

# SLPID

## 2020 AUGUST NEWSLETTER

SLPID, PO Box 2551, Malta, NY 12020 | [www.SLPID.org](http://www.SLPID.org)



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2020

# WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

SLPID is in early planning stages on developing an update to the Saratoga Lake Watershed Management Plan completed in 2003. The 2020 plan is intended to focus on a review and response to the issues that persist from the previous report plus issues that have developed since it was completed. This study would center on the four riparian communities rather than the entire watershed. It will be guided and funded by SLPID with partners including the four lake municipalities, Saratoga County Planning, Saratoga County Soil & Water Conservation District, and Saratoga Lake Association.

At this point in time, the study would cover the following topics:

- An updated general description of the whole watershed with existing information and data;
- Summarization of water quality data (bring forward from recent SLPID plans and impact statements, plus local comprehensive plans, local waterfront revitalization plans, and agricultural preservation plans;
- Summarization of SLPID's aquatic vegetation control efforts;
- Review of zoning and other regulations that impact the lake;
- Extensive detail of issues in the watershed and how they are being addressed;
- Recommendations for policies, guidelines and regulations for the lake and watershed; and
- Detailed implementation strategy for recommendations.

Potential ways to fund the plan update are under consideration. Funding opportunities from grants are limited since there has been no 2020 grant cycle announced. SLPID will continue to monitor grant opportunities and will bring them forward for consideration at the appropriate time.



# SARATOGA LAKE VISITOR POSITIVE EXPERIENCE SURVEY

For many years, SLPID has fielded complaints from the public about the condition of Saratoga Lake and the quality of their boating experience. This is the second year SLPID has directed their team of talented boat stewards to develop and conduct a survey of people leaving the State Boat Launch after a day of boating on Saratoga Lake. This exit survey occurred at the Saratoga Lake State Boat Launch over a period of 9 days in July 2020.

Approximately 174 boaters volunteered to take extra time to answer a total of 6 questions about their time on the lake that day. Most of the take-away's were encouraging.

- About 50% of all boaters were out on the lake for 3-4 hours and 27% were out 4 or more hours.
- The main activity while boating (54%) was fishing followed by general boating at 36%.
- Most people had no problem utilizing the launch.
- Only 5% of boaters encountered weed issues.
- Nearly 80% of boaters reported a "great" boating experience. Only 2% expressed having a poor experience.
- Of the 32 individuals that responded to issues they encountered on the lake, 22 identified fishing as an issue.
- Many expressed frustration with their being too few fish to catch and were concerned that the decrease in weeds may be related to this issue.

SLPID is appreciative of the feedback received and will take further steps to assess why there is a perception that the Saratoga Lake fishery has declined. The survey details are outlined in the chart.

| EXIT SURVEY QUESTIONS   | RESPONSES |
|---|-----------|
| <b>How long were you on the lake?</b>   |           |
| 1-3 hours   | 39        |
| 3-4 hours   | 81        |
| 4 or more hours   | 45        |
| <b>What did you do?</b>   |           |
| Boat around   | 61        |
| Sit in sun  | 16        |
| Fish  | 92        |
| Waterski  | 0         |
| Other   | 1         |
| <b>Did you have to maneuver around to avoid other boats in the water to use the launch?</b> |           |
| Yes   | 39        |
| No  | 131       |
| <b>Did you have any issues boating with weeds?</b>  |           |
| Yes   | 28        |
| No  | 144       |
| <b>Rate your experience:</b>  |           |
| Poor  | 3         |
| Acceptable  | 32        |
| Great   | 136       |
| <b>Issues:</b>  |           |
| Weeds   | 2         |
| Boat Traffic/Crowds   | 8         |
| Poor Fishing  | 22        |
| Mechanical Problems   | 0         |





# HOW MANY BOATS ARE TOO MANY FOR THE LAKE?

Saratoga Lake is a finite resource which is in high demand. As residential development and public access increase, boating and other on-lake recreational activities increase as well. This increased use, coupled with increases in boat size and speed, has made lake over-crowding an issue for many lakes. Balancing lake use with ecological, economical, and aesthetic impacts is paramount in arriving at balanced and sustainable use levels.

Many factors influence the estimation of a lake's recreational carrying capacity. These include the physical characteristics of the lake waterbody's including size, shape, depth, shoreline development, the lake's use characteristics (the number of lakeside homes, number of moored and off-lake boats, number of access sites and density of their use, etc.); environmental impacts such as those to the aquatic plant community or lake sediment; area of the lake available for boating; boat density; and most importantly aesthetic preferences.



# HOW MANY BOATS ARE TOO MANY FOR THE LAKE?

Saratoga Lake has approximately 4,000 acres of surface water. An estimated 800 acres subtracted out where it is either too shallow or too weedy for boats to navigate freely, and areas where boat speed is restricted. Subtracting this acreage out leaves roughly 3,200 acres that could conservatively be considered navigable. Utilizing a factor of 12 acres per boat to determine safe carrying capacity (a typical average that considers all boat activities), a maximum total of 267 boats on the lake at any one time is recommended. This calculation includes boats that are actively cruising. Anchored boats are generally left out of the equation since they are not using up a lot of lake surface real estate. Kayaks and other small boats are also omitted since they are mostly clustered in the speed restricted zones or near the shoreline.

An analysis of boat traffic on the lake on 7/19/20 yielded a total of 201 active non-rafting motorboats and jet skis on the Saratoga Lake. Applying 3,200 acres of usable lake surface area yields a general boat density of approximately 16 acres per boat. While this is within the comfortable carrying capacity of Saratoga Lake, it does indicate that there are times when the lake will seem too crowded especially at peak times of the day for rafting and when the weather changes rapidly and all are heading for shore.

During the 2020 boat census conducted in July a significant increase in the number of both motorboats and kayaks on the lake. This may be an anomaly given Covid-19 pandemic or it may just be a new trend for Saratoga Lake. SLPID will continue to monitor changes in boat traffic annually and survey visiting boaters for their opinion of their lake experience. It is interesting to note that exit surveys taken by SLPID’s Stewards found that nearly 80% of boaters reported a “great” boating experience.



## Motorboat Carrying Capacity on Saratoga Lake 2016-2020

(Based on 3,200 acres lake surface)

|                | ACTIVE MOTOR<br>BOATS ONLY | ACRES PER<br>BOAT |
|----------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| 2016           | 181                        | 18                |
| 2017           | 112                        | 28                |
| 2018           | 149                        | 21                |
| 2019           | 183                        | 18                |
| 2020           | 201                        | 16                |
| 5-YEAR AVERAGE | 165                        | 19                |

## 2020 At-Dock and On-Land Boat Count Summary

|                            | COMMERCIAL   | PRIVATE    | TOTAL        |
|----------------------------|--------------|------------|--------------|
| <b>Motorized Boats</b>     | <b>1,014</b> | <b>912</b> | <b>1,926</b> |
| Motorboats                 | 985          | 686        | 1,671        |
| Jet skis                   | 29           | 226        | 255          |
| <b>Non-Motorized Boats</b> | <b>356</b>   | <b>533</b> | <b>889</b>   |
| Kayaks                     | 130          | 272        | 402          |
| Canoes                     | 20           | 56         | 76           |
| Sailboats                  | 122          | 27         | 149          |
| Other Small Craft          | 84           | 178        | 262          |





# Saratoga Lake TAKE THE PLEDGE





## ENCOURAGE YOUR NEIGHBORS!

Like us on Facebook and send a message

The goal of **Take the Pledge** is to encourage property owners within the Saratoga Lake watershed to commit to a few sustainable actions and demonstrate that small efforts on your part have a significant reaction on the biodiversity and health of the lake.



As a property owner within the watershed, your direct and indirect actions have the most impact on algal growth, sediment run-off, bacteria, pathogens, and poisoning aquatic life and wildlife.

## I PLEDGE:

**TO MINIMIZE RUNOFF** – Use “soft-scaping” and buffers around the lakefront and any slope or hillside that has a chance to runoff into the watershed.

**Tip:** Leave a buffer of grass, hedges or native flowers between the lakefront and lawn. You can reduce impermeable surfaces with natural walkways, patios and permeable or gravel driveways. Instead of concrete patios, use natural permeable materials with native plants integrated.



# Saratoga Lake TAKE THE PLEDGE

**TO SAY NO TO FERTILIZERS** – Most lawns naturally have adequate phosphorous for a healthy lawn and fertilizer is not needed. In accordance with NYS law, if you must use fertilizers, get a soil test done at the county Cooperative Extension office to ensure that you are only using the fertilizer that is needed.

**DO NOT** apply lawn fertilizer within 20 feet of any water body unless...

- There is at least a 10-foot buffer of shrubs, trees or other plants between the area you are fertilizing and the water OR
- Fertilizer can be applied no closer than 3 feet from the water using a device with a spreader guard, deflector shield or drop spreader.

**Tip:** Look for alternatives to fertilizers and if you do use them – never before a storm!

**TO STOP THE POLLUTION** – Do not throw leaves, lawn debris/clippings, or animal feces into the lake. All of these are high in phosphorous that can contribute to algal growth.

**Tip:** Always bag lawn debris for disposal or better yet, compost!

**TO SAY NO TO PESTICIDES** – As well as harmful cleaning agents and other chemicals. The bugs you see in and around the lake are also an important part of the ecosystem. Dangerous pesticides and lawn chemicals can be toxic to aquatic life and promote the growth of algae and weeds.

**Tip:** Avoid all chemicals; they are also bad for you and your pets' health. Wash cars and boats away from the lake.

