

Honeoye Lake Aquatic Vegetation/Weeds Management Program

2001 Harvesting Season

The 2001 harvesting season has ended and considering the lowest lake level in some time, 10 days over 90 degrees, no storm events to flush the lake, and Zebra Mussels, it was only a little above average in weeds harvested. This season ranks third highest to most tonnage harvested in the 15 years of harvesting (537 tons), but is still 100 tons less than 1994. The three hours of down time for weather and the 16 hours of down time for mechanical repairs were about or below the 15-year average. The two seasonal employees (Randy 14 years and John 9 years harvesting) observed the following: lots of weeds, very hot summer, driest summer in 14 years, lowest lake level in 14 years, extremely clear, and lots of Zebra mussels.

- *"The quality of the lake"* The Larsen report for the Ontario County Board Supervisor in 1972 and 73 addressed the condition of Honeoye Lake. The purpose was to see if a municipal sewer system around Honeoye Lake would solve some of the following problems. Honeoye Lake had septic type conditions, the Department of Health closing Sandy Bottom beach for health reasons, dense aquatic vegetation, pea soup conditions, and aesthetically poor water clarity. This was a 1972 report not 2001. Except for a couple algal blooms in mid August and again the first week of September, water clarity has not been better. Most of the credit is the results of Zebra Mussels, and water clarity will only get better, check out Canandaigua and Seneca Lakes. There have not been any signs of septic type conditions on Honeoye Lake in the fifteen years of harvesting. The dense aquatic vegetation will always be a problem with any shallow eutrophic lake. Honeoye Lake has been eutrophic for decades. Eutrophic status is given to a body of water in which the increase of mineral and organic nutrients has reduced the dissolved oxygen, producing an environment that favors plant over animal life. Honeoye Lake is a nutrient rich lake coming from a hundred years or so of human nutrient loading. Try to prevent weed growth in Honeoye Lake is like trying to prevent it from snowing in Rochester. Mother nature plus human nature equals **WEEDS**.
- *"Weed cutting on Honeoye Lake this summer"* All parts of the lake were cut this summer but some locations were cut more than others depending on weed density. As in past years, the lake is divided, for operational purposes, into thirds, NYS Boat launch, California Ranch, and Sandy Bottom with a week being spent at each location. Later in the season, time is sometime spent longer in areas with heavier weed growth. It is not possible to inform 1,000 cottage owners when we will be harvesting in front of their cottages. If some locations on the lake have an area that is so dense that it is non-navigational, the program

does its best to get to this spot and give some relief.

- *"Aquatic Weed Management Program's Budget"* Where does the county get the dollars to harvest vegetation on Honeoye Lake? AWMP is funded by the State of New York, not Ontario County, with contributions from the Town of Canadice and Richmond. The state has not adopted a budget at the writing of this report. Financial contribution from the state for 2002 are still in question. The AWMP will pursue other avenues should the state budget for aquatic weed harvesting be discontinued.

The Aquatic Weed Management Program received criticism from two newspaper articles, a letter to the editor and a political advertisement. For 15 years, the Aquatic Weed Management Program has tried its best to relieve pressure the aquatic vegetation puts on the swimming and boating public. Some of the public would like the harvester harvesting in front of their property even if the vegetation is very light. After cutting in front of everyone's cottage the first three weeks of the season, harvesting takes on a more selective goal. Now removing tonnage from the heavy vegetative areas becomes a priority. The program has always tried to honor requests made by cottage owners who feel the vegetation in their area hinders them from using the lake. Sometimes it is just a matter of cutting a channel to deeper water for their boat or at the end of the dock for swimming. Just a reminder, the big orange machine on the water with the paddle wheels, that's the harvester. The big orange machine on the shoreline is the conveyor, this doesn't float. Some people on the lake are getting these two pieces of equipment confused with each other. Over the past fifteen years, our program has had dozens of suggestions to solve the weed problem, everything from chemicals to dredging to aquatic moth. No matter what people come up with from the east coast to the west coast, it all takes hundreds of thousands of dollars. If anyone out there has a better mouse trap, we will be more than glad to sit down and discuss all options.

September 11 was my 55th birthday; it also was one of the worst tragedy's in the history of the United States from a foreign influence. This attack on our way of life has given me time to reflect about my fellow man. After seeing the sacrifices and bravery exhibited in New York City, it gives me hope that maybe this country is not as self-centered as foreign governments believe. For 15 years, the AWMP has done its best to satisfy the cottage owners and fisherman on Honeoye Lake with its limited resources. If anyone has a complaint now, wait until the next couple of years when Zebra Mussels have more time to work their magic. If Canandaigua and Seneca Lakes are any judges of what they can do, water clarity of thirty feet will cover all of Honeoye Lake. Then the weeds should reach their peak. When sunlight can penetrate to that depth, photosynthetic plants on a fertile lake bottom will generate more discussion on what can be done to help alleviate the aquatic weed problems. It will sure take more than the funds that are available at this moment in time.

Below is a comparison of statistics for the past four harvesting seasons.

2001 JUNE/SEPTEMBER					
	LOADS	HOURS	HRS/LD	TONS	TNS/HR
BOAT LAUNCH	80	138.5	1.73	240	1.73
CA. RANCH	80	133	1.66	240	1.80
SANDY BTM	19	42	2.21	57	1.36
TOTALS	179 LDS	313.5 HRS	1.75 HR	537 T	1.71 T/HR

2000 JUNE/SEPTEMBER					
	LOADS	HOURS	HRS/LD	TONS	TNS/HR
BOAT LAUNCH	52	116.5	2.24	156	1.34
CA. RANCH	81	160.5	1.98	243	1.51
SANDY BTM	12	30	2.50	36	1.2
TOTAL	145 LDS	307 HRS	2.12 HR	435 T	1.42 T/HR

1999 JUNE/SEPTEMBER					
	LOADS	HOURS	HRS/LD	TONS	TNS/HR
BOAT LAUNCH	74	162.5	2.20HR	222T	1.37T
CA. RANCH	62	140.5	2.27HR	186T	1.32T
SANDY BTM	8	34.5	4.25HR	24T	0.70T
TOTALS	144 LDS	337 HRS	2.34HR	432T	1.28T/HR

1998 JULY/SEPTEMBER					
	LOADS	HOURS	HRS/LD	TONS	TNS/HR
BOAT LAUNCH	67	139.9	2.08HR	201T	1.44T
CA. RANCH	60	141.9	2.36HR	180T	1.27T
SANDY BTM	8	30	3.79HR	24T	0.80T
TOTALS	135 LDS	311.8 HRS	2.31HR	405T	1.30T/HR