



Onondaga County Legislature

HASSINA K. ADAMS
Clerk

NICOLE WATTS
Chairwoman

SPENCER BERG
Deputy Clerk

MICHAEL CUSANO – CHAIRMAN **MEETING MINUTES OF THE** **FISHERIES ADVISORY BOARD – JANUARY 15, 2026**

MEMBERS PARTICIPATING: Michael Cusano, Ken Crane, Brian Kelley, Les Monostory, Eric Stanczyk,

GUESTS: Gary Lopez, Emi Genier

Chairman Michael Cusano called the meeting to order at 5:40 P.M.

Old Business:

Cusano went over the minutes from our previous meeting on November 20, 2025. Moved by Eric, second by Brian to approve the November minutes with minor changes and passed. Cusano will update those minutes.

New Business:

County Parks operations

Brian Kelley said that the proposed improvements to the County's Onondaga Lake Marina will be implemented this coming season. County Parks has received permits from NYSDEC to move ahead with its engineering plans. Also at Onondaga Lake, plans are now available in a map format for construction of a new stationary fishing pier to replace the former seasonal pier with funding from Honeywell.

The Oneida Shores Park will be adding a new bathroom facility, and a new effort to control blue-green algae in Jamesville Reservoir has been started with an RFP released to hire a firm in order to address this problem.

Gary Lopez distributed copies of a report on 43 groups or organizations that conducted fishing tournaments on Onondaga and Oneida Lakes out of our County operated Marinas (see attached report). The largest bass tournament included 97 boats, while Oneida Shores was also the site of a Walleye Tournament with 600+ participants. In addition, Onondaga Lake hosted a Carp tournament with both state and international competitors from 3 different countries.

Brian pointed out that Oneida Lake is the second most popular lake for ice fishing in the United States, and provides a significant economic impact for Onondaga County.

Carpenter's Brook Fish Hatchery

Water shortages in summer and fall months are becoming a growing concern in recent years. This is a challenge for raising trout at the Carpenter's Brook Hatchery as more well water needs to be utilized.

Decline of Menhaden fisheries along the U.S. Atlantic coast.

On a topic beyond Onondaga County but important for coastal fisheries along the Atlantic Coast, Les Monostory reported on an article in the Washington Post about declining numbers of both game fish and bait fish in the Long Island Sound vicinity. Popular game fish such as striped bass have largely disappeared.

The foundation of the East Coast's marine food web, supporting striped bass, bluefish, tuna, whales and seabirds is the menhaden, a small oily fish that feeds nearly everything in the Atlantic. The blame has been placed on over fishing by fleets of fishing boats that vacuum nearly 300 million pounds of menhaden from the Eastern Seaboard to the Gulf of Mexico. Many scientists have called for cuts of 50 percent in the annual menhaden harvest to support the recovery of striped bass, one of America's most popular sportfish dependent on menhaden.

Adjournment

The FAB meeting adjourned at 6:10 PM. Next FAB meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 15, 2026 at 5:30 PM at the Onondaga County Parks office in Liverpool.

Minutes by Les Monostory, January 6, 2026.

Oneida Lake is also a favorite of ice fisherman. The popular sportsman travelling website FishingBooker.com ranked Oneida Lake the number 2 lake in the US for 2026.

From FishingBooker "Oneida Lake is the largest lake located entirely within New York State. The 21-mile-long lake is relatively shallow, particularly compared to its deeper cousins in the Finger Lakes. Its surface freezes quickly and solidly in the wintertime, making it a popular place for snowmobiling, ice fishing and even igloo building. Anglers landed stunning catches ranging from a 42-inch, 18-pound muskie — possibly the first pure muskie caught on Oneida Lake in decades — to 10 walleye in just 45 minutes."

2025 - 43 groups / organizations conducted tournaments on Onondaga and Oneida Lake out of our Marinas. Total of 49 days with at least one group hosting a fishing event at our 2 locations.

Organizations include local, regional, national and international competitor participation, located through 8 different states (New Hampshire, Vermont, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Michigan and New York). The majority of these organizations are fishing Bass but Oneida Shores was also the site for a 600+ participant Walleye Tournament and Onondaga Lake hosted a Carp tournament with International competitors from 3 different countries (Canada, Mexico and Yugoslavia).

Largest Tournament in 2025 included 97 boats.

In the past decade we have hosted Bassmaster, Major League Fishing, Anglers Choice and Cashion Rod events on our lakes.

Additionally, Oneida Lake has long been regarded as a premier fishing destination for anglers and has been ranked in the top 100 best Bass Fishing lakes by Bassmaster Magazine for over a decade, last years' ranking was 17 and it has been as high as number 3 in 2011.