



FALL 2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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2026 CHAUTAUQUA LAKE PHOTO CONTEST WINNER

**"HOT AIR BALLOON OVER FALL
FOLIAGE." — LAURA W.**

A Season of Growth on Chautauqua Lake

WOW! This summer was nothing short of remarkable, with CLA crews stepping up and community partners rallying together to face the tremendous challenges on Chautauqua Lake.

During our 22-weeks in-lake, the CLA removed over 24 million pounds of aquatic vegetation from Chautauqua Lake, more than twice the amount removed in 2024.

I cannot thank the employees and community enough for their part in this amazing accomplishment. It was a summer like no other, but we proved we can achieve great things by working together.

DEBRIS

CLA debris crews were put to the test this spring as they spent six weeks working in cool, wet conditions to remove hazardous debris and clear navigational channels for your safety. They also tackled the buildup of knotweed in Burtis Bay. By early June, they had removed 40 truckloads of debris, marking just the start of the season's challenges.

ELODEA

The gloomy spring gave way to an extremely hot and dry summer. During the week of July 4th we experienced an outbreak of the native plant Elodea in the lower basin, which covered the waters from shore to shore.

CONTINUED ►

Protecting Our Waters Celebrating 10 Years of Boat Stewards

In September, we wrapped up the 10th season of our boat steward program aimed at preventing the spread of harmful aquatic species to our waters. These seasonal CLA employees help educate boaters at public launches on Chautauqua Lake, Cassadaga Lake, and two sites on Lake Erie, reaching over 10,000 boats annually. They check for invasive plants on trailers and boats, tracking findings in a state database. Preventing the spread of these species is more effective and cost-efficient than trying to eliminate them later. We urge all boaters to clean their boats before leaving any waterbody, even without a steward's presence.



**CLA & CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY
SIGN ANNUAL AGREEMENT**

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Our beloved lake remained at the center of attention for most of 2025, as newly applicable wetlands regulations took effect and unusual plant growth hampered boating in some areas. And while unseasonal weather delayed full enjoyment of our lake until June, it certainly felt like we made up for it after that! For the thousands of us who use the lake, elodea sprang up as a real nuisance, especially in the South Basin. Native to North America, it's been one of the top three plants found in Chautauqua Lake, but never as widespread as it was this season. We'll see what Mother Nature has in store for us in 2026. The CLA is, as always, preparing for the worst while hoping for the best.

Our best will fully incorporate the three new pieces of marine harvesting equipment next year.

CONTINUED ►



**TOM
SEARS**

SUMMER RECAP

■ CONTINUED

Crews and equipment were quickly relocated to clear large navigational lanes for boaters. An additional offloading site was installed at Ashville Bay Marina, and additional truck drivers were called in to speed up the offloading process.

For more than six weeks, we battled the southern basin weeds, removing record numbers of truckloads daily. Although we successfully harvested large channels, boaters were still having difficulty. On shore, CLA crew supervisors collected raked vegetation from homeowners in our small trucks.

While all this was taking place in the south, a small crew continued to service the rest of the lake. While we were not in all areas as often as usual, we were working in all areas all summer long.

As the weather changes to fall with winter on the way, we can only guess what Mother Nature will bring us next year. In the meantime, rest assured, we are working diligently behind the scenes to plan for the lake's many needs.

Please follow us on Facebook for periodic updates from the shop as our crew refurbishes the equipment this winter.

We look forward to working together next season with towns, villages, local partners, and you, the community.

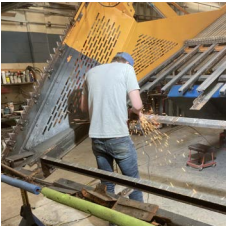
Heather



APRIL 30
LAKE SURVEY BY
COUNTY, TOWNS
& THE CLA

MARCH 19
ICE PICK FELL

JANUARY SHOP WORK CONTINUES



FEBRUARY SHOP WORK CONTINUES

Ice pick contest
began 2/7

MARCH EQUIPMENT READY FOR LAUNCH

APRIL SPRING DEBRIS CLEANUP BEGINS

Shop Work

If this summer taught us anything, it was the importance of winter maintenance to keep our equipment running during the busy season.

From welding and engine tune-ups to fresh paint and new parts, our crew spends the colder months keeping CLA's equipment in top condition, so we're ready to hit the water come spring.



THIS SEASON PROVED HOW VITAL OUR TRUCKS ARE
AND HOW MUCH WE'D BENEFIT FROM ADDING MORE.



Debris Cleanup

Before the first harvester hits the water, the CLA is at work clearing dangerous navigational hazards like logs and other woody debris. In April and May, 40 truckloads of debris were removed.

24,378,000

POUNDS REMOVED THIS SEASON

1,210

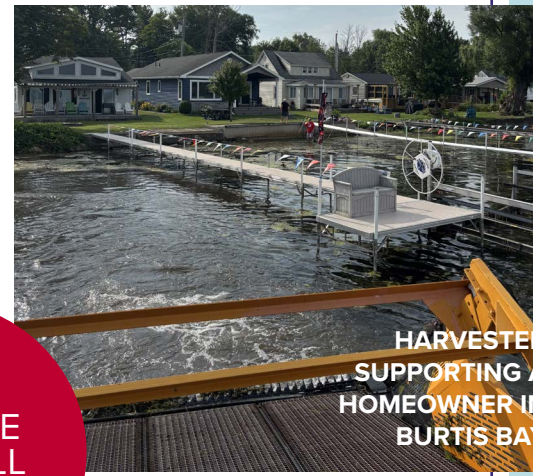
LARGE TRUCKLOADS

89

SMALL TRUCKLOADS

JULY

504 LARGE
& 42 SMALL
TRUCKLOADS
REMOVED



HARVESTING
SUPPORTING
HOMEOWNER IN
BURTIS BAY

Boat Stewards

12.5K

VESSELS INSPECTED

27K

PEOPLE EDUCATED

MAY

NEW BARGE LAUNCHED

used for knotweed
cleanup in Burtis Bay



JUNE

FULL CREWS BEGIN

More than 11,700 flares
sold for annual "Light
the Lake" fundraiser



AUGUST

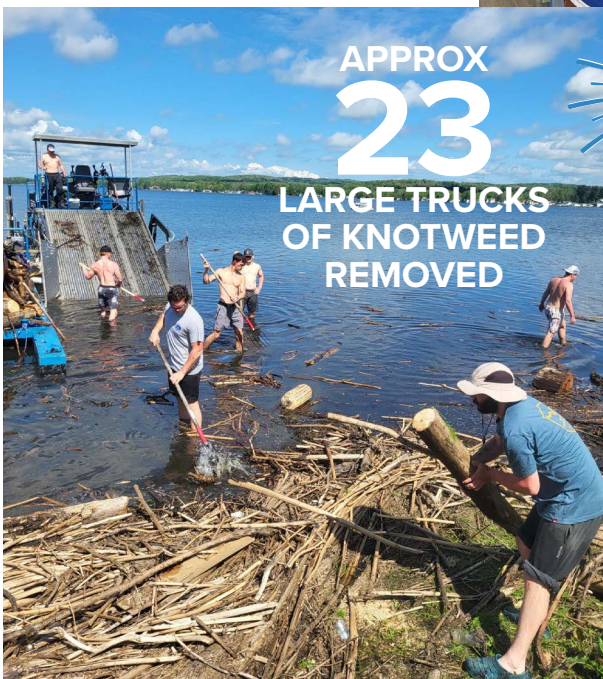
FULL CREWS CONTINUE

Dragon Boat Race - 8/9
Annual Meeting - 8/23



APPROX
23

LARGE TRUCKS
OF KNOTWEED
REMOVED



Harvesting

MORE THAN FIREWORKS
EXPLODED IN CHAUTAUQUA LAKE
OVER JULY 4TH WEEKEND

SCAN CODE TO VIEW
WORK REPORTS



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

■ CONTINUED

These new vessels, and the rest of our fleet, will be ready for deployment on May 3, with the expectation that we will be on the water again through September 2026.

Your Chautauqua Lake Association has received gratifying public and private support in 2025, and we will need your help again next year as new challenges await us. We are exploring several new initiatives to improve our efficiency and will implement those that prove their worth. To do so effectively, we ask for your contributions as you are able to give.

I join your CLA board, General Manager Heather Nolan-Caskey, and her staff in wishing each of you a safe and fulfilling holiday season, and an early 2026 filled with eager anticipation for the wonders and joy we will all experience on Chautauqua Lake.

And heartfelt thanks to each of you for your past and future generosity in helping us to serve our lake!

John Ford

Continued Education at the CLA

Staff will attend the North American Lake Management Society (NALMS) Conference in November, reinforcing our commitment to collaboration and learning.

Earlier this year, staff participated in the New York State Federation of Lake Associations (NYSFOLA) Conference in Lake George.

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- CLA in the Spotlight: Staff presented on CLA operations and our large equipment fleet, sparking strong interest from other lake associations.
- Inspiring Youth: The Onondaga Earth Corps shared how young adults contribute to environmental work—an approach that aligns with our summer crew program and lake stewardship goals.

- Lake Management Insights: Sessions covered invasive species and harmful algal blooms (HABs), emphasizing that while every lake faces challenges, education and community involvement remain key.
- HABs Tip: Blooms over sandy areas often start from nutrients washing in from the watershed, while blooms over silty areas usually come from nutrients already in the lake bottom. Knowing the source helps guide how we respond.

SEPTEMBER
FALL CLEAN-UP
CONTINUED



OCTOBER
EQUIPMENT
PULLED
OUT AND
WINTERIZED



NOVEMBER
SHOP WORK BEGINS
Final reports submitted,
applied for new funding,
plan 2026 programs

DECEMBER
SHOP WORK
CONTINUES



**CARING FOR CHAUTAUQUA
LAKE IS A YEAR-ROUND
COMMITMENT.**

Join us in protecting the lake we
all love for future generations,
while enhancing it for your
enjoyment today.

Scan code to donate online
■ ChautauquaLakeAssociation.org/donate/

*There was also plenty of
action behind the scenes!*

350+ CALLS
IN NATALIE'S PHONE
LOG DURING
JULY & AUGUST

1.2K+
NEW SOCIAL MEDIA
FOLLOWERS
IN JULY & AUGUST

FALL 2025



STARRY STONEWORT REMOVAL PROJECT

This summer, the CLA once again supported the Starry Stonewort removal projects on Chautauqua Lake. Crews collaborated with the mobitracs and the Diver-Assisted Suction Harvesting (DASH) team in Ashville Bay and Prendergast, and our barge was used by the DASH team at all sites. This initiative was in partnership with the Town of Chautauqua, the Town of North Harmony, the CWC, and the Alliance to minimize the spread of this invasive species. Next summer, we hope to have our own DASH crew and boat working in areas of need.



Lake Plants & Herbivores Update

Since 2002, the CLA has contracted with aquatic ecologists to monitor and analyze plant density and insect populations to support long-term lake management and improve lake health.

Special thanks to the survey teams from Rooney's Aquatic Biologists (in collaboration with Racine-Johnson Aquatic Ecologists) and SUNY Oneonta. In August, they visited 371 plots across the North and South Basins. Here is a summary of their findings:

SOUTH BASIN

PLANT SURVEY

- Dense vegetation, including Elodea and Milfoil
- Some areas showed harmful algal blooms (HABs), while areas with thick plant growth maintained clear water.
- The biomass of Elodea and milfoil has increased compared to last year.
- Large surface plant patches provide habitat for eagles, herons, plovers, ducks, geese as well as damselflies.
- The presence of Brittle naiad, an invasive plant, was again detected in the southern basin.
- Signs of weevil herbivory on milfoil.

INSECT HERBIVORE SURVEY

- Observed weevils, moths, midges, and caddisflies feeding on Eurasian watermilfoil.
- Stem and leaf damage primarily due to insect herbivory; minor herbicide impacts noted.



NORTH BASIN

PLANT SURVEY

- More diverse plant community.
- Fewer plants reaching the surface
- Mild, early signs of HABs.

INSECT HERBIVORE SURVEY

- Weevils and moths present, with densities varied by location.
- Stem and leaf damage recorded.
- Healthy milfoil patches are essential for sustaining herbivores that control invasive species without harming native plants.



SEE WHAT'S
HAPPENING
VIRTUALLY
ANYTIME!

Scan the code or visit
ChautauquaLakeAssociation.org
to see current lake conditions in
Lakewood.

SCAN CODE
TO VIEW
FULL REPORTS





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FALL 2025 STAFF

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NATALIE KING

COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR
STEPHANIE P. BUSSMAN



The CLA is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization.

3RD PLACE 2026 PHOTO CONTEST

"WINTER SUNRISE, HADLEY BAY"
— THOMAS L.

NON PROFIT
Us Postage
PAID
Jamestown, NY
Permit No. 65

Upcoming Events

WINTER 2026

ICE PICK CONTEST

Dependent on good ice, the ice pick will be place in Lakewood this winter.

SPRING 2026

LAKE PHOTO CONTEST

Share your love of the lake. Your photo could win tickets to our annual gala!

2ND PLACE

"CROSSING THE LAKE" — VICTOR M.

JUNE / JULY 2026

SPEND THE DAY WITH THE CLA

Celebrate regional giving days with the CLA through virtual tours and behind-the-scenes looks at our lake work.

FLARE SALE

Support the CLA's Light the Lake, an annual July 4th tradition on Chautauqua Lake.

AUGUST 2026

DENIM & DIAMONDS

Our social event of the summer! Join us for dinner, dancing, exciting raffles, and live music. Watch for sponsorship opportunities and tickets this spring.

DRAGON BOAT FESTIVAL

Join us at Celoron Park on 8.08.26 for paddle races, food, music, and family fun.

