



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Terrence Murphy

# **Senator Murphy's \$80,000 Grant Harvests Brighter Future For Lake Mohegan**

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Yorktown, NY - Mohegan Lake has long been considered one of the most polluted bodies of water in New York State. One of the main culprits is the proliferation of harmful algal blooms (HAB)'s that have rapidly spread throughout the lake.

HABs, occur when colonies of algae grow out of control, producing toxins that could have detrimental and even fatal effects on people, fish, shellfish, and birds. A Citizens Statewide Lake Assessment Program (CSLAP) Report commissioned by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation in 2016 concluded that Lake Mohegan was impaired and highly susceptible to HABs and invasive species.

Senator Terrence Murphy has been working with Assemblyman Kevin Byrne, concerned residents and community groups to stem the rising tide of HABs, particularly in Mohegan Lake. To help remedy the problem, Senator Murphy procured an \$80,000 grant so Yorktown could purchase a weed harvester.



"At certain points during the summer the algae in Lake Mohegan gets so thick you can practically walk across it," commented Senator Murphy. "We owe it to our residents and visitors who come here to enjoy the lake to keep it clean. The weed harvester will be an effective tool in managing the submerged, emergent, and free-floating vegetation threatening the lake."

Assemblyman Kevin Byrne stated, "Senator Murphy has made it a priority to clean up our local water bodies and rid them of harmful algal blooms. It's been an honor to work with him to protect and restore our natural resources."

"The weed harvester is designed to remove excessive aquatic plant growth from the lake. In Lake Mohegan, which is very high in nutrients, an overgrowth of aquatic plants clog recreational areas such as beaches or boat launch areas," said Ken Belfer, President of the Mohegan Lake Improvement District. "The new weed harvester will help us keep these areas clear, as well as help us remove certain invasive plant species from the lake. One of these, curly leaf pond weed, dies off in the early summer, sinks to the bottom and decays, and thus provides nutrients in mid-summer to help feed algae blooms. By harvesting as much of this as possible

before it dies, and removing it from the ecosystem, we are able to remove some of the nutrients that contribute to algae blooms. Our original weed harvester was purchased in 1984, and reached the end of its useful life two years ago. We are extremely grateful to Senator Murphy for obtaining the \$80,000 NYS grant that allowed us to purchase a new weed harvester for Lake Mohegan."

A weed harvester is a heavy-duty workboat designed to be highly efficient in the management of submerged, emergent and free-floating aquatic vegetation. Its performance is akin to an underwater lawn mower. The weed harvester has underwater cutting blades that sever the stems of underwater plants and store the vegetation on board in a hold. The action of removing aquatic plant life in such a manner has been referred to as "aquatic harvesting."

The harvested weeds can be composted, sent to a landfill site or used in land reclamation. Other uses for the harvested vegetation include livestock fodder, adding it to the soil as a bulky organic fertilizer, manufacturing the raw material into pulp, paper or fiber, and fermenting it to produce methane for energy production.