



2023 ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

F C L A

A Publication of The Fulton Chain of Lakes Association, Inc.

PO Box 564 • Old Forge, New York 13420

www.FultonChainofLakesAssociation.org

PRESIDENT'S NOTES

Greetings! The year 2023 marks the 55th year your Fulton Chain of Lakes Association has been monitoring, testing and advocating for the "Preservation and Protection" of this specific area of the 6 million acre New York State Park known as The Fulton Chain of Lakes. And what a long way it's come since 1968 when there was visible septic related pollution present in these lakes. Improvements due in large part to the advocacy of this association through the hard work of its board and the support of its members.

After one of the mildest winters in recent memory our 2023 season is well underway with increased activities both on these lakes and throughout their surrounding watershed. So with this heightened level of activity let's remain respectful of these beautiful lakes and continue our vigilance to keep their waters pristine, clean and safe.

Take a few minutes and read through this Newsletter and see how busy your association has been through its members, its board, committees and volunteers. You'll find interesting articles on...

- Water Quality and our ongoing testing through the statewide CSLAP program.
- Safety on the water – Navigation report.
- Scholarship program for Environmental Studies update.
- Dam remediation progress report.
- Annual Boon Family – Maintain the Chain event.
- Government relations and our ongoing advocacy.

More information can also be found on our website www.FultonChainOfLakesAssociation.org. There you will find downloadable information and links to so many resources to keep you informed on issues that effect our lakes and their surrounding

watershed. Or like us on Facebook.

We continue to reach out and inform the public through venues such as presentations at the Old Forge Library and our presence at the Old Forge Boat Show. Opportunities such as these allow us to educate and field questions on issues affecting the water quality of our lakes.

Here are some ongoing issues we will be getting more involved with as the season progresses. Underway we are surveying and studying the possible remediation of invasive aquatic species in our lakes. Fifth and Eighth lakes have some areas of infestation where we will be focusing on. We will also be increasing our advocacy efforts for increased patrolling of our lakes by the county Sheriff's departments.

Would you like to get involved? Here are a number of ways you can help. First are you a member and is your membership current? If not you'll find on the back of this newsletter a very easy form to fill out and mail in with a check. Then how about your neighbors? There have been numerous changes in property ownership in the last few years, drop off a copy of this newsletter and encourage them to join. Informed stakeholders are so important to maintaining the water quality of our lakes. Or perhaps you are interested in the subject matter of one of these articles. If that's the case reach out and ask if there is some way you could assist in some capacity as a volunteer. You can also attend our Annual Meeting, watch for announcements it's held mid to late summer and it usually features a timely and interesting guest speaker.

Finally - Spread the word! If you find this newsletter interesting and informative then share it with your family friends, and neighbors. You can pick up extra copies at the Old Forge or Inlet Information offices.

Mark Steigerwald – President

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Tom McCabe

Back in 1965 the founders of what was to become the FCLA were well aware that there was a serious pollution problem in the Fulton Chain. As interest increased it became obvious that these concerned citizens couldn't fix the problem on their own but needed help from the governments. And so they approached both towns – TOW and Inlet and both counties – Herkimer and Hamilton and New York State especially the DEC. They even contacted our U S Senators at the time and received a letter from Robert F. Kennedy offering his support for such a worthwhile cause and one that was quite new at that time.

So both of the towns supported the cause and eventually passed laws regarding pollution and polluters and allowing for on-site septic system inspecting and testing. The result was and continues to be a significant reduction in pollution and much cleaner lakes which we enjoy. And over the years, both Towns have contributed funds to our joint efforts to control invasive aquatic species, especially Eurasian Milfoil.

Today, 58 years later, FCLA's tradition of working with the local governments continues and remains a major resource in keeping our lakes clean and safe. This past year FCLA President, Mark Steigerwald and I continued our ongoing meetings with our TOW Zoning Officer, Andy Getty and his newly hired Septic

Inspector, Jay Williams, to understand their plans for the summer season of Inspections and Enforcement. The FCLA and the TOW agree that roughly a third of the lake properties (about 300) should be inspected each year and that was accomplished in 2022 and infractions were identified and fixed. And as usual the FCLA reimburses the Town for some of the cost of the Inspector and his activities.

Mark and I also met with Bonnie Baker, the new TOW Supervisor, as we do each year to highlight our cooperative efforts in Pollution Control etc. She agreed to be an Ex Officio FCLA Director where she is welcome to attend any of our Meetings and she receives our Meeting Minutes. We also discussed water safety and the need for more Sheriff patrols on our very busy lakes. We agreed since the TOW generates about 50% of Herkimer County's Real Estate revenue that more Patrols are needed and deserved. She is considering forming a Safe Waters Committee including all the stakeholders with a goal of increased safety. Bonnie, like her predecessors, understands the significant importance of clean and safe lakes to our residents and communities.

So as another year passes, we again thank our government partners for helping to keep our lakes cleaner and safer.

SCHOLARSHIP

Thomas McCabe, Sr. Environmental Studies Scholarship

The Fulton Chain of Lakes Association has awarded the Thomas B. McCabe, Sr. Environmental Studies Scholarship to Natalie Brownsell of Old Forge for the 2022-23 academic year. Natalie, a 2020 graduate of the town of Webb Schools, will be a junior Environmental Studies major in the Fall at Tufts University. In addition to her employment in Old Forge over the summer, she has completed an internship with the Department of Environmental Conservation at the Rome Fish Hatchery.

Natalie is the daughter of Tim Brownsell of Inlet and Jill Van Slyke of Old Forge.

The Fulton Chain of Lakes Association established the McCabe Scholarship to support Town of Webb Schools students engaged in environmental studies. Over the past five years, we've provided support to five students, some for multiple years. Applications are currently being accepted for the 2023-2024 academic year.



REHABILITATION OF THE FIRST AND SIXTH LAKE DAMS – PROGRESS REPORT

Ray Letterman

The Association continues to monitor the progress of the Hudson River Black River Regulating District as they work to rehabilitate the First and Sixth Lake Dams on the Fulton Chain of Lakes. Last summer the Chief Engineer of the District, Robert Foltan, spoke at our annual meeting in the Inlet Town Hall.

In his presentation Mr. Foltan explained that much remains to be done. He estimated that “construction would begin no sooner than June 2024”. When contacted recently he replied that June 2024 is still the estimated date. The District anticipates that 90-100% of the design phase will be completed by late summer 2023, then there will be environmental and dam safety permitting, and finally construction bidding during the first half of 2024. He also said they are hopeful the current proposed state budget will include some funding for the projects.

The following drawing of the Sixth Lake Dam rehab is from a public presentation at Old Forge Town Hall on May 11, 2022 by Arcadis, the District’s engineering firm. The photo on the left is of the existing dam from Google Earth. The Arcadis design will apparently cover most of the existing earthen dam and its small conventional spillway with a new large concrete spillway. A labyrinth (saw-tooth) weir at the top of the spillway will allow it to accommodate higher flows with less rise in lake level compared to a conventional spillway. Large blocks of concrete at the bottom of the spillway will dissipate energy to minimize downstream erosion and help protect the base of the dam. New pipes and valves will be installed to improve the ability to quickly drain water from the reservoir in the case of an emergency like a large approaching storm. The design for the First Lake Dam at Old Forge is conceptually similar to what is shown here for the Sixth Lake Dam. As far as we know the plan is still to use sheet piling to isolate the dams from the reservoirs and complete the rehab work without draining the reservoirs.



To learn more about the issue of old dams in the Adirondack Park that need repair the Association recommends two recent articles by Zachary Matson in the 2023 March/April issue of the Adirondack Explorer magazine; “The Adirondack Park’s deadliest dams,” pages 14 -19 and “Municipal dam owners wait and watch,” pages 20 and 21.

WATER QUALITY COMMITTEE REPORT

Connie Schreppel

The Fulton Chain of Lakes Association participates in several programs directed toward keeping our lakes healthy and suitable for all to enjoy. CSLAP The Citizens' Statewide Lake Assessment Program (CSLAP) trains citizen volunteers to collect data on water quality on many New York State lakes. The Lake Steward Program protects the lakes from the introduction of aquatic invasive species throughout the Fulton Chain and the Town of Webb Septic System and Dye Test Program protects the lakes from failing septic system and sewage contamination.

CSLAP REPORT

The Citizens' Statewide Lake Assessment Program (CSLAP), is supported by the NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation (NYDEC) and the New York Federation of Lake Associations (NYSFOLA). The CSLAP program trains citizen volunteers to collect water samples on many New York State lakes. The Fulton Chain of Lakes Association (FCLA) enrolled in this program from 1986-1990 and from 1995 to 2012. Sampling was again resumed in 2018 and has continued through 2022. In 2022, FCLA volunteers sampled water quality at a representative point on Second Lake at 2-week intervals between June and September and measured some water quality parameters on site. They also sent a series of water samples to the lab at Upstate Freshwater Institute in Syracuse for detailed chemical analysis. The full report, including lab analysis will be posted on the FCLA Website when NYSDEC publishes its statewide report in the early summer of 2023. (<https://fultonchainoflakesassociation.org>)

In summary, the preliminary CSLAP results show that there has been very little change in water quality in Second Lake since CSLAP sampling began in 1986. The lake is moderately "unproductive," which is good. "Productivity" in the ecological sense means the ability to grow unwanted algae. The pH of the lake is near neutral, which is good for fish production, and the lake, like all others in the Chain, remains good for all recreational uses.

New York State, like many other lake districts globally, has recognized an alarming increase in the occurrence of what are called "Harmful Algae Blooms" (HABs), which are blooms of a bacterial species called

Cyanobacteria, and this group of bacteria are often mislabeled "blue-green algae." Not only are such blooms unsightly, but some Cyanobacteria species also can release toxins into the water that can pose a number of serious threats to human and animal health. Such blooms were recorded in September of 2017 in Seventh and Eighth Lakes in the Fulton Chain, but not since then, although a HAB was reported in Raquette Lake in October 2021. HAB blooms were not reported in 2022 in the Fulton Chain of Lakes.

The reasons for HAB outbreaks are often not very clear, and the typical chemistry of the Fulton Chain indicates that the chances of such blooms are low. Nonetheless, the fact that they have occurred in similar nearby lakes and are increasing in frequency throughout the state gives reason for watchfulness, and it is important to prevent pollution of the lake with phosphorus, a chemical that promotes the growth of HABs. The DEC posts notification of current and recent blooms at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/83310.html> and keeps an archival record of such blooms at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/83332.html>

LAKE STEWARD REPORT

Throughout the Adirondack Park, the Adirondack Watershed Institute (AWI) Stewardship Program, located in Paul Smiths College, maintains a system of inspection and decontamination stations, protecting Adirondack lakes from invasive aquatic organisms. In partnership with the FCLA the Adirondack Watershed Institute maintains 3 inspections stations on Fulton Chain: the Rocky Mountain Trailhead Parking Area, the State Boat Launch at Inlet, and the Eighth Lake launch at the state campground. The station on Route 28 at the Rocky Mountain Parking Area is also a decontamination station, where vessels can be pressure washed. Personnel from AWI conducted a total of 2121 inspections among the 3 sites, decontaminated 294 vessels, and intercepted aquatic invasive species including: Curlyleafed Pondweed, Variable-leaf Milfoil, Eurasian Water Milfoil, and Zebra Mussels. Water Stewards also conducted a survey asking visitors if they were aware of the spread of invasive species and 74% of the people surveyed were aware of invasive species but far fewer (8%- 26%) were

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PUBLICITY

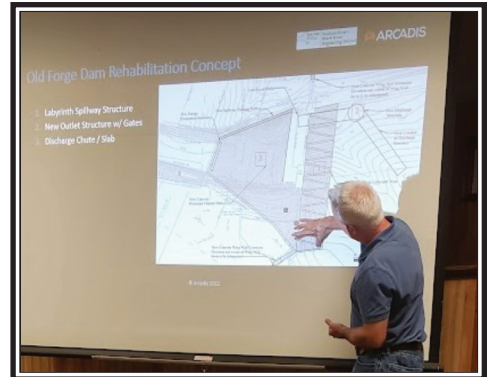
Paul Willsey

The Publicity Committee’s goal is to make residents and visitors aware of issues that affect the quality of our water and to promote safe boating on the lakes. We hope that when people learn about our mission, they will want to join in our efforts. We publish articles and ads in the Adirondack Express to help accomplish this. During 2022 the following articles and ads were published.

Watch for articles and ads this summer related to our mission.

FCLA Annual Meeting

On Wednesday August 18th Robert Foltan, Chief Engineer of the Hudson River Black River Regulating District gave a presentation at the Fulton Chain of Lakes Association Annual Meeting on the status of the rehabilitation work that is planned for the dams on Sixth Lake and in Old Forge. He discussed the studies and preliminary design work that have been completed. Construction could begin in 2024.




The following FCLA ads were published in the Adirondack Express in 2022

Fulton Chain of Lakes Association
New York State Fertilizer Law

- Prohibits the application of phosphorus lawn fertilizer on impervious surfaces
- Prohibits the application of phosphorus lawn fertilizer within 20 feet of any surface water except where there is a vegetative buffer of at least 10 feet
- DO NOT fertilize your lawn unless you use a non-phosphorus fertilizer. Look for analysis with "0" for the middle number, 28-0-4
- Excess phosphorus in the lake can lead to an explosion of algae growth
- Algae is detrimental to boating & swimming, etc.
- As algae die and decay the water is robbed of dissolved oxygen. This can lead to decreased fish populations

www.fultonchainoflakesassociation.org
 Facebook.com/fultonchainoflakesassociation.org
 Email: info@fultonchainoflakesassociation.org



Fulton Chain of Lakes Association

Are you interested in clean water and safe boating on the Fulton Chain of Lakes?

If you are, join the Fulton Chain of Lakes Association

To learn more about FCLA visit:
www.fultonchainoflakesassociation.org
[Facebook.com/fultonchainoflakesassociation.org](https://www.facebook.com/fultonchainoflakesassociation.org)
 Email: info@fultonchainoflakesassociation.org

Membership is \$10 per person or \$25 per family

Mail check to:
 FCLA
 P.O. Box 564
 Old Forge, NY 13420



Fulton Chain of Lakes Association

Help Keep Invasive Species Out of Our Lakes

- Free boat check for invasive species and washed if contamination is found
- Location—Rocky Mountain Trailhead, Route 29 between Eagle Bay and Inlet. Sign will be posted on Route 29 when it is open
- Boat check is especially important if boat has been in waters other than the Fulton Chain
- Boat check and wash conducted by Adirondack Watershed Institute of Paul Smith's College
- Please have your boat checked and washed before you launch it
- FCLA annual meeting is August 18th. Robert Foltan from the Hudson River-Black River Regulating District will discuss dam rehabilitation in the area. Watch for details.

www.fultonchainoflakesassociation.org
 Facebook.com/fultonchainoflakesassociation.org
 Email: info@fultonchainoflakesassociation.org



Fulton Chain of Lakes Association



Notice of Annual Meeting (All are Welcome)

Thursday, August 18th, Inlet Town Hall Robert Foltan Chief Engineer at the Hudson River-Black River Regulating District will discuss the current condition of and the need for rehabilitation of the Sixth Lake and Old Forge dams. The presentation will include the current schedule and potential effects on lake levels.

To learn more about FCLA visit:
www.fultonchainoflakesassociation.org
[Facebook.com/fultonchainoflakesassociation.org](https://www.facebook.com/fultonchainoflakesassociation.org)
 Email: info@fultonchainoflakesassociation.org

WATER QUALITY COMMITTEE REPORT *continued from page 4*

aware of the preventative measures that are needed to prevent the spread of invasive species.

As of June 8, 2022, NYS law requires all motorized watercraft users to obtain a certificate that they have cleaned, drained, and dried boats and equipment each time they launch into a new waterbody in the Adirondack Park and within 10 miles of the Blue Line. Boat stewards will be stationed at boat launches across the Adirondack Park and can be identified by their blue vests. When an aquatic invasive species inspection station is open boaters can receive a watercraft inspection certificate from a boat steward by accepting a free boat inspection or decontamination. Additionally, Boaters that follow the Clean, Drain, Dry steps on their own can fill out a self-issued certificate located at: https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/lands_forests_pdf/self-issuedcertificate.pdf before hitting the water. “Aquatic invasive species like hydrilla, the round goby fish, and zebra mussels are detrimental to the health of our lakes

and rivers,” said DEC Commissioner Basil Seggos. “Our boat stewards are on the front lines, protecting our waters from invasive pests on boats and gear, and last year successfully intercepted more than 14,000 plants and animals that could have started new infestations. To protect pristine waterbodies in the Adirondacks, all motorized watercraft operators are now required to obtain Clean, Drain, Dry certification before they launch.”

TOWN OF WEBB SEPTIC SYSTEM INSPECTION AND DYE TEST PROGRAM

In collaboration with your Lake Association the Town of Webb Code Office conducts routine dye tests and superficial inspection of septic systems around the Fulton Chain and some other nearby lakes. During 2022 the Town of Webb hired additional personnel and an active inspection and dye test program was accomplished.

NAVIGATIONAL COMMITTEE REPORT

Butch Hartsig

As we begin to look forward to the arrival of spring in the Adirondacks, our thoughts turn to preparing our boats for the upcoming season on the waters of the Fulton Chain of Lakes. As you ready your boat for the water, now is the time to check your safety equipment. Are your PFD's in good condition, does the horn work, are navigation lights in working order and do you have up to date distress signals? Another helpful piece of equipment to have on board is a dedicated towline between 35-50 feet long. You never know when a fellow boater may need a tow or you yourself may need one.

In addition to physical equipment, now is also the time to review NYS and local "rules of the road" such as who has the right of way and what are the local speed and noise regulations for the various waters that comprise the Fulton Chain of Lakes. FCLA has a Navigation brochure that describes these local rules and it is available at all local marinas, motels and the Old Forge and Inlet Information Centers.

FCLA will continue to work with Herkimer and Hamilton County Sheriffs' Departments as well as our local fire and rescue departments to promote safe boating on our lakes. To this end the FCLA president, Mark Steigerwald, and I will be meeting with the Herkimer and Hamilton County Sheriffs to ascertain their plans for patrolling the lakes this summer season.

We will also be discussing with them concerns our members have brought to our attention regarding speed, noise, reckless boating and the Eagle Bay sand bar activity.

Now is also the time to make sure all individuals who may be operating your power boat are in compliance with the New York State regulations pertaining to the safe boating certificate. All operators of a power boat born on or after January 1, 1983 must possess a safe boating certificate to operate a power boat in 2023. No person under the age of 10, or 14 for a Personal Water Craft (PWC), shall operate a power boat without being accompanied by an adult. All operators of a PWC must possess a safe boating certificate. All operators of a power boat born on or after January 1, 1978 must possess a safe boating certificate to operate a power boat in 2024. All power boat operators, regardless of age, must possess a safe boating certificate in 2025. Don't put it off. Take your safe boating course now. For more information visit: www.park.ny.gov and enter "boating education" in the search box.

Let's make this boating season safe and enjoyable for everyone using our lakes. Know and follow the rules. Be respectful of others, both on the water and on shore, and please don't trash our lakes! Dispose of trash properly on shore.

Changing seasons on the beautiful Chain of Lakes...





PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

Carin (Boon) Gonsalves and Ray Letterman

This summer the 3rd annual *Maintain the Chain* (MTC) event will be held the week of August 5-13. It will start with an Eco-Arts Festival at View Arts Center in Old Forge on Saturday, August 5th, between 10 am and 2 pm. To register for the 2023 event and for more information about the festival visit the MTC website at <https://www.maintainthechain.net/> or use the FCLA website <https://fultonchainoflakesassociation.org/>. The festival will include hands-on arts and science projects for all ages that focus on protecting the environment. There will be several resources, including environmental experts, available at the festival to help you select and plan your self-directed project. While the official week of the event is August 5-13, you can complete your project anytime during the spring and summer. Registered participants will receive a free MTC T-shirt that can be picked-up at the festival. Please submit photos of your effort to maintainthechain@gmail.com by August 27th to be in the running for the “Best Project” award and to win gifts of appreciation. Please consider donating to help fund future MTC events, as we strive to protect and maintain the beautiful Fulton Chain of Lakes and the Adirondack Park now and for years to come.



Luis Mikelsons, winner of the 2022 Maintain the Chain “Best Project” Award holding his plaque.

The MTC event is a self-directed, volunteer, community event inspired by the Boon Family’s annual tradition of removing trash from the bottom of Fourth Lake. In 2021, we held our first annual event during the pandemic with over 150 registrants and 50 teams participating in various self-directed, environmentally focused improvement projects. We were thrilled by the incredible support we received from the community that made the inaugural event more successful than we ever expected.

The 2nd annual MTC event was held last summer during the 3rd annual Adirondack Water Week. Adirondack Water Week is a regional event meant to raise awareness of water-related issues, the value of water to our region’s economy and environment, and highlight ways people can protect our waterways. MTC partnered with the Adirondack Council and the Adirondack Watershed Institute (AWI) at Paul Smiths College. Last year’s “kick-off” event was at the Great Pines Lodge with inspirational speakers from MTC, FCLA, AWI and the Adirondack Council. The 2022 event included 58 teams and over 190 participants of all ages. Gifts and awards of appreciation were given to several participants for their efforts to maintain the chain. We hope to have even more register for the event this year.

Luis Mikelsons was the winner of the 2022 MTC “Best Project” award. Luis completed not one, but three self-directed projects. He visited an AWI steward at a boat washing station and learned to clean, drain and dry watercraft to protect our lakes from aquatic invasive species. He also used a Secchi disc to measure water clarity in Fourth lake and he removed trash from the lake bottom near his camp. Luis received a gift certificate for his efforts from his favorite local business. He also received a wooden MTC plaque with his name engraved on it as a reminder of his outstanding effort during the MTC event (see photo). Furthermore, his name was added to “Best Project” award plaques permanently displayed in the Town of Inlet and Webb public spaces.



2023 Annual Newsletter

FCLA Officers & Directors – 2023

President	Mark F. Steigerwald
1st VP	
2nd VP	Tom Vawter
Sec/Treasurer	Phyllis Sanzone

Directors:

Butch Hartsig	Steven Mulvihill
Don Kelly	Phil Sanzone
Ray Letterman	Connie Schreppel
Tom McCabe Jr	Michael Schreppel
Jane Mulvihill	Paul Willseys

Directors Emeriti:

Janet Blakeman	Amy Sauer
Jack DeBevoise	Ron Smith
Richard Knight	Ed Stafford
Jim Murphy	Heather Stafford
Jodelle Pross	

Honoraries Directors:

Bonnie Baker – Town of Webb Supervisor
 John Frey – Town of Inlet Supervisor

Ex-Officio: Ray Cardella – President
 6th & 7th Lake Association

Committees

Thomas B. McCabe Environmental Studies Scholarship

Don Kelly-Chair	
Danielle Keifer	Tom Vawter

Water Quality

Tom Vawter-Chair	
Don Kelly	Connie Schreppel
Mike Schreppel	

Publicity/Marketing

Paul Willsey-Chair	
Butch Hartsig	Jane Mulvihill

By-Laws

Phil Sanzone-Chair

Website: Ray Letterman

Nominations/Awards

Tom McCabe-Chair	
Don Kelly	Phil Sanzone

Navigation/Boating

Butch Hartsig-Chair	Tom McCabe
Steve Mulvihill	Paul Willsey

Annual Meeting

Phyllis Sanzone	Mike Schreppel
Connie Schreppel	

Government Liaison

Tom McCabe-Chair	
Kevin Jost	Don Kelly

To become a member, fill out the application below and either give it to an FCLA representative or mail it with your check to FCLA, PO Box 564, Old Forge, NY 13420.

**Membership Application
 Fulton Chain of Lakes Association**

www.FultonChainofLakesAssociation.org • Email: info@FultonChainofLakesAssociation.org

Please print

Name _____ Spouse _____

Home Address _____

Email _____

Fulton Chain 911 Address _____

Summer Mailing Address (if applicable) _____

Local Telephone _____

Contribution: \$10 Basic \$10 Business \$25 Family \$35 Sponsor \$50 Friend of the Lakes \$100 Patron

Date _____, 20____ Signature _____