

## The History of the Silver Lake Association (SLA) Chapter #10

### ***The Federation of Lakes Association (FOLA) & Water Monitoring***

SLCOA President Howard Benedict reported on the meeting of the Federation of Lakes Association (FOLA). He mentioned that common problems and functioning solutions were shared among associations like the SLCOA. He urged the SLCOA to join the FOLA with an annual membership fee of \$100. That motion was passed and it was also moved that the SLCOA have a post established to annually attend the Federation of Lakes Association meetings. Elaine Cook would attend these meetings. Silver Lake was one of 120 lake associations in the Federation. There are 7000 lakes in the state. Vice-President Elaine Cook attended a conference of the FOLA and highlighted this report:

- Lawn fertilizer is a major contributor toward lake pollution, even more than sewage.
- The SLCOA needed to control nonpoint source pollution. Proper land management by farmers was needed to prevent run-off into the lake.
- The SLCOA should look into ways of protecting wetlands around the lake in accordance with the Wetlands Act of 1975.
- Low phosphate detergents needed to be used to help sewer processing.
- The state association looked into "Boating While Intoxicated" (BWI), speeding, and noise levels. Legislation may be passed to control these factors.

Elaine Cook did the Silver Lake water monitoring and sampling from May to October. Samples would be sent to Albany for further testing. It was learned that the County Health Department collects water samples on a monthly basis from six different areas of the lake. The samples are tested and cataloged. Six tract directors had received training from the DEC to begin the lake monitoring program. On a weekly basis they took samples of lake water and recorded observations around the lake. Weather conditions, fish kill, algae growth, and turbidity were some of the observations that were included. Silver Lake was one of twenty-five lakes participating in the CSLAP program. The lake assessment program on water quality tests was evaluated by Scott Kishbaugh who was impressed with the degree of accuracy to which the volunteer group followed procedures.

A motion was passed to allocate \$600 to the SLWQC for future testing. It was then recommended to invite Assemblyman Paxton, Senator Volker and other local representatives to attend SLCOA meetings to increase awareness of Silver Lake's problems. Elaine reported on the preliminary results from the lake samples. It indicated a high level of nitrogen. Laboratory analysts determined a phosphate to nitrate ratio and stated that the high nitrate level is a result of farm run-off, e.g., animal waste and fertilizer, rather than human waste. Tony Fricano (SLWQC) had found a company (ARO Laboratories) to do independent testing of lake samples. The council wants to test streams running into the lake and determine the phosphate and nitrate levels. It cost \$28 for each test sample to be processed.

The testing of lake samples that were also done by Bruce Gilman of Community College of the Finger Lakes had results of high nitrate levels indicating barnyard and human waste; high phosphate levels indicating fertilizers. He also stated that the lake contained a lot of eelgrass. He wanted to return for more testing in the middle of June. There was no charge to the SLCOA for this testing. A thank you letter was sent to Bruce.

Elaine Cook would consult with the Board of Directors of FOLA, many of whom were attorneys. The Watershed Commission had allotted \$4600 for lake testing by Kent State graduate student currently employed by the town of LeRoy. He will spend 16 hours a week on testing. The towns that take water from the lake were very concerned about the lake. A motion was passed to contribute \$500 from the SLCOA funds towards the Kent State student's testing salary.

Dick Laley requested that Wales Wasson and Bayne Johnson be elected to the Watershed Committee which was renamed to the Silver Lake Water Quality Council. A letter was sent to the DEC with the following concerns:

- Who has jurisdiction over Silver Lake and what power did they have?
- Was any money available to clean up the lake and how was it obtained?
- Who is responsible for water quality and quantity? Who enforced these conditions?
- Could the south end of the lake be opened to provide flow through?
- Who regulates ditching?
- What should the Watershed Commission be doing? Who did they answer to?
- What were riparian rights? Could they be sold?
- What was the status of Mt. Morris, who withdrew from the Commission but still was taking water from the lake?
- Did a fertilizer dealer need a permit when his property borders the inlet?

Elaine Cook was collecting information on how other lakes are dealing with weed problems. It was noted that Honeoye was using a weed harvester; Lake George was using Sonar and also used copper sulfate and aluminum sulfate. The SLWQC reported they would like to begin testing for coliform, insecticides, and pesticides.

The abundance of dead snails this year is a result of reduced oxygen levels at the bottom of the lake. The weed harvester was still being discussed with no progress. It was mentioned by Scott Kishbaugh that vegetation was necessary for fish and aquatic life. Harvesting the weeds would really spread the vegetation. Elaine Cook stated that by cutting the weeds it may be necessary to cut numerous times a season which would be very costly. That money could be used for long term lake management.

Shallow lakes have warmer water, which promotes weed growth. Sediment deposits build up and become a garden for weeds. One solution would be to dredge the sediment. Further investigation would have to be done on dredging the inlet and outlet. Elaine Cook brought materials she had when trying to dredge Black Creek. Stocking the lake with carp may help the weed problem, but the knowledge of the carp endangering the pike population had to be known.

At the August 2, 1986 Annual Meeting, it was explained that Eurasian Milfoil had been spreading throughout Silver Lake. This weed grows in 3–15 feet of water and spreads quickly. It was believed to be brought in on boats previously launched at other lakes. The Silver Lake Water Quality Council looked for ways to control and remove weeds from the lake. Chemicals cannot be used because the lake is a source of drinking water for nearby communities. LeRoy had a weed harvester and would lease it for \$40 per hour, this was being investigated. It was Scott's opinion that the milfoil was not Eurasian, but another type. He also mentioned when questioned about LeRoy's weed harvester, he thought it would be too large to get by shore and in-between the docks of Silver Lake. The DEC was working on a sonar chemical in other lakes for weed control and would provide test results to the SLCOA.

The YMCA Camp had dug a trench into the lake, which Tony would follow up to determine why it was dug and what its purpose would be. Further research found that it was for surface run-off and the DEC permit was valid. Doug Klein reported that in the Austin/Shearman Tract, the town had installed a series of dams in the streams so that the water sits in ponds and soaks into the ground rather than running into the lake.

So many people and agencies were involved in keeping Silver Lake's water quality issues in control. Testing was very important and was done by trained SLCOA volunteers. To this day the Silver Lake Association's Water Quality Committee continues to perform the important task of testing the water of Silver Lake and informs the lake community of any water quality issues.