



## ONTARIO COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Thomas P. Harvey<sup>AICP</sup>, Director

June 11, 2024

Dear Honeoye Lake Shoreline Landowner,

The 2024 Honeoye Lake **Aquatic Vegetation Management Program (AVMP)** is just around the corner. Please see program information for lakeshore property owners below. Feel free to contact the program during the operating season by email: [infoweeds@ontariocountyny.gov](mailto:infoweeds@ontariocountyny.gov) or phone: (585) 396-4458.

### **PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND GOALS**

Honeoye is a shallow, eutrophic (nutrient-rich) lake supporting abundant aquatic plant growth. While plants play an important role in the ecosystem, providing oxygen, food, and habitat for a variety of species, excessive plant growth can interfere with boating and recreation. A mechanical weed harvester is used in summer months to reduce vegetation growing near the surface. Harvested plants are composted at local sites including farms.

#### **Program Goals:**

1. **Improve access** for recreational users by cutting and removing excessive plant growth near the surface around the lake perimeter.
2. **Remove nutrients** taken up by plants from the lake water and bottom sediments.
3. **Aid circulation of water** in localized areas choked by aquatic weeds.

### **2024 OPERATING SCHEDULE: MON-THU, JULY 1-AUG 29**

The schedule may vary due to weather conditions. The first week of operations includes equipment setup and staff training.

### **HARVESTING AND WEED MANAGEMENT:**

Harvesting is targeted to areas most affected by dense vegetation along the lake perimeter. No Harvesting Zones include Sandy Bottom Swimming Beach and the regulated wetland at the south end. Residents can request harvesting in front of their shoreline property or ask to be excluded (see instructions below). Be advised the harvester cannot cut close to and in between docks as the machine is not designed to maneuver in small spaces. Those interested in controlling weed beds adjacent to docks should consider other localized methods, including hand pulling and benthic barriers, also called weed mats. These are covered under a general permit from NYS DEC (see <https://www.dec.ny.gov/permits/106121.html>). Residents using benthic barriers should advise the harvesting program about their placement so the crew can take steps to avoid them.

### **SHORELINE PICKUP:**

Aquatic weeds are excellent for water retention in gardens and boosting soil nutrients. Residents who wish to compost themselves are encouraged to pick a spot away from the lake and streams whenever possible. AVMP uses a Shoreline Barge to serve those who wish to have aquatic vegetation that has washed up on shore taken away for off-site composting. To be eligible for Shoreline Pickup, three conditions apply:

1. **Adequate barge access.** Docks that are close together, shallow water or low lake level, or manmade or natural features may prohibit access.
2. **Landowner permission.** Anyone requesting shoreline pickup should email (or call) the program office per instructions below.

- 3. **Aquatic weeds must be raked into piles or rows, and separated from stones, gravel, sticks, and yard waste.** Care should be taken when forming piles to avoid including stones and sticks that can damage the equipment. Piles with too many stones or other may be left on shore to safeguard equipment.

Flexibility may be needed. The shoreline pickup program was created to assist neighbors with removal of excessive plant debris that washes onto shore, but is not intended, nor has capacity, to be a regular property maintenance program. Weather (even moderate wind) impacts barge operations, and schedules can and do abruptly change. While the AVMP crew attempts to get to all areas of the lake, an emphasis is on quantity and thus shoreline areas that receive disproportionate amounts of weed fragments from prevailing winds and currents are visited more frequently. In cases where large amounts of vegetation have accumulated, and access can be provided, the harvester may be backed in to utilize its large storage bin rather than the barge.

Cooperation among neighbors is appreciated! In several areas, neighbors work together to collect shoreline weeds. A pickup time is scheduled with a designated point of contact, and neighbors may even help load material onto the harvester or barge. These community efforts speed up the job, allow more people to be served, and are often fun for all. Consider working with your neighbors and our crew to remove more weeds in less time.

**REQUESTING SHORELINE PICKUP, HARVESTING, OR NO HARVESTING @ YOUR PROPERTY**

Requests can be made by email (preferably) at [infoweeds@ontariocountyny.gov](mailto:infoweeds@ontariocountyny.gov), or by calling (585) 396-4458 during the operating season with the information below.

Name	Email/Telephone #
Address	
Color/Description of house/# on dock?	Description of waterfront – docks/boats/rafts/flags?
Other distinguishing features (color of neighbor’s house, flagpole, break wall, etc.)	
Note # of piles/where located	

**PROGRAM OPERATIONS AND STAFFING**

Program updates may be posted on the County’s website at: <https://ontariocountyny.gov/452/Aquatic-Vegetation-Management-Program>. Betsy Landre of the County Planning Department serves as Program Manager. The returning 2024 crew includes Andrew, Ian, Judy, and Pauline. Additional part-time staff may be hired.

**WATERLINE INFORMATION**

Private waterlines extending beyond docks are at risk of being damaged by the harvester. Residents should take care to mark them at the foot valve with a floating object or buoy. The County cannot be held liable for damaging unmarked waterlines.

**LEARN MORE ABOUT YOUR HONEOYE LAKE**

Visit the Honeoye Lake Watershed Task Force’s website to learn more about Honeoye Lake and watershed projects: <https://www.honeoyelakewatershed.org>. Water quality monitoring updates are posted weekly.

The AVMP team looks forward to working with our partners and the landowners around Honeoye Lake.

Sincerely,

Honeoye Lake AVMP Team at Ontario County Planning Department