



A Publication of The Song Lake Watershed Fund

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Song Lake Watershed Planning Committee
1900 Rittenhouse Square
Tully, New York 13159

What's in Your Lawn?



Lawn Contents:

- Compost.....
- Earthworms.....
- Ladybugs.....
- Mulched leaves & lawn clippings.....

Lawn Contents:

- 2,4-dichlorophenoxyacetic acid.....
- Permethrin.....
- Imidacloprid.....
- Glyphosate-isopropylammonium.....
- Other lawn chemicals.....

Think about it.

For more information about how to have a beautiful lawn the natural way, visit www.dec.ny.gov

UPCOMING SURVEY

Last summer, many of you participated in the first of our watershed surveys. In the next two months, the Song Lake Watershed Committee will be going door to door with a secondary survey. Please be sure to secure some time and consideration to provide your input on this very important survey. Once again, we are fortunate to have the assistance of a Syracuse University senior. Kristin Schu has generously agreed to extend her help past graduation so that we may complete and compile this information.

For more information about Song Lake watershed planning contact SongLakelssues@aol.com. Tony George -696-8045, Marjie Grillo -696-5963,

Native Seeds Available!

Lovely, Seaside Goldenrod is a native plant that was once abundant in the salt marshes around Onondaga Lake. SUNY-ESF biologist Donald J. Leopold initiated the hand harvesting of the tiny plant seeds. Thanks to hard work and generosity, ESF has sent 100 packets for us to distribute to those interested. These seeds are very fragile and should be started indoors before planting outside. They can grow up to 8 ft. in height. There are 15 different native goldenrod species in CNY. None cause hayfever (the scourge of ragweed which looks similar to goldenrod). For more on this plant go to www.syracuse.com/news/index.ssf/2008/09/



Salidago Sempervirens
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Issues on Song Lake

Phosphorus and Algae

What's In The Water?

For the past two years, Song Lake has participated in the New York State Citizen's Statewide Lake Assessment Program (CSLAP). The report for 2008 indicates that the water quality in our lake has declined since 1988. The main indicators of concern are reduced water clarity (mainly due to increases in algae) and higher phosphorus levels in the lake. The report states: ***"It is likely that lake management activities directed toward increasing water clarity and reducing algal blooms in the lake should target nutrient loading to the lake. Indications are that the primary lake nutrients come from the watershed."***

We are participating in three more years of water testing through the CSLAP program. This additional data will evaluate any long-term trends, however, the report states, ***"Given the moderately high lake productivity, management of water quality conditions in Song Lake should focus on reducing nutrient loading to the lake, through maintaining septic systems, shoreline buffer zones, limited use of lawn fertilizers, minimizing land disturbances in the near-lake watershed, and localized stormwater management. The lake association is also advised to minimize introductions of exotic plants and animals from public and private launching areas into the lake, particularly given their abundance in many nearby lakes."***

The full content of the report is available in pdf form by contacting any of the Song Lake Watershed Planning Committee.

So, What Can We Do?

Understanding the impact we all have on our small watershed is the key to keeping our properties valuable, and our lake swimmable, fishable and enjoyed by all.

The Song Lake Watershed Committee is committed to working hand in hand with all those who have a stake in conserving our lake: property owners, renters, fisher folk, boaters, swimmers, birders and anyone who enjoys this unique lake. It is clear from the CSLAP report that the water quality in Song Lake is at risk. We all have something at stake here and we all have a responsibility to become engaged in best management practices that will keep Song Lake from becoming another environmental tragedy.

There are no magic bullets, but here are some things we can do.

Household Activities:

Clean and maintain your septic system. Get it Pumped! Have your septic pumped regularly. Leaking septic systems can contribute to nutrients and bacteria getting into the lake. This can prevent the lake's use for recreational activities. It can also cause over enrichment and algae blooms.

Use phosphate free cleaning agents. Using detergents containing phosphorus to wash boats, cars, and pets in locations where the waste water can run off into the lake adds unneeded nutrients.

Never use phosphorus on your lawn and reduce or eliminate fertilizing. Fertilizing at the lakeshore can also contribute excess nutrients to the lake. This can greatly affect water ecology and recreational activities. (Remember a green lawn creates a green lake.)

Keep a buffer. The area between your house and the lake should be an area of beauty and stability. Healthy, native plants along the shoreline increases natural filtration and prevents erosion. By clearing vegetation near and on the lake shore you are actually removing the natural buffering system that helps absorb nutrients and sediment runoff.

Boating Activities:

Don't churn the sediments. When the phosphorus is trapped in the sediments, it is not available for use. Unfortunately, when powerful outboard motors and jet skis are used in shallow areas they churn up nutrient laden sediments (phosphorus) that support algae growth and destroy aquatic life.

Maintain clean engines. Poorly maintained powerboat engines can leak oil and grease into the lake.

Keep invasive species out. Proper boat cleaning is imperative if we are to keep invasive species out of Song Lake.

When you leave a body of water:



- Remove any visible mud, plants, fish or animals before transporting equipment.
- Eliminate water from equipment before transporting.
- Clean and dry anything that comes into contact with water (boats, trailers, equipment, clothing, dogs, etc.).
- Never release plants, fish or animals into a body of water unless they came out of that body of water.

Prevent the transport of nuisance species.
Clean all recreational equipment.
www.ProtectYourWaters.net

More information at <http://www.basspro.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/CFPageC?storeId=10151&catalogId=10001&langId=1&mode=article&objectID=31535&cat=&subcatID=0&objectType=article>



Photo: algae surface scum in Nebraska lake

What Was That Green Stuff?

Most residents were concerned last year by the presence of algae in large clouds as well as by the presence of a shoreline scum that looked like green paint.

According to the EPA, "Most species of algae are not harmful. Algae are the energy producers at the base of the food web, upon which all other marine organisms depend. However, a few species of algae and other microbes can become harmful to marine life and to people under certain conditions."

We were very fortunate to have Professor Kim Schulz, a biological limnologist and an Associate Professor at the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, analyze our algae. The sample came from the north end of the lake. Dr. Schulz reported that there was a good deal of algae and a wide variety in the mix.

The lab identified "good" algae which are the green algae and some diatoms (tiny, single celled plankton). Dr. Schulz indicated that the greens could be a nuisance when the filamentous (stringy) types cause irritating clumps or "pond scum."

The sample also contained some **potentially toxic algae**; "some cyanobacteria ('blue-green algae') such as Microcystis and Anabaena." What this means for Song Lake is not clear, but given the higher phosphorus concentrations which are increasing all algae, their presence is cause for concern.

These harmful algae can be found in productive lakes in late summer. However, the presence of those algae that are sometimes toxic, should be a warning. First, they are potentially very harmful (even fatal) to humans and pets. Secondly, they can upset the food chain in the lake, killing desirable fish.

http://www.epa.state.oh.us/dsw/inland_lakes/BGAlgaeGrandLakeExcerpt.pdf