

# The Grapevine

Newsletter of the HONEOYE VALLEY ASSOCIATION

Volume 34

One Lake One Community

Spring 2017

## Mission Statement

The Honeoye Valley Association is a not-for-profit (The HVA is a registered 501C3 organization. Your donations are eligible as a tax deduction,) volunteer organization that works in a variety of ways to protect and preserve the environmental quality of the Honeoye Lake watershed. The HVA acts as an advocate for the protection and improvement of the Honeoye Lake Watershed. Activities include communicating with governmental agencies and political representatives, educational outreach, monitoring of the lake ecosystem, and acting as a clearinghouse for information related to these activities.

**Symposium second Saturday in June 10, 2017 HCS Auditorium**

**June 10 – 9:30- 10:00: Lobby open to public to view tables**

**10:00- 11:30: Speakers in the HCS Auditorium**

Black Bear and Bobcat sightings  
in the Honeoye Lake Area



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**MAKING A DIFFERENCE**  
Spring Salamanders  
By Bruce Gilman  
Professor of Environmental  
Conservation and Horticulture  
Finger Lakes  
Community College  
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**Honeoye Valley Association Annual Meeting**  
**Saturday in July 15, 2017**  
**Honeoye United Church of Christ Dining Room**  
**10 am to noon**

**Message from the President –**  
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**STOP AQUATIC  
HITCHHIKERS!**

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**Message from the President – Dan Lalonde**

Welcome to the revived Grapevine newsletter. The Grapevine has been a communication produced by the Honeoye Valley Association for many years. We apologize for the lapse in this newsletter and pledge to do a better job to produce this to all members on a twice a year basis.

Over the last few years, we have been busy. We held the annual roadside cleanup, which last year, accumulated over 800 pounds of trash and waste that was then taken to a landfill. This year's roadside cleanup was held April 22. Near Labor Day, we held the fall food drive and have set new records for poundage and money donations for 2 years in a row. Watch for the dates for this year's event. One of our most important tasks was the Lake Friendly Living Guide which was sent to every home around the lake. This is a cornerstone document that helps property owners learn how to protect the lake through safe land use.

This year, on June 10th, we will hold the 3rd Lake Symposium. This event has had great attendance. Again this year, we will have exciting presentations and tables staffed by various groups representing local topics of interest.

Last year saw the completion of the Inlet Restoration Project. This effort to reintroduce a meandering stream path to the Honeoye inlet is projected to greatly reduce sediment and debris coming into the lake during storm events. On April 22, a second shrub and tree planting event was held to plant vegetation that will reinforce the stream banks.

The HVA is very interested in the numerous scientific studies that are being conducted on Honeoye Lake. Studies on climate change and Honeoye Lake composition are exciting and we hope produce new insights to blue green algae and methods to reduce the algae blooms, especially Harmful Algal Blooms (HAB's). These studies are multiyear and show a dedication to understanding and improving Honeoye Lake.

Lastly, the boat steward program will be enhanced this year and may possibly include 7 day monitoring of boats entering and leaving Honeoye lake. This is a key effort to control the spread of invasive species between lakes.

Through our website, our email blasts to members and the Grapevine, we hope to communicate and educate the Honeoye watershed. We welcome your comments and feedback to improve what and how we support you and the Honeoye watershed.

Thank you!

**Much Ado about the Weir:**

**By David and Carole Baker**

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The discussion continues in our community regarding removing the existing concrete weir at the north end of the lake and letting nature return to the lake to "pre-weir" days, or modifying it to incorporate an adjustable gate to allow some additional control of lake levels. The existing weir has been attributed by some as causing stagnation of lake waters resulting in Harmful Algal Blooms

(HABs) during hot dry days of summer and affecting flow at flood stages which contributes to flood damage to lakeshore properties and areas downstream of the lake. This has been a polarizing issue in the community which continues to escalate in intensity in forums including social media. The purpose of this article is to encourage thoughtful discussion and consideration of the implications changes to the weir may have on the entire community.

Removal or modification of the weir needs to be a well thought out and thorough process which is based on facts, not anecdotes and imperfect memories of the “good old days”. Any modification of the existing structure will be a long process involving input from many stakeholders including but not limited to lake front property owners. The NYS DEC and the Army Corp of Engineers both have statutory authority requiring that environmental impacts be considered before permits for modification or removal can be issued. Consideration must be given to the effects that modification of the weir might have on downstream landowners and communities beyond the borders of the Town of Richmond. Additionally, potential impacts on the Honeoye Lake Watershed ecosystem need to be fully evaluated with consideration given to potential harms that may be inflicted on fish and wildlife resources.

In deciding what, if anything, to do with the existing structure it is relevant to consider why it was constructed in the first place. The installation of first the earthen weir occurred in the early 1950’s when the owner of the property constructed a boat basin/marina in the area now known as Sandy Bottom Beach Park. Remnants of that lagoon and its earthen weir still exist today. Prior to the construction of that lagoon and earthen weir water levels in the lake fluctuated seasonally. High water levels were determined by inflows from snow melt and rains. Outflow from the lake was dictated by topography. Seasonally, when lake levels reached a certain level, flow out of the lake would be reduced or stopped. Historically, that level was similar to what was experienced in the late summer of 2016.

Construction of the new weir in 1998 was aimed at stabilizing lake water levels to prevent them from reaching levels that would adversely affect recreational boating and to provide a measure of protection for residential waterlines which were vulnerable to freezing at times of low lake water during the winter.

The current concrete weir was constructed in 1997/98. The top of the weir is at an elevation of 803.5 feet above sea level which is the historic average lake level / mean high water elevation as per 6 CRR-NY 608.11 of the NY Codes, Rules and Regulations. Any amount of water in the lake exceeding 803.5 flows freely over the weir. A more in depth analysis of weir history and historical flows written by Jack Starke can be found on the HVA website at <http://www.hvaweb.org/resources/Documents/2014%20Honeoye%20flooding.pdf>.

Over the years increased numbers of residences, installation of roads, sewers, water and gas lines; more numerous and powerful boats, channelling for agricultural use, construction of residential lakeshore break walls, increased pesticide and fertilizer use, invasive aquatic plants and animals and climate change have all impacted the ecology of the lake to various degrees. The net result is a vastly different lake ecosystem than what existed prior 1800.

Some lakeshore property owners have cited a need to create flow in the lake through removal of the weir or installation of a gate. One opinion circulated is that stagnate water conditions are causing harmful algal blooms

(HABs) and that increasing flow from the lake would alleviate Harmful Algal Blooms. While this may seem intuitive and a common-sense solution to the problem of HABs it is an overly simplistic remedy which does not fully address the causes of HABs is unlikely to alleviate HABs and will have an impact on the lake ecosystem. It is also important to note that lakes with gated weirs have experienced toxic BGA blooms as per review of the DEC website.

It is relevant to note that the Honeoye Valley is relatively flat unlike other area lakes. The moraine dam left by retreat of glaciers over 10,000 years ago created Honeoye Lake. Increasing flow out of the lake would require channelizing Honeoye Creek to increase gradient and flow. Increasing gradient and flow will cause the lake to drain more quickly and to a greater degree than currently occurs. Actions of this nature would create lake water levels which are much lower than are desirable for recreational uses and would endanger existing waterlines and the wellbeing of the Honeoye watershed ecosystem as a whole.

Some points to consider regarding removal or modification of the existing weir include:

- What specific adverse effects to the lake ecosystem (if any) are directly attributable to the construction design of the current weir?
- Would construction of a gated weir actually correct those identified adverse effects?
- If a gated weir is constructed who will decide when to release water and how much water to release?
- How much water should be let out of the lake and when should it be done to prevent exposure and freezing of water pipes for the many households still drawing water from the lake?
- How do we compensate for the "flat" HVA valley to have water flow away from town?
- What is the impact of releasing water from the lake on those downstream in the north? Will it cause flooding of farmlands/businesses outside of town?
- What happens if water is let out in anticipation of spring rains and we have a dry spring/summer without adequate replenishment of the lake water?
- Who will pay? Any modification of the weir would require extensive permit review including preparation of an environmental impact statement prior to issuance of construction permits. Assuming permits are granted; who will pay the construction costs for the weir and fund ongoing costs related to maintenance of the structure and regulation of water levels?

This is by no means a comprehensive list of factors that need to be considered in an undertaking of this scope. It is offered as a starting point to encourage thoughtful dialog to identify and address the numerous and complex factors which are impacting the Honeoye Lake ecosystem and the quality of life of its residents and visitors today and in the future.

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE

By Bruce Gilman

Professor of Environmental Conservation and Horticulture  
Finger Lakes Community College

Every spring, with the first warm evening rains, spotted salamanders (*Ambystoma maculatum*) begin a synchronous migration from hillside forests to the southern Honeoye Valley floor. They are seeking breeding pools, ponds, and shallow depressions in the extensive silver maple-ash swamp forest that occupies nearly 900 acres of the valley floor. Perhaps it is this abundance of potential breeding sites that contributes to the large migrating population observed every spring. As adults during the summer, spotted salamanders are seldom encountered, spending much of their time burrowing underground in the upland forests. Spotted salamanders belong to a group known as the mole salamanders characterized by their plump, robust body and short, blunt head. Their stout body most often has a black dorsal surface with two irregular rows of yellow to orange spots. The ventral surface is slate gray. There are usually twelve costal grooves between the legs along each side. They can grow to ten inches and live for twenty years. No way are they a large charismatic wildlife species, but they are still attractive in their own way to me and my college students.



My college's Muller Field Station is ideally located in the center of this migratory pathway but, unfortunately, so is County Road 36. To decrease the accidental road kills of spotted salamanders, we annually organize a campaign to physically move salamanders across the highway. This year, over the course of two nights, we moved an estimated 1100 spotted salamanders to safety on the opposite side of the road. We also moved just over 100 Jefferson's salamanders (*Ambystoma jeffersonianum*), one red eft (*Notophthalmus viridescens*)



In addition to making a difference for the salamanders, this activity profoundly affects my students. Going beyond wildlife observation to actual wildlife conservation put into action, saving salamanders is an instantaneous reward and a memory that will continue to inspire and transform one's conservation ethic in the future.

**Never feed bears intentionally; it is illegal and creates human-bear conflicts.**

Black Bear and Bobcat in the Honeoye Lake and surrounding areas have significant forested and open areas where wildlife abounds. Last summer, a black bear was observed swimming across Honeoye Lake. At the Muller Field Station, trail cams have captured images of at least one bobcat that roamed through the area. Residents should remain alert that wild animals are in the area and should be smart with their pets and garbage, which could attract bears.

Though rarely seen by most New Yorkers, black bears (*Ursus americanus*) are valued by hunters, photographers, and wildlife watchers and many people enjoy just knowing that bears are present in New York. For many, black bears symbolize wilderness and wildness, but increasingly, bears can be found in semi-rural environments, agricultural areas and occasionally, in urban centers. New York's black bear population is currently estimated at a minimum of 6,000-8,000 bears in areas open to hunting, with roughly 50-60% of the bears inhabiting the Adirondack region, about 30-35% in the Catskill region and about 10-15% in the central-western region. Black bears are an important and natural component of New York's ecosystem. Whether you live or recreate in the bear country, please help maintain and protect the bears, and at the same time protect yourself and your property by not feeding bears and by reducing bear attractants.

Black bears are large an average adult male weighs about 300 pounds while females average about 170 pounds. Black bears can remain dormant for up to 5 months in winter. Bears eat nearly anything. They are omnivorous; bears are naturally curious they spend a great deal of time exploring for food, and this can bring them close to humans. Bears are intelligent, if an activity results in food, they will repeat that activity. If an encounter with a human is negative, they learn to avoid humans. Also if an encounter with a human doesn't result in a reward (food), they will not have any reason to have contact with humans. Feeding bears creates human-bear conflicts and deliberate and intentional feeding of bears is illegal in New York, besides being bad for the bears. Often when feeding on garbage or camper's supplies, bears will eat unhealthy materials such as soap, shaving cream, insect repellent, food packaging, etc. For more information to keep bears and humans safe <http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/6995.html>

**Some Bobcat facts**

Bobcat Scientific Name: *Lynx Rufus* Bobcats are about twice the size of a domestic cat and usually smaller than the Canada lynx. Their fur is dense, short, and soft and is generally shorter and more reddish in the summer and longer and grayer in the winter. Spotting occurs in some bobcats and is faded in others. The face has notable long hairs along the cheeks and black tufts at the tops of each ear. Males are, on average, one-third larger than females. Both sexes can be greater than 30 pounds; however, averages for males and females are 21 and 14 pounds, respectively. Body length for males is 34 inches and 30 inches for females. Tail length is usually between 5 and 6 inches for both sexes.

Bobcats are solitary animals and may be active at any time, day or night. Males have larger home ranges than females, and they travel greater distances on a daily basis. Home ranges are smaller in areas of good habitat than in areas of poor habitat.

Bobcat will use multiple strategies while hunting. They may approach stealthily, using any form of cover available between them and their prey, attempting to get close enough to pounce and strike. They may also use an ambush technique where they will sit and wait for prey to pass by, thereby affording them the opportunity to strike undetected. Smaller prey items such as mice and birds are consumed whole. Larger animals taken and stored are eaten in the position they lay, and can be identified as a bobcat cache by the upper parts being consumed, while the portion of the cache in contact with the ground may be untouched.

Scents marking using feces, urine, and scrapes of fluid from their anal glands have all been documented as ways they mark territory, and are commonly found on the underside of leaning trees, logs, shelter rocks, or stumps.



Thank you to the New York State DEC website  
for the Bear and Bobcat information

[http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/administration\\_pdf/1211\\_citizenscience.pdf](http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/administration_pdf/1211_citizenscience.pdf)

### **Prevent the Spread of Aquatic Invasive Species**

1. Check your boating and fishing equipment for invasive species
2. Clean any visible mud, plants, fish or animals before transporting equipment.
3. Drain all water holding compartments including live wells, bait wells and bilge areas.
4. Dry boats, trailers and all equipment before use in another waterbody.
5. Disinfect anything that came into contact with water, if it cannot be dried before reuse.

**For more information <http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/48221.html>**

## Join the Honeoye Valley Association HVA



**JOIN or RENEW TODAY!**  
 Start receiving alerts and updates  
 Single, Family, or Business Memberships

Support the ongoing efforts of the HVA  
 JOIN online <http://www.hvaweb.org>

The HVA acts as an advocate for the protection and improvement of the Honeoye Lake Watershed. Activities include communicating with governmental agencies and political representatives, educational outreach, monitoring of the lake ecosystem, and is a clearinghouse for information related to these activities.

### HVA Membership Form

please print clearly or join online!

<http://www.hvaweb.org>

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First name: \_\_\_\_\_

	Mailing Address	Lake Address
		<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Check box if same as mailing address</i>
Street:		
City:		
State:	Zip:	Zip:
Phone #:		

<input type="checkbox"/>	Single Membership	\$ 20.00	Individual, single vote
<input type="checkbox"/>	Family Membership	\$ 30.00	Two adults and children living in same household; each adult eligible for a single vote
<input type="checkbox"/>	Business Membership	\$ 50.00	No votes; recognition of membership on website

Cash       Check \_\_\_\_\_       Please invoice me

Additional tax-deductible donation for lake projects: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I am interested in assisting with HVA activities, please contact me. My area of interest/expertise is: \_\_\_\_\_ (optional)

***Please mail form and payment to: Honeoye Valley Association / PO Box 165 / Honeoye, NY 14471***