

## Slow Weed Growth Nets Smaller Harvest in 2019

The St. Albans Area Watershed Association is again weed harvesting on St. Albans Bay. This will be SAAWA's 15<sup>th</sup> season of harvester operation.

Two workers have been employed this summer to operate the two weed harvesters and tractor which transports the harvested weeds from the Bay to composting sites. Weed harvesting began on July 15<sup>th</sup>, as per our permit, and will end September 15<sup>th</sup>.

Most noteworthy this season is the lack of weed growth. In prior years it was common to harvest 15 to 20 loads each day. This year, so far we have averaged three loads per day. Areas which are usually clogged with weeds have been essentially weed free.

Factors which might explain the diminished weed growth are a cold winter with thick ice lasting into April, a wet spring resulting in the lake remaining above flood stage for 60 plus days, and colder water temperatures which lasted well into June.



The primary areas of operation are along the easterly shore of St. Albans Bay in the vicinity of Ferrand Road in Georgia and Bingham Shore Road in the Town of St. Albans, south from Black Bridge for about ½ mile adjacent to Hathaway Point Road, and from the fishing access to Hathaway Point.

Weed harvesting has been shown to improve water quality by removing organic matter which otherwise decomposes in the Bay, allows for better

water circulation and removes nutrients which feed algae blooms.

Funding for weed harvesting is provided by The Town of St. Albans (\$7,500.00), the Town of Georgia (\$2,500.00), the City of St. Albans (\$10,000.00) and an Aquatic Nuisance Control Grant-in-Aid awarded by the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation in the amount of \$5,038.00, proceeds from the Restore the Bay 5K and donations by SAAWA members.

## SAAWA Board: Where do we go from here?

It was a busy year for the SAAWA Board as we consider where to go from here. A meeting with representatives from the Department of Environmental Conservation and the Lake Champlain Basin Program early in 2019 started a discussion how best to focus our energy and attention. We looked for advice on how to move forward on a possible Jewett Brook wetland restoration project in conjunction with the DEC and the Army Corps of Engineers. This is an area which has been under State consideration for many years but never seems to go anywhere. What will

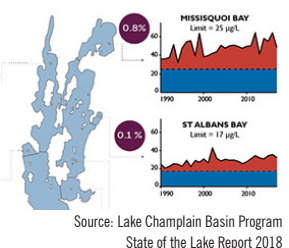
it take to finally move this project ahead? This is a complex issue and we will try to continue the discussion throughout the coming year.

We will continue to encourage the State of Vermont to help farmers transition to a new model of agriculture — one more healthy, profitable and sustainable for farms and the surrounding community. The old model of more corn, more cows and more debt is broken and despite the best efforts of some in the ag community, there seems to be little progress in phosphorus reduction for St. Albans and Missisquoi Bays. It's still

pouring in (see graph detail, right).

The end of last season brought some challenges to our harvesting efforts in

the form of unanticipated repairs and maintenance. Our goal is to secure the program financially through grants and increasing Harvester Donations as well as functionally, by putting systems in place, so it will continue to work well and cost-effectively over time. While not a solution to our



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## Where do we go from here...*continued from page 1*

problems, harvesting does have a visible impact on water quality and contributes to phosphorus removal.

This coming year we will continue work investigating Jewett and Stevens Brooks to learn more about areas of concern. We would like to know more about any phosphorus monitoring that is taking place and what the numbers tell us. We also want to investigate further whether tile drains are helping — or hurting — our watershed. It appears that drain tiles need proper installation and regular maintenance to avoid malfunctioning. This process seems fairly unregulated at this time.

There are many other areas that need attention and research. If you would like to join these efforts, or wish to suggest other areas of interest, please email [info@saintalbanswatershed.org](mailto:info@saintalbanswatershed.org).

## Speak Up! Online Survey for 2021 Clean Water Funding Priorities Open Until Sept. 6

Vermont's Clean Water Board held a public meeting on August 22 in Montpelier, in part to determine how to spend \$33 million in 2021. You can complete an online survey through September 6. According to Vermont Digger and WCAX reporting, after members of the public complained that agriculture pollution is still not being addressed, the Board stated it will reconsider policies for farming. Regeneration Vermont's Michael Colby stated "this project, this budget is more of the same. It's ignoring the main problem which is the kind of agriculture we are promoting in the state." Robert Cormier from Lake Carmi also voiced his opinion that the biggest change should be: "...we gotta stop the spreading... it's the concentration spreading."

"We heard quite a bit of

comment today about the need to rethink the agricultural model, said Emily Bird, Clean Water Initiative program manager, "So once the board has a chance to review...they will be able to discuss how to best adjust the budget to support the public input," said Emily Bird, Clean Water Initiative program manager.

Now is the time to encourage the State to prioritize reducing agricultural runoff as well as considering supporting transition from industrial corn and concentrated dairy farming operations to a healthier agricultural model such as managed grazing, more diversified farming and putting sensitive areas into permanent grassland. The survey asks for some meaningless percentage estimates but there is room for comments. Comment away!.



You can reach the survey here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CWFSFY21>.

You can also visit [SAAWAVT.org](http://SAAWAVT.org)

for easier access using the link on our homepage.



PO Box 1567, St. Albans, VT 05478

The SAAWA Newsletter is a publication of the Saint Albans Area Watershed Association

### Board of Directors

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Visit us on the web: [SAAWAVT.org](http://SAAWAVT.org)

The Board generally meets on the 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>

Wednesdays of each month at 5:30 pm. All are welcome!

Email: [info@saintalbanswatershed.org](mailto:info@saintalbanswatershed.org) for directions.

## JOIN US! Demand Clean Water!

Your support is essential and helps SAAWA keep the focus on clean water in St. Albans Bay! Please complete the form below and return to:

**St. Albans Area Watershed Association**

PO Box 1567, St. Albans, VT 05478

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Shoreline property owner? ☐ yes ☐ no

### Membership Level

☐ \$10 Individual ☐ \$20 Family ☐ \$5 Student

(Individual, Family and Student memberships receive SAAWA newsletter)

☐ \$50 Lake Advocate ☐ \$100 Lake Steward ☐ \$150 Business Sponsor

(Winslow book on Lake Champlain)

(Website Link)

2019



You may become a member  
or renew your membership securely online at  
**[saawavt.org](http://saawavt.org)**

If you have an interest in becoming a  
SAAWA Board Member, please contact Steve Langevin,  
SAAWA president: [info@saintalbanswatershed.org](mailto:info@saintalbanswatershed.org).

**Join us and speak up for clean water!**



## News/Updates

Ewww.... What IS that stuff?!

### Brown algae-like scums observed

In late July, long ribbons of brown scummy 'algae' were observed drifting in the Hathaway Point area and Maquam shore. SAAWA was curious what this was and reached out to VT DEC, Lakes & Ponds Division's Angela Shambaugh who advised us that this phenomenon turned out to be overwintering reproductive cells (known as ephippia) produced by *Daphnia* spp., a



small zooplankton common in Lake Champlain. Although quite widespread this year, Angela said it is mainly a nuisance.

"*Daphnia* are integral to the aquatic food web—they eat algae and cyanobacteria and are themselves important food for small fish. Abundant ephippia indicates a large number of individuals ... not a bad thing."

Angela went on to say "*Daphnia* are always very common, but it's rare to see their overwintering eggs in such abundance..." She wondered if the long winter and late water warming influenced the timing of egg release, resulting in the outcome that many individuals were releasing at once and concentrated by water currents into these large, visible accumulations."



### Water chestnut removal paddle

SAAWA members again participated in an invasive water chestnut removal paddle during July. Keeping water chestnut under control helps preserve wetland habitat and prevents spread to new locations. Water chestnut has a 12-year viability period for seeds dropped in the lake and river bottom sediments. Volunteers were able to remove 2,475 water chestnut rosettes from the marsh. Due to water chestnut's prolific growth of 15-20 seeds per rosette, this may have prevented the spread of an estimated 37,125 to 49,000 seeds.

### VT Ag not publishing pesticide usage data

In a recent VT Digger article, Regeneration Vermont, which has monitored pesticide usage for nearly 25 years, stated that State pesticide data has not been publicly available for 5 years. Legally required public reports from the State ceased in 2013. The Ag Agency blames problems on database issues but has still been unable to validate or post data. Regeneration VT analyzed data from 2014-



2016, (obtained under FOIA requests), and determined that use of glyphosate on corn fields had doubled during that time. According to Michael Colby, executive director of the nonprofit, "...if the goal is to try to reduce pesticides... the best place to start is to know how much you're using."

### Another judgement against glyphosate

A California jury has awarded another large damage settlement against Monsanto's Roundup herbicide, concluding it was a "substantial factor" in causing non-Hodgkin's lymphoma in a Livermore, CA couple who used the herbicide on their properties. Although Alameda County Superior Court judge Winifred Smith reduced the award to Alva and Alberta Pilliod from \$2.055 billion to \$87 million, she agreed that evidence supported the finding that Monsanto knew the herbicide's active ingredient could be dangerous. As the Pilliod's attorney stated, "the judge rejected every argument Monsanto raised and sustained a very substantial verdict."

SAAWA continues to be concerned that glyphosate and similar herbicides might also be responsible for worsening existing agricultural runoff in our watershed. Studies have shown the surfactants in the product multiply the runoff of phosphorus, in addition to the glyphosate pollution itself. Its impact on water quality is still not being adequately addressed as evidence of health consequences mounts. We worry about farm workers, homeowners and area residents who have been convinced that chemicals such as glyphosate and atrazine are benign. This is not the healthy "Vermont brand" that anyone wants to see.

### Cyanobacteria woes

While water quality was relatively good in the Bay this summer, largely due to weather conditions and lack of weeds, we still saw a period of fairly intense cyanobacteria in July. Continue to look for late summer outbreaks if temperatures warm. Cyanobacteria exposure is hazardous for pets and people and the water should be avoided when present. Disturbingly, a recent VT Digger article reported that several researchers are studying a relationship between cyanobacteria and ALS clusters. While there is no scientific proof of this link, it is certainly a source of concern. Research on fish and air quality was conducted in St. Albans Bay last summer but results have been slow to emerge. We hope to provide an update shortly.

### This year: jump in, get involved, join us!

SAAWA efforts to promote clean water and gain momentum for important projects will only happen with your help. Help reach out to new members. Talk with neighbors, family and friends and ask them to join our team! Volunteering is a way to learn more about lake issues and contribute to real change. You can help in many ways:

- join the SAAWA Board
- research water issues
- write newsletter & social media articles
- attend public meetings
- contact public officials
- organize 5K & other events
- help with the harvester
- and much more!

SAAWA is an all volunteer association and we pride ourselves on a cost effective operation. But we need you! Please make this the year that you step up and lend a hand.



# A Beautiful Day at the Bay!

## Restore the Bay 5K Helps Support SAAWA



This year, SAAWA held the Restore the Bay 5K (our signature event of the year) on July 29. The date was changed to coincide with **14th Star Brewing Company's Homegrown Music Festival** at the St. Albans Bay Park. This was truly an all-ages event! Our oldest runner was 87 years of age and the youngest at 6 years old.

There were slightly fewer participants than last year, perhaps owing to a later start time and mid-summer heat, but we were blessed with a beautiful, sunny, breezy day and hope everyone had a good time. We would be interested in feedback regarding whether a later start is workable for most runners and walkers, or whether we should return to an earlier starting time.

We are grateful to everyone who came out for the Restore the Bay 5K! Congratulations to **Kevin Leahy (top finisher, men)** and **Chandra Walsh (top finisher, women)** See final results.

Please help us thank the many folks who helped make this event happen! We are grateful for all our wonderful sponsors, prize donors and volunteers!

Town of St. Albans and Town of St. Albans Public Works for their support and providing a wonderful venue. They are working hard to make the Bay Park a great place to be. Chris & Jamie St.

Marie at **The Bay Store** helped supply creemee coupons. **St. Albans Police** were on hand to escort the racers, control traffic and keep everyone safe, **Hannaford Supermarket** provided after-race snacks and water, **Sandra Moulton** handled race timing and **St. Albans Recreation Dept.** (Andrew Gratton & Kelly Viens) loaned us the results board and race expertise.

Thanks to this year's wonderful event sponsors **Franklin County Industrial Development Corporation**, **SB Collins**, and **Northwestern Medical Center**.

Winner and raffle prizes were generously provided by **Mimmo's**, **Twigg's**, **14th Star Brewing Co.**, **Grand Avenue Enterprises**, **What A Yarn!**, **Eastern Dragon**, **Grazer's**, **Jeff's Maine Seafood**, **The Frozen Ogre**, **The Welden Theatre**. Armand Messier of **Northern Vermont Aerial Photography** captured the race from the air and ground, **Corporate Outfitters**, student volunteers from **BFA** and the many other race volunteers.

Finally, we are especially grateful for support from the **Lake Champlain Basin Program**, **UVM Extension and Lake Champlain Sea Grant** who helped sponsor SAAWA race shirts and brought information on **Raise the Blade** lawn care to reduce runoff.



# Clean Water Efforts



## Order yours today! Restore the Bay Tee Shirts

We have a limited number of the awesome performance tees from the Restore the Bay 5K still available. They are comfortable and cool, and make great gifts! Wear with pride, support SAAWA and send a message that we all want to see clean water in Saint Albans Bay!

**\$25/each**

(includes SAAWA Membership!)

Adult, women's cut  
& youth sizes available

Email [kate@saintalbanswatershed.org](mailto:kate@saintalbanswatershed.org)  
to request a size or order your shirt online:  
[saawavt.org](http://saawavt.org)



## Raise the Blade to 3", Slow Runoff

SAAWA was pleased to have representatives from Lake Champlain Basin Program, UVM Extension and Lake Champlain SeaGrant on hand at the 5K with their display on "raising the blade." They recommend mowing a little less often, leaving grass at a height of 3", not cutting more than 1/3 of the blade at a time, and leaving grass clippings on the grass to compost naturally. These simple steps help grass develop a healthier root system and retain more water while slowing runoff from the property.



Raising the Blade is a simple step everyone can take in their own yards to help reduce the total amount of stormwater. Commercial businesses with large expanses of lawn can make an even bigger impact.

If you would like more information on this program, visit [lawntolake.org](http://lawntolake.org).

## 2019 RESTORE THE BAY 5K RESULTS

Last Name	Bib	Name	Time
First Overall Male	75	Kevin Leahy	18:10.5
First Overall Female	71	Chandra Walsh	25:05.5
First Walker	457	John McCormick	38:20.2
U-12 Male	66	Jackson Sargent	31:51.8
13-17 Male	60	Ethan Mashtare	18:26.0
18-49 Female	78	Madelyn Carey	26:40.9
18-49 Male	75	Kevin Leahy	18:10.5
50+ Female	71	Chandra Walsh	25:05.5
50+ Male	59	Michael Mashtare	23:41.6



PO Box 1567  
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[www.saawavt.org](http://www.saawavt.org)

*working to restore Saint Albans Bay*

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