



# *The Oquaga Lake Improvement Association Inc.*

---

June 2019

Dear Fellow Oquaga Lakers,

Rain, rain, rain. Walking in the foot-tall grass I see the water coming over my shoes. Forget trying to mow. We've had 35 days with measurable rain and a total of 16.4 inches so far this year (and counting).

## **NEWS**

Bluestone Wind project. A 124 Megawatt wind project is proposed in the western part of the Town of Sanford approximately four (4) miles north of the lake. The proposed project straddles the Windsor/Sanford line along the Route 41 corridor north of Route 17. A total of 33 wind turbines are proposed. From the ground surface to the tip of the rotor the turbines will be 670 feet tall. They will be situated on the hilltops and will be quite prominent. A fact sheet is enclosed with this letter providing links to the document repository containing all the application materials and studies. It is worth noting that the project is the subject of the Article 10 Application process administered by the State. Projects greater than 25 Megawatts are not subject to local (Town) approval. The town can negotiate road use agreement and a Host Agreement but there is no specific approval or permit needed from the Town of Sanford. Large scale projects such as Bluestone are subject to approval by the New York State Siting Board pursuant to the Article 10 process. The purpose of having the State responsible for the approval of large scale energy project is to weigh the overall public benefit of the project against the potential local impacts. As you no doubt are aware New York State is aggressively encouraging the development of renewable energy projects in order to have 50% of generated electricity supplied through renewable sources by 2030.

Please read the enclosed materials and become engaged in the process. Information is provided on how to submit comments to the Public Service Commission. Like any large project, there are supporters and opponents. Ultimately the Siting Board will decide if the project will be authorized.

## **OQUAGA WEBSITE**

Please visit [www.oquaga.com](http://www.oquaga.com) for the latest news, announcements, event schedule, and links to the Town Zoning Code. The Association could use help from our tech savvy members to increase our presence on various social media platforms. Let us know if you can help.

## **NEWSLETTER**

*The Oquaga Lake News* has resumed and will continue through the Summer. If you did not receive your copy of the weekly e-letter last season, please send your e-mail address to [olia@oquaga.com](mailto:olia@oquaga.com) or [Barbara@oquaga.com](mailto:Barbara@oquaga.com).

## **LAKE LOWERING**

The Lake is lowered every 5 years on the 00s and 05s. The next lowering will begin after the 2020 season and the lake level will be lowered approximately 5 feet. If you are planning any work on the waterfront or permanently installed docks, or if you are planning a new dock, now is the time to apply for necessary permits and approvals. Excavation or filling of the shoreline or lake bottom requires permits from the US Army Corps of Engineers and NYSDEC. Property improvements within 35 feet of the shoreline also require Site Plan approval by the Town Planning Board. All construction must be in

accordance with the Town Zoning Code for the Lake Protection Overlay. Approvals of this nature take time to process and often require revisions to satisfy Planning Board requirements and conditions. Some projects may require variances necessitating a referral to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Submit your applications now.

### **NEWS FROM SCOTTS.**

**Scott's** *I asked Gary for input....*

### **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

For the Association to function we need your help. We need support with running events and fulfilling the mission of the Association. Our Mission as stated in the By Laws is:

"To preserve, improve and protect Oquaga Lake and the lands adjoining the same and bordering thereon, all located in the Town of Sanford, Broome County, New York; to develop and promote the said territory as a summer resort; to prevent the contamination of the waters thereof; to further and advance the social and general welfare of the said territory and the owners and occupants thereof and the members of this Association; to do any and all acts necessary to carry into effect the foregoing objectives, including acquiring and holding title and property rights in and to the said Oquaga Lake, adjoining lands and springs and water courses in the vicinity."

Fulfilling this mission requires a persistent, ongoing effort, more than the Board can handle by itself. Attached is volunteer signup sheet. Please consider helping fulfill our Mission.

### **COMMITTEES**

At the last several annual Association Meetings we discussed the need to involve more of the Lake Community through the committees and activities. A list of standing Committees is on the website. Call any Board Member to become involved. Board member list is enclosed.

### **SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

Enclosed is the Schedule of Events for the 2019 season. Please provide comments and suggestions to [olia@oquaga.com](mailto:olia@oquaga.com) or [Barbara@oquaga.com](mailto:Barbara@oquaga.com).

The Fourth of July falls on a Thursday this year. This year, Scotts will be commemorating 150 years of operation with a *Mrs Maise!* weekend during the weekend of the Fourth. More details of the events will follow and we encourage the membership to participate in the celebration.

The J Elmer Crowley Fishing Tournament in the morning of July 4<sup>th</sup>. The day will end with the Ring of Fire.

The Independence Week Celebration continues Saturday, July 6<sup>th</sup> with Lake Clean Up Day.

The Annual Family Day will be held on Saturday, August 3 (always the first Saturday in August) with Gruel-a-thon and Field Games in the morning and Water Sports after lunch. Due to declining attendance, there will be no Family picnic this year, but watch your mail and e-mail for an alternative event.

Don't forget to mark your calendar for the Annual Membership Meeting on Friday, August 30 (always the last Friday in August). Your membership, participation, and attendance are important.

See the enclosed Event Calendar for details and more information will follow in mailed and e-mailed reminders.

### **LAKE CLEANUP DAY**

Last year's lake cleanup netted quite a haul. **This year's Cleanup Day is July 6<sup>th</sup>.** We will be meeting at Gieskes' (48 Hanson Road) for a walk around the Lake to pick up litter and trash from along the road. Please meet at Koen's house at 10:00. Gloves and trash bags will be provided. We need your help to keep the lake clean. Let's get the children out this year to Give Something Back to Mother Earth and Oquaga Lake.

### **LAUNCHING YOUR BOAT**

Scott's will continue to allow Lake Association members and their guests access to the Lake through their boat launch area.

#### **Please Note:**

The Scott's have requested that we follow a few simple rules.

1. Please pay the launch fee using the enclosed form, pick up the key to the launch and bring your boat registration form. (Copy available on the News page at Oquaga.com.)
2. Bring your boat and trailer to the launch by going along Playhouse Road and backing into the launch.
3. The gate must be locked when you finish launching your boat.
4. Exit the launch area by driving by the farmhouse to the main road.
5. Please stay off the grass on either side of the launch access.
6. Do not leave your trailer in the launch area.
7. Return the key when done.

### **INVASIVE SPECIES**

If your boat has been on another water body it is extremely important that the boat and trailer be cleaned and free of any vegetation, zebra mussels, etc., before launching. This includes cleaning the bilge. Remember, it only takes one person failing to properly clean their boat to introduce an invasive species to the Lake.

### **BOAT STICKERS**

Don't forget to place your orange stickers on all your watercraft for identification. If you need new stickers contact Barbara at 467-1897 and she will assist you. We will also have stickers available at all official Lake events.

### **BOATER SAFETY**

We continue to see very unsafe boating on the lake including water skiing and tubing with no spotter in the boat, speeding after dark, speeding near shore, and tubers not wearing PFDs, to mention a few. Boaters also need to be courteous of others using the lake. Please be mindful of your wake. There have been instances of swamped boats due to large wakes. Under NYS Navigation Law a boat operator is responsible for damage caused by their wake. Small boats sailboats and canoes always have the right of way over power boats. Large wakes create an unsafe condition for small boats. Please be courteous and avoid tubing and putting out large wakes near small craft. Also, if the lake is glass and skiers are starting out please consider holding off tubing until skiers finish. Negotiating large waves is unsafe for skiers.

The *Boating Rules* are enclosed as a reminder. Over the years, we have included laminated color versions of the Rules which we hope you have posted conspicuously in your cottage. Laminated color copies will be available at all Association events.

### **BEARS**

Bears and evidence of bears have been observed this spring. Please recognize that we live in bear habitat. Bears are attracted to food and garbage so please keep all food and garbage indoors and secured. Clean up outdoor eating areas and barbecues. And be particularly attentive to any small children and pets. A copy of the *There Are Bears* annual mailing is enclosed. Laminated copies, suitable for posting, are available from Barbara and at any official event.

### **TICKS**

Please carefully check children and pets. The New York State Department of Health website is a good source of information about how to protect your family from ticks and Lyme disease.  
<http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/lyme/>

### **FIREWORKS**

Almost everyone enjoys a display of fireworks to celebrate the Fourth of July or for certain significant celebrations. However, fireworks all summer long can be a problem as many pet owners will attest. Some pets need to be sedated in advance. Please be courteous and provide some warning so that your neighbors can plan. If you are planning a large display, please let Barbara know (467.1897) so she can advise the neighbors in the weekly e-newsletter.

### **STAR GAZING**

The night sky is awesome. The stars really pop especially on moonless nights. However, over recent years there has been an increase in excessive outdoor lighting around the lake including flood lighting of docks and shore. Outdoor lighting makes star gazing difficult, if not impossible. Please consider minimizing outdoor lights at bedtime. The night sky never disappoints. Turning off the lights also lowers your NYSEG bill, a win/win. Free apps for smart devices provide real time information and maps showing the position of stars, constellations, planets and even passing satellites. Be sure to check out the **Perseid Meteor Shower on August 13.**

See: [https://in-the-sky.org/news.php?id=20180813\\_10\\_100](https://in-the-sky.org/news.php?id=20180813_10_100)

### **TOWN OF SANFORD**

Last year the Town mailed a notice to all property owners in the Lake Protection Overlay Zone and we have posted the same on our website. Please carefully review the information distributed by the Town if you have plans to do improvements on your property. Docks, decks, building additions, fences, sheds, etc require building permits and, in many circumstances, Site Plan Approval by the Planning Board is required. Permits authorizing disturbance of the shore or work in the water can take a long time. You can anticipate significant fines if you proceed without first obtaining the necessary state and federal permits.

### **SEWERS**

The Town requested that the OLIA continue to remind property owners in the Oquaga Lake Sewer District that the Town has permanent easements on every property in the District. These easements were for the installation, maintenance and repair of the sewer tanks and pipes installed on the lot. It is imperative that the property owner not build or pave within the sewer easement. If you do so, it is at your risk. The Town must be able to access the tanks for maintenance, pump replacement and removal of solids. The Town is also responsible to replace tanks that have failed or are leaking beyond repair.

The homeowner is responsible for the pipes in the house and the pipe from the house to the sewer tank. The Town is responsible for everything else. If it is necessary to dig up the existing system to replace the tanks or Town owned pipes, the Town is responsible only to backfill and grade and seed.

The Town will not replace decks, gardens, pavement or anything else inappropriately installed in the permanent easement.

Bottom line: DO NOT BUILD OR PLANT TREES IN THE EASEMENT.

### **LAKE MONITORING**

The 2019 water quality monitoring program is approved for funding under the Citizen's Statewide Lake Assessment Program (CSLAP). Oquaga Lake has participated in this program since the early 1990s. A special thanks to Heather and Ben Hanson for agreeing to take over the annual monitoring program. See Heather, Ben or myself if you are interested in participating in the sampling program.

Water Quality Reports are available on the OLIA website; click on the Documents section.

### **FRIDAY NIGHTS**

Scotts plans to operate on a limited schedule similar to last summer. The Friday night tradition of gathering for a social hour of fun and frivolity continues at Scott's or K's Inn (after Friday afternoon Mah Jongg) at 5pm. There will be a message on Barbara's answering machine (467-1897) with this week's venue, and you can find it at the top of the NEWS page on the website: [Oquaga.com](http://Oquaga.com). Come join with your Lake Friends and Neighbors for Friday Social Hour.

### **DUES**

Membership dues for 2019 is \$100. Enclosed with this letter is the invoice for your Lake Association dues. Your prompt attention to this invoice will help to control expenses and insure our financial security. Thank you in advance for your continued support.

The Oquaga Lake Improvement Association is a Not-For-Profit corporation, made up of property owners, businesses and interested individuals, to promote the interests of the entire Lake community. The Association needs full participation from the Lake community.

Your dues allow the Association to focus on protecting the Lake environment, preserving water quality and assuring our continued enjoyment of the Lake.

Accomplishments of the OLIA include:

- Promoting safe boating.
- Working with the Town to implement zoning and creation of the Lake Overlay Zone.
- Protecting water quality through implementation of the sewer project.
- Performing annual monitoring of Lake water quality.
- Maintaining and repair of the outlet structure.
- Arranging for trapping and removal of beaver.
- Assisting the Town in overseeing the sewer district operations and expenses.
- Conducting annual fish stocking.

These efforts help maintain your property values and hold down the expense of the sewer system.

Everyone benefits. It is important that we get full participation from all property owners.

**HAVE A GREAT SUMMER!**

For the Board of Directors  
Mark Millsbaugh  
President