

FALL 2024

LISTEN TO THE LAKE...

Official Newsletter of the Keuka Lake Association

A Message from the President....

BY STEVE BRIGHAM

As the warmth of summer begins to give way to the crisp air of autumn, we at the Keuka Lake Association would like to take a moment to reflect on the highlights of this past season and provide a glimpse into the exciting events and activities awaiting us this Fall.

This summer, Keuka Lake was a vibrant hub of activity and joy. Our shoreline monitoring volunteers (60+) were active all summer and on the lookout for Harmful Algal Blooms. They were taking pictures, samples, and reporting activity through our online reporting system. We would like to thank each and every one of those who participated in this activity.

This season, we continued our efforts to sample the lake monthly. We send these samples to the lab in Geneva and the results are entered in our 30+year database so they can be analyzed for any significant trends. This regular sampling and rapid response to concerns ensures that our waters remain safe and clean for all to enjoy. We also reestablished our fecal/e.coli monitoring this year. It's been a few years since we had a program for monitoring, but we all felt that we should begin again to see how our septic management program has had an effect on the lake.

In July, we had a fantastic Annual Meeting at Keuka College. We appreciate the turnout of our members at this meeting. We got to hear updates from our committee chairs on their team activities. Sue Oliver, our Vice President, gave an interesting presentation and shared pictures of how we execute water quality sampling on the boat. We also heard about broader watershed activity from our Keynote Speaker, Colby Petersen, of the Yates County Soil & Water Conservation District. We all found this talk very informative and educational. We hope to have Colby speak again at future events.

As we transition into the fall season, there's plenty to look forward to around Keuka Lake. Keuka Lake's shoreline will soon be ablaze with the vibrant colors of autumn. Whether by car, bike, or boat, there are countless ways to enjoy the stunning fall foliage. The Keuka Lake Wine Trail will be especially delightful this time of year, with many wineries offering special harvest season events and tastings. Don't miss out on the region's renowned wines and the chance to sample some local produce.

We thank each and every one of you for your continued support and enthusiasm. Together, we can ensure that Keuka Lake remains a pristine and cherished destination for generations to come.

Steve

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Testing Keuka Lake's Water

WATER QUALITY COMMITTEE



Evolving and Improving

One key mission of the KLA is to “improve and protect” the water quality of Keuka Lake. Testing programs have shown that the water quality is, and has been, very good. From 1989, and through 2008, the KLA conducted monthly fecal bacteria testing along every mile of Keuka Lake shoreline during the summer months. Early on, the results showed occasional levels of bacteria in excess of safe limits for drinking or swimming, in certain areas. This information aided the formation of the Keuka Watershed Improvement Cooperative (KWIC) and the adoption of their rigorous septic system regulations by all 8 surrounding municipalities, in 1993. These regulations mandated that all residential properties within 200 feet of Keuka Lake, designated as Zone 1, have their septic systems pumped and inspected every 5 years, and that their design meets NYS Health Department requirements. In addition, Zone 1 holding tanks are required to be pumped and inspected annually.

In the decade after the KWIC regulations were adopted, ongoing fecal bacteria test results showed that the KWIC regulations appeared to have had a significant impact in reducing the bacteria levels of shoreline lake water. This bacteria testing every mile around the lake shoreline was conducted until 2008, but discontinued after several years of acceptable results.

Beginning this year, fecal coliform and e-coli testing of lake water in selected areas around the shoreline has commenced, concentrating on potential suspect areas. With limited data thus far, no major bacteria shoreline sources have been detected, but testing will continue monthly through October.

Fecal bacteria and e-coli testing has also begun on the two major water sources of the lake, Sugar Creek and Cold Brook, where higher than acceptable bacteria levels have been found entering the lake. Sampling collection points that are upstream, will aid in defining the source, which could be human (from failing septic systems), or animal from upstream farms. Other streams to be sampled and tested include Mt. Washington, Glen Brook, Wagener Glen, Brandy Bay, Willow Grove, and Day Road.

We welcome volunteers! Jobs include data recording and sampling (to collect water, record temperatures and perform a simple sample filtration process). You don't have to scramble down a creek bank if that's not for you! Each team samples only 2 streams that sometimes requires a pair of waders. The process takes about 2 hours and what you find on these outings is always an adventure, sometimes a challenge, but definitely a good time.

Contact the KLA office for more information.

2024 Water Quality Program Initiatives

BY SUE OLIVER, VICE PRESIDENT



Shared from the Presentation on Water Quality at the 2024 KLA Annual Meeting

WHO	WHAT	WHERE	WHEN	FREQUENCY
KLA	Lake	8 Sites	April - October	Monthly
KLA	Lake- Fecal	13 Sites	June - October	Monthly
CSLAP	Lake	1 Site	June - September	Monthly
Watershed Volunteers	Streams	8 Major Inputs	August - October	3x/year
HABs Volunteers	Photos & Water Samples	Shoreline	June - October	Weekly
Water Stewards	Invasive Species	Boat Launches	June - Labor Day	Weekends



Submitted by: Rob Dintruff



Water Quality Update

BY BOB LAMBERT, WATER QUALITY COMMITTEE

Harmful Algal Blooms

This summer has seen considerable focus on harmful algal blooms (HABs), given their increasing prevalence on some of our sister Finger Lakes and their unusually early appearance on Keuka Lake.

What are HABs? Cyanobacteria are algae-like organisms (sometimes confusingly called blue-green algae). They are present in low numbers in most water bodies, but when conditions are right, they can multiply quickly and form surface scums – the bloom. Key drivers for HABs are thought to be increasing nutrients in the water (especially phosphorus, but also nitrogen), sunlight, warmer temperatures, and calm waters. Some HABs release toxins, which can be serious health threats for humans and animals. A HAB can last anywhere from a few hours to a few weeks.

How can I help? “Know it, Avoid it, Report it”

Know it: Typical HAB appearances include:

- Green dots or blobs on the water surface
- Linear green streaking
- Pea soup appearance
- Spilled paint appearance
- Any atypical water color – blue, green, white, brown

Green algae can also cause blooms, such as the typical pond scum. These are never harmful. The NYS DEC HAB website (<https://dec.ny.gov/environmental-protection/water/water-quality/harmful-algal-blooms>) has a series of pictures which can help differentiate HABs from the more harmless varieties of surface scums.

Avoid it: The general rule is to avoid water that is discolored or has a surface scum. This includes all recreational activities, including swimming, kayaking, and fishing.

Touching the bloom, swallowing it, or inhaling any aerosolized material is potentially harmful and should be avoided by humans and animals. If there is any contact with a HAB, rinse thoroughly and monitor for any symptoms, particularly nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, eye/nose/throat irritation, allergic reactions or difficulty breathing. Seek medical assistance promptly if any of these occur. For animals, follow the same advice: rinse thoroughly and monitor closely. Dogs are especially prone to ill effects and should be taken to the vet promptly for any concerns following potential exposure.

Many homes on Keuka Lake source their water directly from the lake. If there is any concern for HAB near the water intake line, do not use until the HAB has cleared. Boiling, chlorine disinfection, UV treatment, and advanced filtration systems may not protect from HAB-related toxins.

Knowing the location of HABs can be helpful. The NYS DEC publishes the ‘HAB Interactive Map’ on their website (noted earlier). It is up to date, easy to find, and gives anyone a quick picture of where and when there have been HABs on any NYS body of water. All HABs found that season are marked, and any HABs new in the prior two weeks are highlighted.

Report it: Anyone who suspects a HAB should report it to the NYS DEC. There is a streamlined reporting form on their website. Submitting a photo with the report is very helpful.

The KLA has sponsored a ‘HAB shoreline monitoring’ program for a few years now. Currently we have 69 volunteers who monitor a short distance of waterfront every week, and report to the DEC, including photo documentation. When a HAB is suspected, we also send a water sample to the Finger Lakes Institute at Hobart/William Smith College for further testing. This allows chemical confirmation of the HAB and provides information on any toxins. We are grateful for the efforts of our volunteers and would welcome more volunteers going forward!



Keuka Lake HAB Update, as of August 23, 2024:

- **8 HABs per the DEC**
 - 3 through our shoreline monitoring program
 - Another 5 reported directly to the DEC
- We are expecting more HABs, since the peak season will go on for another 4-6 weeks.
- Prior numbers of HABs:
 - 2023: 9
 - 2022: 16
 - 2021: 12
 - 2020: 15

How do we prevent HABs? There is much ongoing research into causes and preventive measures. The NYS DEC expects to publish their latest perspective on water quality in the Finger Lakes (including HABs) late this year or early next. Much current research is centered on the watershed and its impact on phosphorus levels: source type, key locations, stormwater impact, and others. For those at KLA's annual meeting this year, Colby Peterson's presentation on the numerous efforts to minimize harmful run-off in our watershed was truly impressive!

How have Keuka Lake's nutrient levels been trending? Average phosphorus and nitrogen levels have shown no significant change over the last 24 years. Our goal is to maintain this, or even improve upon it where possible. Other factors, such as climate change, major rain events, dreissenid (zebra mussels) impact and others may explain the increasing incidence of HABs. Research efforts continue, as the full range of contributing factors is not well understood.

What can KLA members do now? Helpful measures include:

- minimizing use of lawn and garden fertilizers
- avoiding phosphate-containing fertilizers, soaps and detergents
- ensuring septic systems are functioning optimally
- considering natural shoreline plantings
- using rain barrels
- directing hard surface run-off toward planted surfaces
- using pervious pavers
- composting

*Get Involved-
Come learn about
being a HABs
Shoreline Volunteer!*

HABs Volunteer Appreciation Party

Sunday,
22nd Sept 2024
3-5pm

LYONSMITH
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2597 ASSEMBLY AVENUE

KEUKA LAKE
ASSOCIATION

Food & Drinks - Cornhole - Bocce Ball - Door Prizes
Open to ALL

PLEASE RSVP:
info@keukalakeassociation.org

LOOK OUT FOR HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS

Cyanobacteria blooms, sometimes referred to as **harmful algal blooms (HABs)** can affect the water quality and aquatic life in a waterbody. Some HABs produced by bacteria can create toxins that may also harm people, animals, and the local environment.



HOW TO IDENTIFY A HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOM

Algal blooms can make the water appear green, blue, brown, or red.



HABs can be blue, bright green, or brown—they may look similar to spilled paint, pea soup, or greenish colored particles floating on the water's surface. However, only professional water testing can confirm if HABs and toxins are present - so if you see it, avoid it!

The NYS DEC has monitoring programs to report blooms. Visit the NYHABS website (<https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/77118.html>).

EXPOSED?
Shower immediately. See a doctor or vet if symptoms occur.

SYMPTOMS OF EXPOSURE

Vary depending on how the person or animal was exposed.

- Ear, eye, headache, nose, skin and throat irritation
- Paralysis, respiratory illness and seizures
- Abdominal pain, diarrhea, liver and kidney damage and vomiting
- Drooling, diarrhea, low energy, not eating, stumbling, tremors and vomiting

WHEN IN DOUBT, STAY OUT!

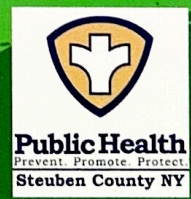
Stay away from the water when a suspected HAB is present.

If you or your pet experience symptoms, please contact your health care provider or veterinarian

- DON'T** Play with scum or mats on the shore
- DON'T** Let animals drink water, eat algae or swim
- DON'T** Swim
- DON'T** Fish or wade
- DON'T** Boat or kayak



Cornell Cooperative Extension
Yates County



A Case Study in Managing Keuka's Water Level

BY WAYNE HAND & ROB DINTRUFF, LAKE LEVEL COMMITTEE



Executing Actions that Tamed the Impact of Hurricane Debby

On Tuesday, August 6, 2024, as Hurricane Debby pounded Charleston, South Carolina, a storm tracker predicted that the Finger Lakes Region was now in its likely path. The Keuka Lake Outlet Compact (KLOC) controls the lake level, but considers recommendations from the Lake Level Committee of the KLA. The Village of Penn Yan Public Works Director, serves KLOC as the Gate Manager, regulating the outflow near the Main Street bridge. All were on alert, routinely checking the NOAA weather forecast for our watershed so that appropriate actions could be taken to deal with the storm. A delicate balancing act had begun.

Those who forecast the weather often take heavy criticism because "approximately right" and "precisely wrong" are the same thing. With Keuka Lake on the western edge of the approaching storm the exact amount of rain would not be known until a day, or even a few hours, before it started and the amount of rain would vary across the watershed. Both over-reacting and failing to act had immediate and long-term consequences to be considered. Water flowing through the gates in Penn Yan supports the needs of the Outlet Trail stream leading to Seneca Lake and the water treatment plant positioned nearby. Thus, a minimum flow rate is required. The potential for a dry spell later in August leads to caution, suggesting that maintaining a slightly higher level might be the proper course of action. After all, the amount of water flowing out of Keuka Lake can be controlled, but not the amount of water that flows in.

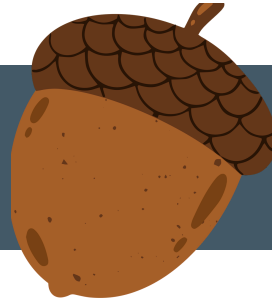
The starting point for the lake level management participants was favorable. The target level in the summer is 714 feet above sea level +/- 3 inches and on the morning of August 9th it was right on target at 713.97 feet. As the storm approached, it was decision time. Those involved sat in the sweet spot between confidence in their experience and a bit of panic. So here's what they did:

- Those managing the lake level relied on weather forecasts of Penn Yan and Hammondsport. Facts and data from NOAA would inform team decisions more than mass media reports occasionally prone to sensationalism.
- Knowing that some significant level of rain was inevitable, two of the six outlet gates were opened on Thursday afternoon, well before Friday's storm.
- By Friday morning, those open gates had dropped the lake level slightly and the team had a more accurate forecast: 3-4 inches of rain through mid-afternoon.
- With the lake level now rising rapidly, three additional gates were opened at about 2:30 pm and a sixth gate was opened as the sun began to shine at about 4:00 pm. Meanwhile, water and debris poured into the lake from hundreds of streams originating within the watershed.
- On Saturday six gates remained open and the discharge rate was maintained at more than 900 cubic feet per second, about 50 times the typical flow rate.

By Saturday afternoon, the outward flow of water and surface evaporation exceeded the inflow causing the lake level to begin its decline. In the days that followed, some of the control gates in Penn Yan were gradually closed and a slight excursion above the desired lake level was back in range.

Many thanks to all involved, for a job well done.

ACORNS AND CRITTERS – A FEW FAQs



Critter Corner

BY DAVE DECALESTA

The red and white oaks found on hillsides above Keuka Lake produce acorns in fall which are critical for the winter survival of many species of wildlife. Acorns are rich in fats, which animals need for energy when there are few other sources available in winter. Some, like bears, deer and (surprisingly) ducks, gorge on acorns in fall and convert acorn fat into their own fat which they then draw upon when food is scarce. Some, notably deer and turkeys, dig and scratch about in winter under the snow to find and eat acorns. Other critters, squirrels and blue jays, bury the acorns and dig them up during winter when they begin to run out of energy. **The FAQs:**

How do birds like ducks, turkeys, and jays eat acorns without teeth? Seed-eating birds have a muscular gland called the gizzard (that chewy lump of muscle your mom cooked up with giblets in Thanksgiving Day gravy) that food passes through before it gets to the stomach. The birds swallow gravel and small stones that lodge in the gizzard. When seeds pass into the gizzard, a series of muscular contractions grind up the seeds—acorns—and release the nutrients into the stomach.

How do squirrels and jays find the acorns they bury? For years, scientists puzzled over this. Then, in what could be called torture-science, they tested how squirrels found the acorns they hid. It wasn't smell – squirrels found their own cached acorns at a much higher rate than other squirrels. Turns out squirrels (and probably jays) invented GPS systems eons before Garmin or Magellan. When squirrels were allowed to bury acorns, and then nearby shrubs and small trees were moved or removed, the squirrels dug in the wrong places. Their landmarks were gone and their GPS systems didn't work.

Are all acorns created equal? Nope. Red and white oaks have different leaves and acorns: red oak leaves have pointed lobes and the acorns are squatty whereas white oak leaves have rounded lobes and the acorns are elongated. And there's more: red oak acorns have a higher tannin content than white oak acorns, making them more bitter and less palatable. That's why in a good acorn year (about every 3-5 years) there are more red oak acorns lying around than whites, which have been scooped up avidly. And, squirrels treat them differently. White oak acorns germinate in fall, so if squirrels want the acorn and all its fat available in winter, they bite into the acorn point (growing point) to prevent the acorn from germinating and using some of the stored fat. They don't do that with red oak acorns, which germinate in spring, thus leaving all the goodies intact during winter. How do squirrels know about that?

Squirrels and jays are Johnny acorn seeders: By dispersing acorns far from the parent trees, squirrels and jays insure spreading the oaks farther than just below the tree. Also, burying the acorns hides them (somewhat) from ducks, turkeys, and deer. And from the acorn weevil.

Perhaps most importantly, burying acorns hides them from the acorn weevil, which drills into acorns and lays an egg, which turns into an acorn maggot that eats up the insides of the acorn, leaving no food for wildlife, and no future oak tree. Acorn weevils are a serious pest of acorns, and account for most of the mortality (after that caused by being eaten by wildlife). Let's hear it for the squirrels and jays!



Welcome!

New KLA Members!

Anne Currie
Austin Hassett & Alice Murphey
Beth Puckett
Brian Martin
Caitlin Nichols
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Dave Willcox
Dean & Steve Brown
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Edward & Julie Dix
Gavin Reynolds
George Hollister
Jim Trezise
John Thorpe
Katharine K Tracey
Ken Backer
Kevin & Claudia Goodreau
Kim & Barry Evans
Lorraine Manelis
Margaret Long
Meyer's RV & Marine
Nance Francisco
Robyn Swatsburg
Sandra Struzinsky
Steve Shaw Jr.

REMINDER: In 2024, all operators of motorized vessels born on or after January 1, 1978 need to carry a safe boating certificate while operating. Starting January 1, 2025, a safety certificate will be required of all operators, regardless of age.

AREA BOATER SAFETY COURSES:

www.americasboatingclub.org
www.cgaux.org (Coast Guard)

LOCAL SHERIFFS' DEPTS

Yates: www.yatescounty.org
315-536-4438

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607-622-3901



Just a reminder: if you are not a year round Laker and want to keep in touch with what is going on back at Keuka, we advise you to use the following ways to stay connected:

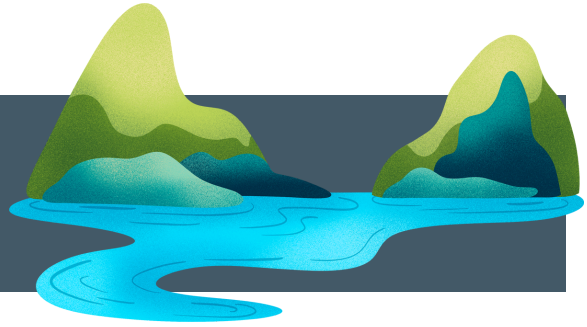
- Make sure we have your proper email address so that you can receive our monthly newsletter
- Follow us on Facebook and Twitter
- Check in periodically to our website for announcements and of course just to see those great photos, as a reminder as to what you'll be coming back to next season!
- Set up a Google Alert so you can be notified if any news that involves Keuka Lake or the Keuka Lake Association is published

Safe Travels!



Submitted by: Susan Evans Norris

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The advertising section of the KLA newsletter is provided as a service to KLA members only.

The ads are restricted to 1/4 page, to fit into a 3.75 x 4.75 space. It is the responsibility of the advertiser to contact the KLA office with a request for ad space in an upcoming issue and send a print-ready, color ad in a JPG format only.

The deadline for the Winter 2024 issue is NOV 1st and will be accepted in the order submitted. However, in an attempt to present an interesting diversity of ads, the KLA editorial staff reserves the right to limit the number of any specific type of ad in any given issue. KLA also reserves the right to decline acceptance of an ad deemed inappropriate for the publication.



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PHONE NUMBER _____

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Dates I wish to receive mailings at KEUKA address: From ___/___ thru ___/___ (month/day)

Would you like to receive E-Announcements and our monthly E-Newsletters? Yes/No

How would you like to receive our Quarterly Printed Newsletter? Mail/E-mail/Both

	<i>Membership Level</i>	
\$50	Partner	
\$100	Sponsor	
\$150	Patron	
\$250	Guardian	
\$500	Champion	
\$1000	Premier	

Check # _____ (Please make checks payable to the Keuka Lake Association)

Credit Card number: _____

Expiration Date: ___/___/___ Signature: _____

Please mail application and payment to: KLA, PO Box 35, Penn Yan, NY 14527

Thank you for your support!





KLA ORDER FORM



NAME(S) _____
 MAILING ADDRESS _____
 CITY, STATE, ZIP _____
 PHONE NUMBER _____
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Check # _____ (Please make checks payable to the Keuka Lake Association)

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Please mail application and payment to: KLA, PO Box 35, Penn Yan, NY 14527

Thank you for your support!



EVENTS AROUND THE LAKE

SEPTEMBER

7TH-COMMUNITY TABLE
7TH- TOUR DE TEDDI
21ST- WINGS AND WHEELS
22ND- HABS VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION PARTY

OCTOBER

6th- HAMMONDSPORT OCTOBERFEST

NOVEMBER

2nd- PENN YAN FALL FESTIVAL

2025 KLAeidoscope Calendars
are now available at several
local retail business partners!



Additional 2024 Directories are available for
purchase at our office. Please call to make an
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options! Call or email the office to set up a
time to come pick one up! \$25+tax



Keuka Lake Association
2466 State Route 54A
PO Box 35
Penn Yan, NY 14527



Our mission is to preserve and protect Keuka Lake and its natural beauty for future generations.

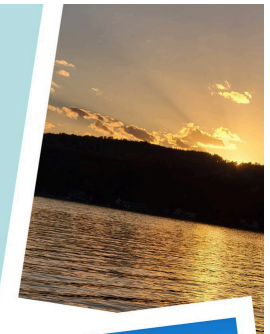
HABs Volunteer Appreciation Party

 Sunday,
22nd Sept 2024
3-5pm

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Food & Drinks—Cornhole—Bocce Ball—Door Prizes
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