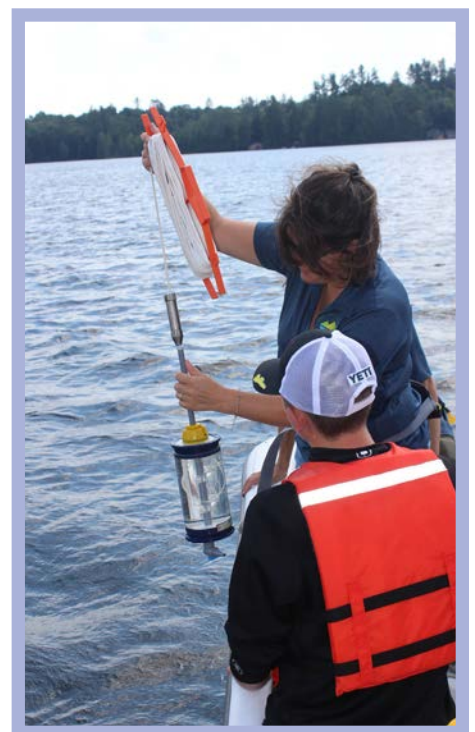
Lake associations participating in CSLAP have access to DEC and academic researchers using CSLAP data for a variety of purposes. In recent years, CSLAP volunteers have been utilized to conduct innovated monitoring related to harmful algal blooms, pharmaceuticals, and other emerging contaminants of concern.

DEC and NYSFOLA staff can help CSLAP volunteers navigate the challenges in getting answers to lake related issues.

CSLAP is the ideal program to compare lakes to nearby or similar waterbodies across the state. For example, lakes in the Indian River system can be compared to one another and to those in Central NY or the Adirondacks.

CSLAP engages lake residents and informs lake associations. Many volunteers in the program have been sampling for decades. Several are “original” to the program since its inception in 1986. CSLAP data has been used to support lake and watershed planning, local zoning or other municipal law changes or practices, aquatic invasive species programs, sewer districts, grant programs, and educational efforts. These activities are designed to protect lakes with good water quality and make improvements in impaired waterbodies.

CSLAP volunteers are usually very dedicated individuals and leaders within their lake community. In order to make the data meaningful, volunteers participate in a training session to learn the proper techniques for sample collection, preparation, preservation, and shipping.



CSLAP Continued...

The CSLAP Sampling Protocol must be adhered to, and sampling should be conducted for at least five years. On some lakes, a single individual has been the CSLAP volunteer for decades. In other locations, a group of friends heads out every other week to spend time together and conduct the sampling. Over 25,000 samples have been collected since the inception of the program!

Several of the Indian River Lakes have been long time CSLAP participants while others have a shorter record. Data is available on the NYSFOLA website <https://nysfola.org/cslap-report-search/> for the following lakes: Black, Butterfield, Hyde, Lake of the Woods, Millsite, Moon (1996 only), and Grass.

The IRLC will be hosting a CSLAP training on May 29th at the annual Water Quality Conference.

2020 Pioneer Conservation Scholarships

High-school seniors who plan to further their education in the field of science with a particular emphasis in the area of environmental studies are welcomed to apply for a Pioneer Conservation Scholarship.

Annual scholarships are available to local high-school graduates, a Jefferson Community College graduate going on to study environmental science, or a child or grandchild of any IRLC member.

To apply, contact your guidance counselor or call the IRLC office for details.



IRLC Programs for Families of Deployed Soldiers

This winter the IRLC supported the 10th Mountain Division's 1st Brigade Combat Team deployment fair by providing Army spouses and family members with IRLC program information.

Army families received information about the IRLC's guided hikes and paddles, trail networks, speaker series, and Kids' Nature Camp.

The goal of the IRLC's outreach efforts is to provide soldiers' family members with the opportunity to connect with nature and enjoy their time in the North Country while their Soldier is deployed.

Volunteer Laura Nachbauer serves as a liaison to our Fort Drum community, and she is pictured above discussing programs with a military family.

Project WHIRL to support Revitalization Efforts by J. Wylie Huffman

The IRLC is serving as a major partner in support of the St. Lawrence River Watershed Revitalization Project (SLWRP) by representing our service area, the Indian River Watershed.

The SLWRP's goal is to inventory current conditions and trends in water quality and quantify, identify key problems and future goals, and develop targeted recommendations for actions for a sustainable future. Citizen science initiatives are proposed

to fill in data gaps throughout our Indian River Lakes and for the Indian River where no data currently exists.

The IRLC's signature high school program, Project WHIRL, will spend 96+ hours this summer gathering water quality data and making biological assessments throughout the watershed to support the project. Students will seek to understand the effects of human impact on water quality.

A “Pollution Diet” for Black Lake

by Lauren A. Townley

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is working in communities across the state to improve water quality to ensure protection of public health and the environment and enhance the enjoyment of our recreational assets like Black Lake. To help accomplish our goals, DEC collects monitoring data on rivers, streams, lakes, estuaries, and coastal waters, then evaluates these results and reports the water quality information to the public.

Data collected from Black Lake indicate that the lake is eutrophic, characterized by high levels of nutrients (mainly phosphorus) that cause excessive algae and plant growth, which reduce water clarity. High levels of nutrients can also lead to the formation of algae blooms.

Harmful algae blooms (HABs) are certain types of algae that produce toxins that can be harmful to people and animals. DEC has confirmed the presence of HABs in Black Lake since 2012, when DEC’s enhanced HABs monitoring

and reporting program was initiated. Historical records also indicate the presence of HABs in years prior. These conditions impair swimming, boating, fishing, and general enjoyment of the lake.

In 1998, DEC proposed Black Lake for inclusion on the New York State Section 303(d) List of Impaired Waters, a federally-mandated listing of the state’s waterbodies that are not meeting their best uses. Black Lake is classified as Class B, which means that its designated best uses are swimming and recreation. By adding Black Lake to the 303(d) list, DEC is required to complete a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), or “pollution diet,” for the lake that outlines the maximum amount of a pollutant (nitrogen, phosphorus, pathogens, etc.) that it can receive and still meet water quality standards.

DEC has initiated the process of developing a TMDL plan for Black Lake to address excessive phosphorus. The TMDL plan will identify Black Lake’s sources of phosphorus pollution, use computer models to determine pollution reductions needed and the amount of pollution coming from each source, and determine how much each source needs to be reduced.

DEC will continue working closely with the local watershed community to develop an implementation plan that will identify and describe the actions needed to meet the pollution reduction goals set by the TMDL. The implementation plan can then be used by the Black Lake community to identify projects that will improve water quality. In addition, information from the plan may improve scoring for competitive state and federal funding to help pay for projects.

More information on TMDL’s can be found on DEC’s website: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/23835.html>. A 2018 CSLAP Report for Black Lake is also available on DEC’s website: http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/water_pdf/cslrpt18blackl.pdf

DEC looks forward to continuing to work together throughout this process to create a cleaner, healthier Black Lake for residents and visitors to enjoy. Any questions regarding DEC’s plans to improve water quality can be directed to DEC’s Division of Water, Bureau of Water Resource Management at (518) 402-8086 or DOWinformation@dec.ny.gov

Lauren Townley will present at IRLC’s Water Quality Conference slated for May 29th, 2020.



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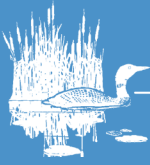
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Front Cover: © Mark Scarlett
The photo depicts a beaver lodge
on Grass Lake.

IRLC Newsletter : Winter 2020

Join us at an upcoming event...

Food for Thought Nature Talk	March 28th
Food for Thought Nature Talk	April 25th
Birds, Blossoms, & Bugs Hike	May 16th
Planting Native Species	May 20th
Bird Conservation Talk	May 21st
Bird Conservation Walk	May 23rd
Water Quality Conference	May 29th
Moonlight Paddle	June 5th
Redwood Hill Kids' Nature Camp	July 14th-16th
Celebration of the Lakes	August 8th

For a full listing of events & event details, visit indianriverlakes.org.

