



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

The ice is out and the lakes are starting to refill. Here are some things that are happening on our lakes.

Hatch Hill Dam

The Hatch Hill dam project has been completed. The dam will allow free flow of water between Upper Bolton Lake and Middle Bolton Lake, while maintaining a constant level in Upper Bolton Lake. In addition, there is an easier, safer trash rack that should stay clear despite the best efforts of the beavers as well as a permanent spillway that does not require seasonal maintenance. This project was a major goal for FBL and took several years of work with the DEEP (Department of Energy and Environmental Protection) and other stakeholders to reach completion.

Watershed Management Plan

The Bolton Lakes Watershed Management plan has now gone to the DEEP for final approval. Thanks to all who participated during the draft's comment period; your suggestions greatly improved the final version. A copy of the current version of the plan has been posted on the FBL website. Approval of the Watershed Management plan isn't expected right away due to reassigned and reduced staffing at the DEEP.

In anticipation of final approval, we are finalizing an implementation roadmap for the Watershed Management plan; this will be posted on the FBL website when complete. A huge thank-you to Paul Weisser for all his efforts in creating this implementation roadmap.

Fill-up

The fill-up of the lakes began on March 16th, and they should be restored to normal surface levels by the middle of April. It began with the closing of the valve at the outlet of Lower Bolton Lake, followed by closing the valve between Middle Bolton Lake and Lower Bolton Lake. The upper lake, which accommodates the bulk of the watershed inflow, is maintained at a constant water level.

AIS Grants

The state Aquatic Invasive Species Grant for 2021 (awarded to Vernon, Bolton, and FBL) funded treatment of invasive aquatic species. In addition, the funding was used to erect

signs on our local roads marking the edge of the watershed; most of them have been installed. Soon signs will be installed at the boat launches warning about the threat of aquatic invasive species specific to our lakes: milfoil, fanwort and curly pondweed.

More recently, the two towns and FBL applied for a 2022 AIS Grant. This year's application requested additional funding to maintain control of algae blooms, chemical treatment (only when necessary), consulting fees, and data collection and analyses. We should hear soon if we are awarded funding.

Lake Monitoring

The FBL team of volunteers will start testing the lake water in mid-April. The testing occurs twice a month from now until mid-October. Anyone interested in helping the team by piloting a boat and/or recording data, please contact John Williams at fbl@friendsofboltonlakes.org.

New Invasive Reporting Tool

The invasive reporting tool on FBL has been updated to include reporting of more than just plants. Check it out on our webpage [here](#).

Harmful Algae Blooms

Last summer ended with several harmful algae blooms (HABs) caused by a number of environmental reasons. Our lakes were not alone in Connecticut. The combination of heavy rains and wind caused our lakes to be ripe for HABs. While we can't control the weather there are steps we can take to help prevent HABs.

- Eliminate or limit the use of fertilizers on private property
- Create riparian barriers at the water edge

If you suspect there is a HAB, first keep people and pets out of the water. Then do one of the following:

- Report HAB sightings using the FBL reporting tool [here](#).
- Report HAB sightings using the Bloomwatch App described below.
- Contact the local health district; Eastern Highland for Lower Lake, (860) 429-3325. North Central for Middle Lake, (860) 745-0383.

Here are some web references:

The CDC site is [here](#) and a video to help identify blooms is [here](#) .

BloomWatch App

Cyanobacteria associated HABs and the toxins they produce are an increasing concern across the country. The frequency of occurrence is increasing and their toxicity over the years has been associated with numerous human and animal health issues. This has

direct implications to the use of recreational water bodies for contact recreation, the susceptibility of public water supplies to HABs and their toxins, and the overall ecological degradation of aquatic resources.

The US EPA developed the BloomWatch 'App' as a part of the Cyanobacteria Monitoring Collaborative (CMC) program to engage the public to report when and where potential cyanobacteria blooms appear. It utilizes crowdsourcing to find and report potential cyanobacteria blooms.

The CMC program has three overlapping components or tiers: A bloom watch/tracking component, a cyanobacteria identification and documentation component, and a cyanobacteria monitoring component. Each expanding tier has a specific component objective associated with it. The BloomWatch tracking component was developed to enable lay people, citizen scientists, and the like to be able to report on the presence of a bloom with the use of a smartphone App. This tiered approach provides important information on where, when, and potentially for how long blooms are occurring.

The main objective of BloomWatch is to photographically document the location and time of a bloom for further verification. Because of logistics and the variability of when and where HABs may occur, (blooms may only be visibly present for a few hours or less and at specific locations within a particular waterbody) it is imperative that efforts be made to engage the public's help. Local knowledge of where and when blooms are occurring is likely under-reported, or not reported at all. When blooms are reported to a state water quality or health official, by the time officials can reach the location the bloom has often dissipated or shifted from its prior location. Local citizens are usually the first to encounter a bloom condition, as they often occur in the early morning hours while individuals are out walking their dogs, getting in a morning run, or getting ready for the day's work. Images can be taken at any time and consist of three images per submittal and follow a prescribed format.

The BloomWatch app is very easy to use:

- Go to <https://cyanos.org/bloomwatch> or Google BloomWatch. on your smartphone.
- Read through the descriptive info.
- Download the app on your phone. There are apps for iOS and Android.
- When you see a bloom you want to report, open the app on your phone. Click on "Let's Get Started" and follow the prompts.
- On the submission screen, scroll down to the Custom Email List and add additional addresses you want to receive the submission. Please add:

hillary.kenyon@gmail.com, kimw9@sbcglobal.net, and fbl@friendsofboltonlakes.org.

- Scroll back up and select "Email Data." This will generate an email that defaults to DEEP.AlgalBlooms@ct.gov, bloomwatch@epa.gov, and the addresses on your Custom Email List. (NOTE: You can also add cc's on this email from your phone's contacts.) Select Send and you're done.

Once you've started using the App it's easy.

Please continue to use the FBL website feature to report invasive aquatic plants. The BloomWatch App should be used *only* to report algae blooms. Thanks!

New Board Member

FBL is pleased to announce the appointment of Carol Thompson. Carol brings a wealth of business experience and entrepreneurial spirit to the board.

Karl Prewo

Friends of Bolton Lake is saddened to report that Karl Prewo, a founding member of FBL, passed away this winter. His contributions as a member of the Board of Directors and his unwavering friendship will be missed by so many. We extend to Karen and her family our deepest sympathy and condolences during this sorrowful time.

Membership

FBL knows how important the lakes are to you and we greatly appreciate your continued membership in this non-profit organization. Member support, like yours, is critical for continuing the mission of protecting our lakes in the future. Please take a few moments of your time to reach out to your neighbors and friends that also value the lakes, but are not yet members, and ask them to consider joining. Your help recruiting others will go a long way toward supporting the mission of FBL. Thank you!

FBL encourages everyone to reach out, ask questions and participate in our diverse programs such as water quality monitoring, lake ambassadors, emergency preparedness and general vigilance of our pristine habitat. When it's within the goals and objectives of FBL, we will work as your advocate.

Have an enjoyable summer season.

FBL board of directors