

CHAUTAUQUA LAKE PARTNERSHIP

CHAUTAUQUA LAKE, A GREAT LAKE SEEKING A GREATER FUTURE

PO Box 337, Bemus Point, NY 14712

November 5, 2018

Senator Cathy Young

Assemblyman Andy Goodell

County Executive George Borrello

The significant negative impacts, environmental and otherwise, of weed cutting/harvesting, openly acknowledged in studies conducted by the United States Environmental Protection Agency, the New York State Department of Conservation (NYSDEC), Chautauqua County and many others, have long been overlooked in Chautauqua Lake.

Propagation and spreading of the Lake's invasive non-native weeds as a result of the weed cutting operation, due primarily to unrecovered cut weed fragments and non-selective cutting of native and more competitive invasives, has been of great concern to us and, in our opinion, is in violation of New York State Law.

Additionally, most are unaware that very substantial killing of fish, mostly small fingerlings, and invertebrates are a result of the weed cutting/harvesting operation. This fish kill, estimated to be in the millions each season, is acknowledged and quantified in the studies and has been documented in the Lake.

The Chautauqua Lake Partnership (Partnership) communicated concerns regarding weed cutting/harvesting beginning in late 2016. Unfortunately, there have been no discernible improvements in that operation to date. In the attached letter, the Partnership asks the NYSDEC to (1) enforce the existing law prohibiting invasive weed propagation, (2) conduct a formal review of all environmental impacts of weed cutting/harvesting in Chautauqua Lake and (3) consider regulation in Chautauqua Lake as in New York State's Adirondack Park and many other states.

The Partnership is not asking NYSDEC to order an immediate cessation to all weed cutting in Chautauqua Lake but to require that such cutting occurs in an environmentally safe manner and consistent with protections required by state law and regulation. In fact, a combination of herbicides and weed cutting/harvesting

has proven to be effective for weed management in large New York State lakes. **For Chautauqua Lake, the Partnership seeks an optimal combination of regulatory agency-permitted herbicides and environmental impact-mitigated weed cutting/harvesting.** With completion of the 2018 Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for herbicides (SEIS) followed by NYSDEC permitting of successful herbicide applications last summer, there's an opportunity to develop and conduct such a combination program in our Lake in 2019.

With knowledge gained through support for development of the SEIS and two seasons of successful herbicide permitting and treatments, supportive relationships with lakeside communities and municipalities and several years (latest August 2018) of detailed weed type and density surveys, the Partnership is well-positioned to develop and coordinate a combination Chautauqua Lake weed management program for 2019. Program development could be funded through the Sheldon Foundation's \$20,000 grant to the Chautauqua Lake and Watershed Management Alliance (Alliance) which was designated for a joint Chautauqua Lake Partnership/Chautauqua Lake Association project.

With state and county government political and financial support and cooperation of the Chautauqua Lake Association, effective and safe Chautauqua Lake weed management programs for Chautauqua Lake are now attainable for 2019 and beyond. We hope that you will support the Partnership in this endeavor. We will be contacting you in the near future to elicit your support.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jim Cirbus, President

Mr. Jim Wehrfritz, Vice President

Chautauqua Lake Partnership, Inc.

Attachment (2018.11.02 – Weed Cutting Letter to the NYSDEC)

cc: Ms. Lori Cornell, NYS Governor's Regional Representative
Chautauqua Lake County Legislators, Town Supervisors and Village Mayors
Mr. Pierre Chagnon, Chairman, Chautauqua Lake & Watershed
Management Alliance
Ms. Linda Swanson, Executive Director, Sheldon Foundation
Mr. Joe Johnson, Executive Director, Lenna Foundation
Ms. Tory Irgang, Executive Director, Chautauqua Region Community
Foundation
Mr. Paul Stage, Chairman, Chautauqua Lake Association
Mr. Doug Conroe, Executive Director, Chautauqua Lake Association