Oral Presentation

USING AN ARTIFICIAL REEF TO IMPROVE HABITAT FOR BIOTA IN ONONDAGA LAKE, NY

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Onondaga Lake, located in Syracuse, NY has been perturbed for more than a century by both industrial and municipal waste inputs. As a result, littoral habitat has been severely degraded. Originally, this lake supported a coldwater fishery including Atlantic salmon and the Onondaga whitefish (Coregonus sp.). However, these fish were lost by 1900, mainly due to summer hypolimnetic oxygen depletions generated from the decay of excessive algae. In 1994, we conducted a demonstration project to improve littoral habitat for fish. The results indicated we could attract spawners and juvenile fish using gravel, logs and a wind-breaking reef (to stabilize substrate). In 2001, a permanent lake reef was installed and, at the same site, a connection to a wetland outside the lake was re-established. Our project is continuing to monitor the changes in substrate, plants, invertebrates and fishes that are occurring in this newly formed in-lake wetland. We will present preliminary results from the 2001 project and describe our plans for future work.