Seneca Lake PURE WATERS Association

BLOOM WATCH UPDATE

SHORELINE MONITORING SCORECARD

Observation Dates: Thru 8/16/2020
% Zones Monitored: 71%
Suspicious Blooms: 0
Confirmed Blooms: 0

Week 2 Summary – No Blooms Yet

Week 2 saw the majority of our volunteers out and searching for HABs. I am happy to report that none were spotted from 8/10 through 8/16. Conditions were favorable during much of the week, but it appears the Cyanobacteria are not ready to bloom here on Seneca Lake.

The last 2 years, volunteers confirmed the first blooms on August 17th and 19th, so we seem to be on the same path. Volunteers will be back out this week in in search of the first blooms of the season.

Seneca Lake Pure Waters Association works closely with many partners as we strive to improve the lake's water quality. This week we highlight the Seneca Lake Intermunicipal Organization (SWIO) and its most recent membership initiative aimed at bringing all the watershed's local governments together to help coordinate and support improvement efforts.

Seneca Lake Intermunicipal Organization Membership Drive

The Seneca Lake Intermunicipal Organization (SWIO), an important Pure Waters partner, recently sent a letter to all watershed municipalities kicking off its membership drive. SWIO President, Mark Venuti (Geneva Town Supervisor), asked municipalities to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) pledging support for the organization. In addition, he introduced a “fair share” funding model to resource SWIO into the future.

In 2018, New York state awarded SWIO a $200,000 grant to hire a Seneca Lake Watershed Steward. The grant bolsters the development of the Nine Element Watershed Management Plan currently underway. In 2021, SWIO will exhaust the grant funds and will need to internally fund the position.

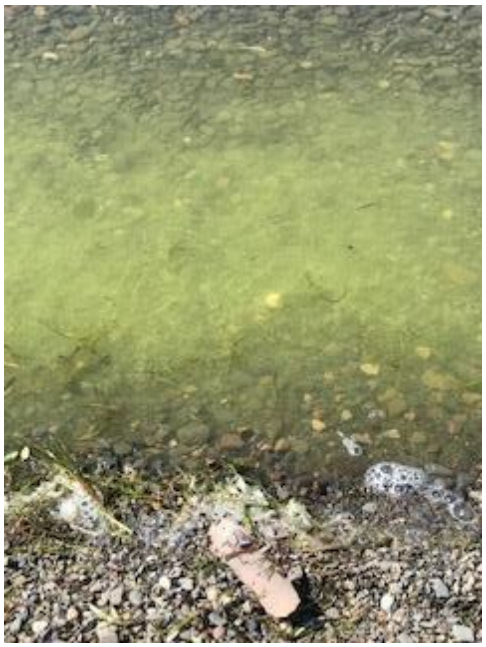
The proposed funding model is based on the Canandaigua Lake Watershed Council’s methodology that it has used to fund its Watershed Manager office for well over a decade. (The Canandaigua Lake Watershed Council, like SWIO, is an intermunicipal organization.) For those interested, SWIO has produced a video explaining the “fair share” methodology, including the modest amounts being asked from each municipality. In the video Mark also explains why addressing Seneca Lake water quality is so important to all watershed stakeholders.

The Watershed Steward position is particularly important for a large waterbody like Seneca Lake. With five counties and over 40 municipalities, the steward can prioritize actions and help bring in grants for key water quality projects around the lake. In addition, he obtains grants for, and conducts, educational activities and research efforts. As the Watershed Management Plan is completed, he will be the primary focus for orchestrating its execution over the next decade or more.

Pure Waters will be working hard to help SWIO gain the support of our local governments. We need everyone to pitch in and do their part if we are going to effectively tackle the complex effort required to improve Seneca Lake water quality.

What do blooms look like?

We will provide some photos in each Bloom Watch to help everyone better identify blooms.

This week's photos are from Keuka Lake on July 21st. These are typical shoreline blooms—streaking and shallow water. Yellow-green is a common color.

Do not put your hands in a bloom. Blooms are very 2-dimensional and don't stick together like seaweed or filamentous algae does. It is mainly green, but can take on some other colors. It can be streaky, blotches, dots, or scum in appearance.

What is one of the best things I can do to stay on top of this situation?

Visit the Seneca Lake Pure Waters website frequently at senecalake.org. It will have the most current information. In addition, if you live on the lake, it might be a good idea to check with neighbors and determine who your local Shoreline Survey Volunteer is. All of our volunteers are a wealth of information and a good person to know. Our 120+ volunteers are well distributed around the lake and many residents have regular conversations with our volunteers as they survey our shores on a regular basis.

If not a Pure Waters member, consider joining. We can use your support and help as we work hard to accomplish our mission of Preserving, Protecting and Promoting Seneca Lake Water Quality. Click here if you would like to become a member now. Those who need to renew and know their login information can click here to renew.

I look forward to keeping you up to date as we progress through our HABs/Cyanobacteria season. Enjoy the rest of your summer!!

Bill Roege

HABs Director

Seneca Lake Pure Waters Association

HAB FACTS: What you need to know!

Exposure to any cyanobacteria HABs can cause health effects in people and animals when water with blooms is touched, swallowed, or when airborne droplets are inhaled. This is true regardless of toxin levels; some blue-green algae produce toxins, while others do not. Exposure to blooms and toxins can cause symptoms such as diarrhea, nausea or vomiting; skin, eye or throat irritation and allergic reactions or breathing difficulties.

Because blue-green algal bloom conditions change rapidly over time, the best prevention is to take steps to avoid waters with visible blooms:

- People, pets, and livestock should avoid areas with blooms or surface scums, or water that is noticeably discolored.
- Avoid blooms when swimming, boating, fishing, and don't eat fish caught from areas of water with blooms.
- If you or your pets are exposed to blue-green algal blooms, stop using the water and rinse off with clean water.
- Consider medical attention for people and animals if symptoms such as diarrhea, nausea, or vomiting; skin, eye, or throat irritation; and allergic reactions or breathing difficulties occur after contact with surface waters with blooms.
- Never drink untreated surface water. Even if you treat it in your home with water filtration, chlorine, ultraviolet (UV) light, or other treatment; it's still not protected from blue-green algae and toxins.
- If you would like to see where HABs are occurring in NY State, visit the DEC Website at https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/77118.html. Their map is here.