



Happy New Year from the board of the Friends of Bolton Lakes. In this newsletter we would like to review 2021 and look ahead to 2022.

## 2021

**Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Grant:** The FBL, along with the towns of Vernon and Bolton, applied for and were awarded an AIS grant from the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) for \$24,910.50. The funds from that grant will be used to manage and monitor invasive plant species, provide water quality testing, offer public educational outreach, purchase equipment, and provide AIS signage at both boat launches and signs that delineate the watershed on major roads.

**Watershed Management Plan:** The watershed management plan that started at the end of 2020 was completed in 2021. The main body of this plan was drafted by Northeast Aquatic Research (NEAR), the professional limnology team responsible for our lakes. FBL was intimately involved with getting the plan started, participating on the steering committee, and providing data input from the monitoring group. The final draft of the plan will be placed on our FBL website and the websites of the four towns in which our watershed lies (Tolland, Coventry, Vernon, and Bolton) by mid-January. There will be a two-week public comment period. The steering committee will integrate suitable public comment into the plan, after which point it will be submitted to the DEEP. Uniform, thoughtful management of the entire watershed is a goal of FBL and we hope this document will serve us well in the future.

**Hatch Hill Dam:** At the very end of 2021, the Hatch Hill dam reconstruction project was almost completed. The new dam will improve control of the level of Upper Bolton Lake protecting Hatch Hill from flooding. It will also make general maintenance safer and easier at the dam. At this point the contractor is waiting to get the trash rack and weir gate installed.

**Invasive Plant Treatments:** In mid-June, the Lower Lake was treated for curly pondweed. The treatment was mainly successful but some small patches near the spillway remain. Toward the end of August, the Middle Lake was treated for fanwort and milfoil. Thank you to everyone who used the invasive species reporting tool on the FBL website; we received over 100 observations this year. Those observations are what FBL used to keep the towns and the lake consultant informed of the condition of the lakes. Your input is vital to keeping our lakes in good shape.

**Algae Blooms:** In May, the green algae was prevalent in both the Middle and Lower Lakes. Although not poisonous, it was thick on the surface of the water. By mid-July we started seeing signs of blue-green algae or cyanobacteria. This can be harmful to animals and people. Lower Bolton Lake was closed at the end of July for a period of time and again in early September by the local health department. Both lakes had considerable algae that did not dissipate until well after the drawdown. Our lakes were not alone; many lakes in Connecticut

had to deal with algae blooms this past summer. The unusually heavy rains this spring and summer brought a lot of silt into the lakes and the winds kept them stirred up providing ideal conditions for the cyanobacteria to thrive. At this time, the Department of Public Health has removed all notifications of lake closures.

**Monitoring:** The science committee again did bi-monthly monitoring of the Middle and Lower Lakes, starting in mid-April and finishing in mid-October. Every two weeks volunteers measured the clarity on both lakes at the deepest point and then measured temperature, oxygen level and pH at .5-meter intervals from 0 to 5 meters. In addition, once-a-month water samples were taken at two or three levels and the water samples were delivered to NEAR for chemical analysis. We also have two passive monitoring systems. On both lakes we have depth monitors that check the depth of the lake every hour. And we have two sets of temperature and light monitors strung on buoys that we deploy during the summer. You may have seen the buoys anchored at the deep spots in each lake. On several occasions we responded to emergency calls to take samples for cyanobacteria counts. All our data is shared with NEAR for their use in the management of our lakes.

**Spring and Fall forums:** This spring we had a virtual forum where the results of the aquatic plant survey of Middle Lake (done in the fall of 2020) were presented by Greg Bugbee from Connecticut Experimental Agriculture Station. In the fall we had a virtual forum that included the annual business meeting and a presentation from DEEP on the Hatch Hill dam reconstruction project.

## 2022

**Membership:** Membership for 2022 is now open. You may renew your membership at the FBL website [here](#) either using the webform or downloading the form and mailing it to Friends of Bolton Lakes, Inc., P.O. Box 1385, Manchester, CT 06045.

**Monitoring:** We will continue to monitor as above. In addition, this year we plan on obtaining water samples to count algae during the summer months. Anyone interested in participating is welcome. Please email FBL at [fbl@friendsofboltonlakes.org](mailto:fbl@friendsofboltonlakes.org).

**Spring and Fall forums:** Depending on public health conditions these will either be virtual as in 2021 or in person. An agenda will be developed as we approach the date of the forums.

The Friends of Bolton Lakes will continue its collaboration with the towns, the state DEEP and our legislators to ensure that our goals are achieved. Let's again challenge ourselves to make our collective voices heard by participating in our energetic organization. The meetings are held at 6:30 PM on the third Wednesday of each month.

Have a healthy and prosperous New Year.

FBL board of directors