

Town Takes Steps to Lower Phosphorus in Peach Lake

By SUE GUZMAN

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NORTH SALEM, N.Y.— North Salem is installing special filters designed to reduce the levels of phosphorus in Peach Lake and cut the growth of algae and seaweed ,which choke off oxygen in the water and are harmful to aquatic life.

The town has been working the state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the East of Hudson Watershed Corp. (EOHWC) to lower the concentration of phosphorus in the water.

North Salem Supervisor Warren Lucas says the town has purchased eight filtration units manufactured by Contech known as “Jellyfish,” In November, the town board voted to borrow \$800,000 to design, purchase and install the eight units. The town will be reimbursed \$450,000 by the NYS DEC and \$350,000 by the EOHWC, Lucas said North Salem will pay for the cost of the financing, which is at a rate of 1.15 percent, as well as any cost overages that might occur.

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The town began installing the filters at Vails Grove community at Peach Lake on Jan. 11. Two of them are being installed outside the borders of the Town of North Salem in the Town of Southeast. “The lake waters don’t know where the municipal boundaries are, so to a great extent we put them where the drainage math showed the biggest bang for the buck,” Lucas explained.

He thanked Southeast Supervisor Tony Hay and Councilwoman Lynn Eckhart for their support in the project.

“Because of the nicer weather this winter the work is currently on going and should be finished within six to eight weeks, with the final site work being done this spring,” Lucas said.

The supervisor said he’s hopeful the system will lower the phosphorus levels to about 20 micrograms per liter (20mcg/l). Before the filters were installed, tests indicated levels were about 32mcg/l.

The town has been battling increasing phosphorus levels since 2013. Lucas said the phosphorus removal will take some time, but will pay off in the end.

“It will have a positive effect over time if we can make sure everyone understands the importance of protecting Peach Lake,” he said.

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