

BLPA BATTLE WITH ALGAE, WEEDS NEVER-ENDING

Posted by John McKenna | Jul 18, 2024 | News



Algae and non-native invasive weeds and the challenge of combating them was the focus of the Bantam Lake Protective Association's recent annual meeting at Morris Town Hall.

BLPA President Connie Trolle headed a meeting that drew about 50 of the organization's members and featured an update by consultant Larry Marsicano on the state of the effort to halt algae growth.

Marsicano explained the new strategy of treating the lake for algae by using hydrogen peroxide. The results of treatments in May and June are promising, he said.

The presence of cyanobacteria, the scientific name for algae, has been limited by the treatment that involves hydrogen peroxide in granular form sinking to the bottom of the lake and destroying cyanobacteria where it rests before it can grow and rise to the surface as the lake warms up in the summer season.

"We won't know until the end of July and early August just how effective treatment has been," Marsicano said. "That's when cyanobacteria counts are the highest. I expect the counts to go up, but not as high as they have in the past."

The BLPA also heard from Greg Bugbee of the Connecticut Agriculture Experiment Station. Bugbee presented information designed to help the BLPA identify non-native invasive weeds such as Eurasian milfoil, fanwort and the latest threat, hydrilla.

A multi-year battle by the BLPA against milfoil and fanwort has largely been successful. Hydrilla has yet to be found in Bantam Lake, but Bugbee said it has proliferated in several lakes and waterways in the state, including the Connecticut River.

"It has become a problem that is getting worse," he said.

Hydrilla is considered one of the world's worst invasive weeds with its ability to change the physical and chemical characteristics of a lake by blocking sunlight and displacing native weeds.

The BLPA spent \$152,680 on water-quality treatment during the fiscal year of 2023-24, according to information presented by its treasurer, Peter Longo. Another \$44,560 was spent on consulting, surveys and testing. Funding the BLPA's endeavors in 2023-24 were membership dues and donations of \$74,080, contributions from Morris (\$30,000), White Memorial (\$13,500), and Litchfield (\$10,000), and fundraising totaling \$29,511.



BLPA consultant Larry Marsicano explains the effort to control algae in the lake by treating it with hydrogen peroxide. 6