



TOWN OF CORTLANDT

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Dear Property Owner:

The Town of Cortlandt has evaluated various measures to improve the quality of the water at Westchester Lake. On Monday, October 26, 2015 Town representatives met with about 15 residents living near Westchester Lake to discuss our consultant's evaluation of the Lake and various recommendations to restore water quality and reduce algae blooms and high levels of phosphorus. We decided on implementing some of these recommendations in phases. The following is a summary of our first steps in addressing the algae problem:

1. The Town will temporarily drawdown the water level of Westchester Lake in the winter in order to kill aquatic plants that are contributing to the ongoing problem with excessive algae in the lake. Since the existing dam does not have a working low level valve and since we do not want to impact the dam in any way, we will gradually open the earthen embankment just upstream of the dam. This will allow lake water to enter the area between the embankment and the dam. When needed we will set up a siphoning system which will draw water from this area and discharge it downstream of the dam. This operation will continue until the level of the lake has dropped about 2ft which will expose aquatic vegetation to freezing winter weather which will kill these plants. We will return the level of the lake to its pre-drawdown elevation in the early Spring.

2. Since routine maintenance of lawns and other routine activities could be a source of nutrients that contributes to the algae problem, we will send letters to Cortlandt residents who are located within the Westchester Lake watershed every Spring instructing them to do the following:

a. Fertilizers:

All residents surrounding Westchester Lake must either eliminate or greatly reduce the use of phosphorus containing fertilizers around their yard.

Also:

- Do not apply fertilizer if rain is forecast
- Sweep excess fertilizer back onto the lawn and off the street.
- Do a soil test to ascertain what your lawn really needs

b. Lawn Mowing

When you mow your lawn, please direct the clippings away from the street, driveways, sidewalks, and other paved areas. Sweep up your grass clippings and return them to the lawn. Consider mowing your grass at a high setting (over 2.5 inches) and let the short grass blades fall back onto the lawn as natural fertilizer.

c. Pet Waste

If you have a family pet – animal waste contains a lot of phosphorus. Please pick up your pet's waste and dispose of it properly to prevent the waste from entering the Pond.

3. Septic systems can also be a significant source of phosphorus and other nutrients. Therefore, we will require pump outs of Septic tanks and septic system inspections at least once every three years. Septic maintenance contractors must be licensed and must report problems with the septic system to the County Health Department. Repairs must be made within the time frame established by the County.

In closing, I want to thank you for your cooperation. Together we can maintain and even further improve the visual beauty and health of Westchester Lake/Wallace Pond.

Yours truly,

Ed Vergano, P.E.
Director DOTS

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