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## OLA's Battle with Water Chestnuts

The Board of Directors of the Oneida Lake Association is pleased to report on a series successful weed pulls that we conducted in order to mitigate the threats from invasive water chestnuts in our lake. Under the leadership of Director Patricia Cerro-Reehil, her teams conducted three weed pulls during this past summer.

Director Cerro-Reehil states: "We are grateful for the participation of the Hamilton, Oneida, Oswego, and Onondaga County Soil and Water Conservation Districts at these events. We also had participation from the staff of the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, as well as volunteers from Hobart and Williams Smith Colleges."

The first weed pull was near Johnnie's Pier 31, in Upper South Bay, on July 10. It is estimated that nearly two acres of advanced growth was present! Unfortunately, even with the helping hands of twenty-three volunteers, and pulling nearly 4,000 pounds of water chestnuts, we only knocked down less than a quarter of the patch. Owner John Hadyk hired a contractor (Serenity Solutions) to continue the work the following week. All appropriate permits were secured before the follow-up work commenced at both the Oneida Lake Marina and Johnnies. Hadyk disposed of the weeds in his dumpster after they dried out.



Just under 4,000 pounds of Water Chestnuts were pulled from Johnnie's Pier 31 in Upper South Bay.  
Photo by Jayla White, NYSDEC

The crew then moved to Metzger's Pond in Constantia on July 17<sup>th</sup>. This weed pull is the fourth year at this location. The owner, John Metzger was onsite, and he has given permission to pull at this site each year. In contrast to the south shore pull, the team of eleven volunteers reported very good news at this location. The total number of water chestnuts found were markedly less than in previous years. This result is a great success story, where pulling by hand at the same location for multiple years can make a difference! OLA President Lance Vella was on hand assisting in this effort. The Oswego County Soil and Water Conservation District weighed and tallied the water chestnuts. The estimated weight pulled was ~500 pounds. The weeds were disposed of onsite in the woods.

The final weed pull was on July 24 on Long Point Road near Old Man's Bay. This was the second year that OLA conducted a water chestnut pull at this location. The weeds were placed in the Onondaga County Soil and Water Conservation District trailer and hauled to a nearby farm field. It is

estimated that we pulled 780 pounds of weeds. Cerro-Reehil reported: “OLA Director Kurt Snyder was on his deck observing the operation. I think he approved of what he saw!”

Cerro-Reehil adds, “We had participation from both the Onondaga County S&WCD and the Oswego County Watercats. In fact, the Watercats came back to this site on August 4<sup>th</sup> and pulled another 137 pounds. The total pounds of water chestnuts removed from this site was 917, with 12 participants pulling weeds.”

For the season, there were a total of 46 participants hauling out over 5,400 pounds of weeds!

A huge thank you to all of the Soil and Water Conservation Districts for securing the permits, and logging in the data thru the iMap Invasives system! These Water Chestnut weed pulls would not be possible without them. The OLA will present a complementary one-year membership to those who volunteered.

And once again, we thank Director Patricia Cerro-Reehil for her terrific effort in leading these successful weed pulls!

If you would like to participate next summer, we have three events tentatively planned. Mark your calendars with the following dates:

July 9-10

July 16-17

July 23-24

We'll keep you posted with reminders in our enews.

The Oswego County Soil & Water Conservation District **Watercats** (below) are instrumental in the Metzger's Pond Weed Pull



Representatives from the Onondaga & Oswego County Soil & Water Conservation Districts team together for the Water Chestnut weed pull on Long Point Road.

The Oneida Lake Association is pleased to congratulate **Captain Grant Langheinrich** on his recent feature in the September/October issue of *Boat US Magazine*. Captain Grant operates a TowBoatUS service here on Oneida Lake. His fleet also provides 24/7 service on Lake Ontario at Sodus Point.

According to *BoatUS Magazine*, shortly before COVID, the Sodus Point former owners unexpectedly had to cease operations. “Since then, we’ve had overwhelming requests for TowBoatUS to come back,” said Grant. “We appreciated BoatUS members who reached out to us as well as many folks in the marine community asking me to grow my business here. That enthusiasm really helped us make the decision to reopen the port, and we look forward helping boaters on the bay and lake.”

Captain Grant provides round-the-clock, professional on-water assistance for recreational boaters including towing, battery jumps, soft ungroundings and fuel drop-offs.

All of Captain Grant’s operators are U.S. Coast Guard certified and licensed. In fact, many of you have seen these vessels on both ends of Oneida Lake. Most recently, in late July, one of the rescue boats salvaged a fishing boat that had capsized off Godfrey Point due to the fierce winds. The fishermen had been in the water for more than five hours when they were plucked out by a passerby. After a call to TowBoatUS, the boat was towed to a safe location.

We thank Captain Grant Langheinrich not only for his patrol of the lake; he is also a great supporter of the OLA. For the past several years, Captain Grant has donated several \$25 gift certificates to BassPro as give-aways at our Annual Membership Meetings. Grant also serves as a Deputy Sheriff for Oneida County.

Congratulations Captain Grant!

He can be reached at 315-744-2229.



## What the . . . ??

For the past few years, as I am putting my dock in during the spring, I have been greeted by some hecklers who seem annoyed at my presence. As I tightened nuts and bolts in the chilly waist-deep water, I felt a jab in my lower leg. The first time it happened I nearly jumped clear out of the water! "What the . . . ??" Then I looked down and saw that it was a gar. It didn't bite, and it really didn't hurt at all. And it wasn't all that big, maybe about 16 inches. It was just an unfriendly poke by its long snout. About every ten minutes or so, I got another poke. But at least now I knew what it was. I tried to finish up as soon as I could and leave them to their business, probably preparing a spawning bed. This story has repeated itself for the past few springs. They do not seem intimidated at all by my size or presence.

A recent edition of the DEC newsletter included some interesting facts about the longnose gar. Take a look:

**Native Waters** - Longnose gar are native to New York and can be found in lakes, rivers, and streams from the St. Lawrence River all the way south to Florida and Texas.

**Prehistoric Survivors** - Fossil evidence shows that gar have existed since the Early Cretaceous Period, over 100 million years ago.

**Built to Breath** - The longnose gar's air bladder functions like a lung, allowing them to gulp air at the surface, an advantage in low-oxygen waters.

**Armor Plated** - Covered in thin, interlocking ganoid scales, gar sport a natural suit of armor that helps protect them from predators.

**Signature Look** - With long, toothy snouts, and torpedo shaped bodies, longnose gar are often seen cruising just below the water's surface.

**Fertile Fish** - Spawning from spring through summer, female gar lay 18,000 to 33,000 adhesive eggs that cling to rocks and aquatic vegetation.

**Toxic Offspring** - Gar eggs and larvae are toxic to mammals, birds, crustaceans, and even some fish, an evolutionary trait that protects their young.

Thankfully, the gar I encountered were not all that big. On the other hand, here's the record breaker for New York State.

**The New York State record longnose gar weighed 15lbs 14 oz and measured 53.25 inches. It was caught in Jefferson County.**



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## Free Fishing Day – September 27, 2025

Coinciding with National Hunting & Fishing Day on September 27, 2025, will also be a [Free Fishing Day](#) in New York. That means anyone can freshwater fish without a fishing license. What better way to celebrate Fall than to connect with nature by spending some time on the water? Visit the DEC website to plan your trip today.

**The Mission of the Oneida Lake Association is to protect the fisheries, wildlife, and natural resources of Oneida Lake by promoting science-based conservation and management through education and outreach, in partnership with our members and local communities.**

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Pay your dues, and HELP PROTECT ONEIDA LAKE!!!!  
**\$8 annually**

Donate



Memorials and contributions to our program are most welcome.

OLA is a 501(c)4 organization serving and protecting the Oneida Lake environment.



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[OLA Website](#)

OLA is a 501(c)(4) not-for-profit organization.

The Oneida Lake Association is a member of the New York State Conservation Council <http://www.nyscc.com/> and the New York State Federation of Lake Associations <http://www.nysfola.org/>.

Please remember to obey all laws, rules, regulations, and codes of ethics as they pertain to boating, fishing, hunting, and the management of Oneida Lake and its tributaries.

Report environmental violations.

**1-844-DEC-ECOS (1-844-332-3267)**

*Edited by John Harmon*

*Send us your notes and articles for use in future ENews!*

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