

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF RECREATION ON SARATOGA LAKE AND THREATS
TO ITS LONG TERM VITALITY: THE PERSPECTIVE OF LOCAL BUSINESSES

BY

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ABSTRACT

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF RECREATION ON SARATOGA LAKE AND THREATS TO ITS LONG TERM VITALITY: THE PERSPECTIVE OF LOCAL BUSINESSES

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A great deal of speculation regarding the use of Saratoga Lake as a municipal water source focused on potential consequences for businesses that derive a majority of their revenue from recreation on the lake. However, there is a dearth of knowledge regarding the aggregate impact of recreation on the local economy. Through surveys, interviews, and by phone, we estimate the gross impact of recreation for on Saratoga Lake and identified the spectrum of opinions regarding the future of recreation on Saratoga Lake from the people who know it best.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF RECREATION ON SARATOGA LAKE AND THREATS TO ITS LONG TERM VITALITY: THE PERSPECTIVE OF LOCAL BUSINESSES

Introduction:

Ever since the 1988 Sutherland Report concluded that Saratoga Springs' municipal water source, Loughberry Lake, would not provide sufficient water for the city's anticipated population increase and economic growth, politicians, businesses, and citizens alike have been embroiled in debate over the future of the local water economy. A major factor in this debate has been the candidacy of Saratoga Lake as a supplemental water source. Were it to become tapped by Saratoga Springs as a water source, the lake would come under state jurisdiction and blanket legislation. Many have speculated that a result of this could be limitations on the type and extent of certain recreational activities. For the businesses that depend on the revenue generated by recreational related consumption, it is a very sensitive and important subject. In order to make wise decisions regarding the future source of municipal water for Saratoga Springs, the various actors and agents of the lake's recreational economy must be well understood. To the best of our knowledge, this paper is the first of its kind to broach the subject.

Although Saratoga Lake enjoys recreation generated capital throughout the year, it is mostly attributable to boating, crew regattas, bass fishing, and various internal and external revenues associated with the tourist season. Thus, it seems unwise to initiate any kind of change to the lake without surveying the most important economic actors, and quantifying the dollar value of recreation for Saratoga Lake. All of the managers and owners that we spoke with, as well as most of the other employees, grew up on or around

the lake. Some as long ago as the late 1950's. If policy decisions are made without the consideration of the people that know it best, the proprietors on 9P, the future of recreation and its associated economy, may be compromised. Our research objective is to determine the dollar value of the recreation economy, as well as illuminate the scope of business owner's interests and perceived threats with regard to the drinking water source debate and their predictions for the future of recreation on Saratoga Lake.

Literature Review:

Although there is very little literature about the Saratoga Lake economy, there is an abundance of research and published reports that evaluate the environment, ecotourism, and recreation from an economic perspective. For our research, we looked at *The Upper Mississippi Study* (United States Geological Survey 1990), *The Recreational Economic Value of the Eastern Trinity Alps Wilderness* (Hackett 2000), and *Recreation Evaluation of the Multiple Purpose Reservoir for the East Locust Creek Watershed, MO* (Cartwright). For the *Eastern Trinity Alps* study, the objective was to point out that, from an economic point of view, wilderness areas contain a considerable amount of natural capital. It also observes that if some value generating activity must be passed up in order to fund wilderness area maintenance and management, managers may eventually need to assess the benefits generated by the wilderness area. Thus we are carrying out this study to gain a basic understanding of the benefits and revenues associated with Saratoga Lake.

In *Recreation Evaluation of East Locust Creek Watershed, MO*, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources and Conservation studied the feasibility and demand for creating more outdoor recreation facilities within the state. The study was conducted

under the assumption that recreation generated a significant amount of money in Missouri and that this impact could be magnified by building a reservoir. The departments calculated the participation rates of Missourians in various recreation activities and an estimate of user days per activity. Among the seven lakes that were studied to identify which recreational activities were most relevant, fishing, boating, and camping were factors in every one (52%, 34%, and 14% respectively). Our study, to some degree, deals with the same issues in changing the status of an existing lake. However, our study revolves around the potential limitations encountered if Saratoga Lake were to become a drinking water source as opposed to the possible benefits of creating a reservoir.

One possible explanation for the fact that recreation and ecosystem valuations, although well understood, have not been conducted at Saratoga Lake is that there is a small pool of people who really know the economic surge that comes with recreation, and most of them are not personally interested in such a study. This is not to say that they are ambivalent to this information, but rather that such a study is only important as a point of curiosity, as opposed to a formal research project. Our experience taught us that the use valuation methods and survey techniques that typically inform such studies are not conducive to Saratoga Lake research.

The USGS study included 76 counties throughout 5 states, and surveyed 1,316 people (USGS 1990). The Hackett paper relied primarily on the zonal travel cost method (TCM), which computes direct travel expenditures, a good indication of how much people are *willing to pay* to recreate or experience nature. In the *Missouri* study, the state used unit day value methods, a five step methodology that calculates recreational demand

and supply in user days, estimates the increased demand and supply from a proposed development, and derives the monetary benefits (Hackett 2000).

The aforementioned methodologies are cited in many similar research papers, however, our interview/business pool was unwilling to participate in formal surveying, disapproved of a perceived connection between our study and development of the lake, and often did not sympathize with our motivation to conduct this research. This is not to say that most interviewees were uncooperative, but formal surveys killed conversations, and questions regarding exact revenue figures were looked down upon. For these reasons, our research relied primarily on open ended interviews, based around five or six specific questions, but generally conducted conversationally [See Appendix 1 for initial survey]. The more informal and less structured the interviews were, the more data was collected. It also gave us information that we were not necessarily looking for. This often included historical information as well as personal opinions. Considering that our subjects usually grew up on or around the lake, this information proved to be particularly helpful in contextualizing our dialogue with broader political and economic issues.

Methods:

The businesses included in this study were chosen based on our preliminary judgment of whether they were strongly affected by recreation on the lake. As our research progressed, the total number of businesses decreased as the unaffected or marginal ones were eliminated. Although each and every commercial establishment on Route 9P is affected by the seasonal recreation surge one way or another, we narrowed

our sample size down to the ones that seemed to rely most heavily and contribute more significantly to the recreation economy. For instance, the marinas were considered vital to our research, whereas the handful of motels and bed & breakfasts were excluded. For further information, local bass fishing organizations were contacted by phone, Saratoga State Park provided boat launch data, and the New York State Department of Transportation provided us with information regarding the number of vehicles that cross the Route 9P Bridge. In total, we interviewed 19 businesses on the lake, and contacted three organizations by phone.

Businesses Surveyed

Recreation:

Allerdice Hardware
 Boat N RV Condos

 Kayak Shak

 Lake Lonley Livery
 Point Breeze Marina
 Saratoga Boat Works

 Saratoga Tackle and Archery
 South Shore Marina

Restaurants:

Barrymore Liquors
 Chameleons on the Lake
 Manginos
 Ristorante
 Panzas
 Restaurant
 Sciroccos Restaurant
 Stewarts (2)
 Tropic
 Hut

Lodging:

Harren Brook Inn
 Lees Park Camping

 Saratoga Lake Motel
 Verros Anchor Inn and
 Tavern

Organizations

Elite Angling of the Capital Region
 Saratoga Rowing Association
 Saratoga Lake Association

The recreational economy of Saratoga Lake primarily revolves around and is impacted most significantly by boating, regattas, and bass fishing in that order. Other businesses, such as Stewart’s, Barrymore’s Liquor Store, and Allerdice anticipate and depend on marine oriented sales, but their contribution to the overall recreation economy

is marginal. Nevertheless, they are included in this study because their bottom line is impacted by recreation related sales.

Businesses were also identified on a scale of 1-4 based on their dependence on the lake. The numbers were assigned based on the services offered and proximity to the lake. For example, a business which offers fishing tackle and has docks on the lake would be a 4 whereas a convenient store across the street from the lake would be a 1 or 2 depending on the amount of their reported sales increase or decrease to due seasonality. We did this primarily as a tool to help us identify and place emphasis on the business that were most highly dependent on the lake.

At the marina's, we interviewed the managers and two-three other employees. The managers provided us with sales information, such as most common boat sales and their relative prices, the cost of servicing and winterizing boats, and estimated the number of boats on the lake at various times throughout the season. More often than not, we were directed to speak with mechanics for information like the number of rentable slips, cost of gas, and the impact of fishermen/tourists/locals in the lake boating population. All subjects were asked about overuse issues, whether or not environmental degradation may be a consequence of boating, and their opinion about the future (threats) for recreation on Saratoga Lake.

Our data on the impact of regattas on Saratoga Lake was provided by the executive director of the SRA. In the past few years, there has been such a noticeable capital in-flow from the four SRA hosted regattas that Chris and his staff conducted their own study to determine the net value of the major crew events for Saratoga Springs. He derived his calculations from information provided by the sheriff's department, the

chamber of commerce, and surveys of all the hotels and motels in the greater Saratoga area. Fortunately the person we interviewed was the author of the study, and procured this information immediately upon request (Chase, SRA, 3-11-07).

The last major individual contributor to the recreation economy is bass fishing. Although many other types of fish are competitively and recreationally fished, the associated costs of all other types of fishing pale in comparison to those of bass fisherman. Tim Blodgett and Nick of Saratoga Archery and Tackle not only informed us of the internal and external costs of bass fishing, and also of the unique concerns that fisherman have for the lake. Our bass fishing data was supplemented by a phone interview with Gerry Rosenbarker, head of Elite Anglers of the Capital District, who gave us some insight into the tendencies of competitive bass fisherman who travel long distances every weekend for fishing tournaments.

Despite the fact that most of the remaining businesses we surveyed do not individually make a noticeable impact on the Saratoga Lake recreational economy (with the exception of Stewarts), their combined recreation related sales do. These businesses include two Stewarts Market, Barrymore's Liquor Store, Bayshore's Tropic Hut, and Allerdice Hardware Store. We asked each of the respective employees to estimate how much of their sales could be correlated to marine sales or boaters specifically, fisherman, ice fisherman, or regatta participants.

Restaurant's were a prominent component of our research, and provided us with some of our most interesting results. In order to speak with the managers/owners of the surveyed restaurants, we frequented these establishments for drinks and/or a meal. Under these circumstances, during mid-week lulls, employees were free to give us their time,

and even partially obliged as hosts. Most of these businesses have been under the same management/ownership for decades, and their knowledge of the relationship between recreation, the lake, and their business cannot be equaled. Because the nature of their relationship to the lake is quite different than businesses that are more overtly recreation oriented, the direction of our interviews were premised around the history of recreation on the lake, and how observable trends might evolve in the future.

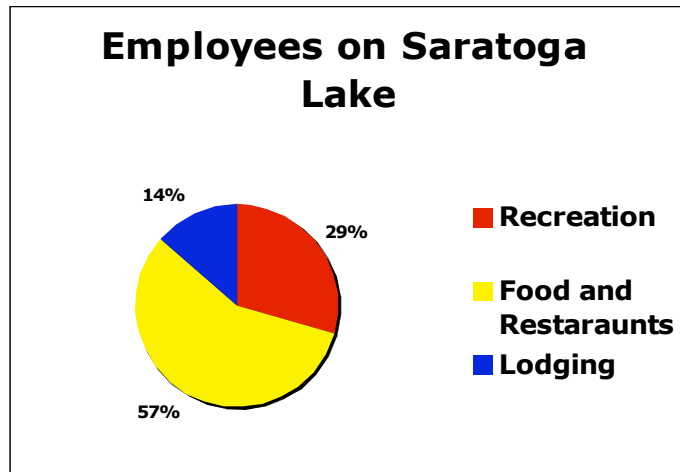
Results and Analysis:

We found 3 major sources of income on the lake to be boating, crew regattas, and bass fishing. The breakdown among these three sources in combination with the employment numbers on the lake should shed some light into the total economic impact recreation has on Saratoga Lake.

Summer Time Employment-

We totaled the number of employees by asking each business how many workers they had during peak and off season. We decided to use the summertime employment numbers because the majority of recreation occurs in the summer and thus it makes more sense that the employees are working to offset the increased number of people in the area. 3 restaurants provided us with exact employee numbers, and the fourth was estimated based on size and capacity comparisons between the other three due to the fact that the businesses was not willing to provide us with their employment information. To find the total number of employees working for the lodging businesses would include surveying all of the service oriented jobs which are associated with running a business based on

accommodating tourists (plumbers, carpenters, electricians, housekeepers). This was not carried out in our study and should be considered for future studies. The division of the 132 total summertime employees is shown below.



Boating-

Our knowledge of the costs and revenue generated by boating on Saratoga Lake came primarily from interviews and observations made at Point Breeze Marina and Saratoga Boatworks. The sort of information we inquired about included the number of rentable slips on the lake, the rates and fees for boat maintenance, parts, winterizing, cost of gas, respective marina capacity, and estimates of the number of boats on the lake at different points during the season. In order to get this and other data, we asked about most common sales, in demand items, standard procedures, general trends in boating on the lake, and whatever they believed we ought to know. As for the aggregate amount generated by boat sales, by far the single most expensive item in the lake economy, we were given ball park numbers. Although most of the marina employees we spoke to were hesitant to give us exact sales records, we did our best to get other employees to verify or

re-estimate certain data. For example, the manager and mechanic of Marina 1 believe that they sell approximately 150 15-22 ft. pontoon boats every year, and that the 22 ft. models are the most popular. He told us that they sell a handful of higher end boats a year (going for around \$50 K), and they sell many smaller boats (\$1600-4,000). Our calculations relied as much on our powers of deductive reasoning as hard data, but we definitely use conservative numbers. For example, Marina 1

Winterizes 150 boats @ \$75 a foot—average boat is 22 ft = \$236,500
Sells 200 boats a year @ avg. price of \$20,000 = \$4,000,000
Summer rentals @ \$65 an hour—average 10-12 a day = \$45,500 assuming there are 70 summer days.
Gasoline sales (only gas on lake) @ 500-1000 gallons/ day @ \$3.50 per gallon.
Assuming sales of 750 gal/day for 70 summer days = \$183,750
For a total of \$4,465,750 for MARINA 1.

Marina 1>Marina 2> Marina 3 in terms of size, capacity, and sales. All three Marina's gave us their servicing, work hours, and winterizing rates. We used the same calculation technique for each one, and scaled our numbers accordingly. Marina 3 actually estimated their net worth at just short of \$1 million.

For the boat storage facility we used the total number of available spaces (75) multiplied by the average cost of \$150.00/month based on the average boat size (22 feet), and assumed that it would be $\frac{3}{4}$ capacity. From this, we derived a net worth of \$106,200.

Crew Regattas-

Regatta data was by far the easiest to come by, and may be the most precise of our study. The executive director of SRA conducted his own study last year, and the results were supposedly published in *The Saratogian*. Unfortunately, neither the Saratoga Public

Library nor the newspaper itself was helpful in recovering the article. According to this study, Saratoga Rowing Association's 4 big regattas (Head of the Fish, Tail of the Fish, NYS Championships, and Local Invitational) generate \$8.7 million. This number is based on sheriff's information on attendance and traffic records, data from the Saratoga Chamber of Commerce, and a survey of the hotels and restaurants used by regatta participants. They calculated that the average person spends \$5.50 at each event and that roughly 30,000 people participate or are spectators in total for all four regattas (Chase, SRA, 3-10-07).

Bass Fishing-

Fishermen come to Saratoga Lake in search of a variety of different fish, but the greatest economic impact by far comes from bass fishing. There are between 60-75 tournaments in a season (mostly bass, but also pike, and walleye), from the third week in June (Saturday) until shortly after Labor Day. The majority of them (50-60) are Tuesday and Thursday local fishing tournaments, peopled by groups like the fire and police department, and other nearby businesses and organizations. Approximately 10-12 times a year, professional bass fishermen come through, driving from as far away as New Hampshire, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. According to our sources, the impact of these tournaments roughly equals that of the other tournaments combined (Blodgett 4-24-07).

The tackle shop on Saratoga Lake grosses \$200-250 K a year. However, this is not the only place to get fishing equipment. One interviewee we spoke with is an ex-employee of Dick's Sporting goods, and estimated that 80% of the lake fishing sales come from Dick's and Wal-Mart, and that the lake tackle shop probably represents 10%

of bass fishing sales. The remaining 10% is likely used elsewhere (Nick the Fisherman 4-26-07).

For the local fishermen, a few lures, a bag of worms, and a couple of hooks may be the extent of their weekly purchase. We estimate that this comprises \$75-\$100 K at the local tackle shop. For the competitive bass fishermen, we must take into account lodging for the two tournament days, plus one extra day for 'pre-fishing'. They tend to have a \$40 K boat, with a 40-60 gallon gas tank that they often fill at the lake before launching (Rosenbarker 4-17-07). In order to remain competitive, it is important to buy what local fishermen recommend as the best lure for the time of season, and to consider the advice of the local fishing industry, who presumably have a finger on the pulse of the local fishing community. They are looking for the right color, size, and newest gear, and they cannot afford to run out of a fundamental item in the middle of a tournament. To put this in context, a competitive bass fishermen generally aspires to make it to the ESPN Bass Masters championship, and to accomplish this, often has between 8-12 rods and reels, and roughly \$6-7 K invested in their tackle boxes. Consequently, they are heavy spenders at the local tackle shop, as well as Dick's and Wal-Mart (Nick the Fisherman 4-26-07).

Every fisherman needs a fishing license, as do tournament groups. For a resident the cost is \$19, and \$40 for a non resident (Blodgett 3-01-07). Licenses are also available for one day usage. SPA State Park was not forthcoming about the cost of a tournament license.

According to our sources, in a good month Dick's fishing department generates \$200,000 from bass fishermen alone. Wal-Mart, we were told, generates slightly less. If

we assume that both stores have unremarkable seasons (such as the last 2), lasting from May to September, we calculate that the two stores might gross \$1.3 million between them (\$700,000 and \$600,000 respectively). With the addition of Saratoga Tackle and Archery's reported earnings, this number inflates to \$1.5 million.

Restaurants-

Our most surprising results came from the lake restaurant industry. In years long past, tourists and recreation enthusiasts used to go from lake in the afternoon straight to one of the nearby restaurants. According to Roger Mangino, who established his business in 1959, the impact of recreation has subsided drastically with the development of Saratoga Springs. Today, he says, when people exit the lake in the afternoon, they are through with the lake atmosphere for at least the evening, and almost always prefer to head back to their lodgings or favorite restaurants in the city (Mangino 3-27-07). For both he and Gail, the manager of Panza's Restaurant (a similar establishment), the only identifiable recreational impact comes from the occasional ice fisherman or snow-plower who may have a few drinks. However, these restaurants (including Scirocco's) consider themselves 'destination' restaurants, whose profits are derived almost entirely from people that travel from Saratoga Springs or further. They are also affected by nearby residents, who appreciate the history and 'local' atmosphere provided by these establishments, but as a consequence of recreation (Rodriguez 4-21-07). As a result, we did not include restaurant revenue in our final assessment of the dollar value of recreation.

Despite what our interviewees told us, our conversations with Elite Angling of the Capital Region and some passing fisherman incline Peter and I to believe that these restaurants underestimate the impact of fisherman and boaters. We feel this way because fisherman (especially those who have traveled a great distance) and boaters do not necessarily project their day's activities by their actions or appearance in the restaurant. We were told that fisherman appreciate the fact that they can grab a good meal right off the water, and boating enthusiasts with families are probably tempted to take advantage of the fact that they can bring their families and friends immediately to a good meal/drinks after being on the water. This may be especially true for families with children. An especially vital piece of information was relayed to us by Richard at Chameleons on the Lake. He cited that although the number of people recreating on Saratoga Lake drastically increases in the summer time, the number of people coming into the restaurant do not correlate with the people spending time on the lake. Although most of the restaurants business does occur in the summer time, he believes that recreation on the lake has little to do with the spike in business (Rodriguez 4-21-07).

Other Businesses-

Among the businesses we decided were marginally affected by recreation on Saratoga Lake were two Stewarts Markets, Barrymore's Liquor Store, Allerdice Hardware Store, Bayshore Tropic Hut, and Lee's Campground. The manager of the Northernmost Stewarts estimated for us the amount of money that his store grossed as a result of recreation. Because the Northern Store is closer to direct public access to the lake, he told us that his market was more directly affected than the one just a few miles

further south on 9P. His guess was 40-50% more (Bruce 2-27-06). We assume there are 70 days in the recreation season, and that the average difference between winter and summer sales numbers represents the amount contributed to recreation. We include Memorial Day, July 4th, one nice weekend in August, and Labor Day as ‘major holidays’, and that they count as two days. Our total for both stores comes out to \$792,000.

Stewarts Market Sales (daily gross)	
Winter	\$7-8.5K
Summer	\$14-17 K
major holiday	\$21-23K

We spoke with two employees at Barrymore’s Liquor Store, a young man and a middle aged woman, on two different occasions. In the winter, we were told that sales can go from as low as \$400 to as much as \$4,000 in a week. I was told that the cash register often closes with around \$900 in the early fall and late spring. One employee mentioned that a lucrative day in the summer could gross \$3,500, and that it was not uncommon to make \$2,000 in sales during the summer season, from June to Labor Day. Both employees believe that around 9 out of 10 of daytime summer sales are attributable to lake recreation in one way or another. At first this number seemed exaggerated, but we then we were informed that the store sells wine so quickly that they cannot keep it cold, and actually lose sales because people prefer to get beverages from different stores than to buy un-chilled wine.

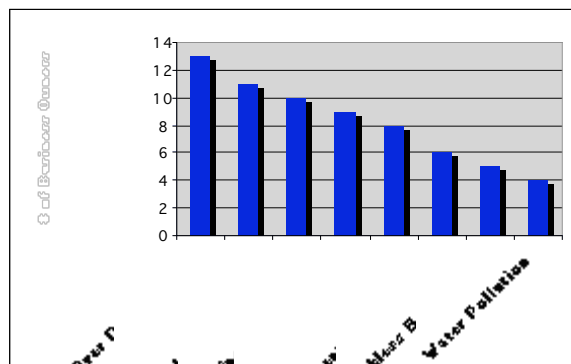
The owner of Allerdice Hardware Store gave us the most accurate revenue data of all of our businesses. In his files, he found exactly how much his Saratoga Lake store grossed in ‘Marine’ sales. According to his bookkeeping, this number accounted for

\$7,000 last year, which he considered ‘normal’. He also told us that this accounted for between 8-10% of the store’s total sales.

From our interview with the owner of Verro’s Tavern (Verros 3-27-07) , it was abundantly clear that recreation hardly, if at all, affected his gross annual revenue. And although we were not able to speak as lengthily as we had hoped with the owner of Bayshore Tropic Hut, we find it hard to believe, given the magnitude of sales generated by the larger businesses included in this study, that its total sales would meaningfully affect our final recreation based dollar value. We felt the same about Lee’s Campground. However, despite the fact that these businesses do not generate the sort of revenue that could significantly affect our results, each of them were very helpful in identifying the range of concerns regarding present and future threats to their businesses specifically, and to lake recreation generally (Lee 3-24-07).

Long term threats to Recreation:

We asked what businesses believed to be long term threats to the continued recreation on Saratoga Lake. This question generated many responses with most businesses relaying more than one threat. The common themes were, in order from most prominent to least; development, overuse, seasonal property owners, drinking water source, public access, governmental jurisdictions, reckless boat users, water pollution. We left any qualitative comments such as “greatest” and “least” out and focused on the quantity of each perceived theme in relation to others. The frequency of each response is shown below.



For the marina's, the main great threat to recreation on Saratoga Lake is overuse and over development around the lake as all 8 of the recreation based businesses at one point or another mentioned this. We make the connection that, although only 38% of the recreation based business owners cited drinking water source issue as a threat, the over development and overuse in part has to do with using Saratoga Lake as a drinking water source because one of the reasons Saratoga needs a new source of water is the influx of people moving to the area. It is important to note that, although the marina employees represent approximately 35% of recreation oriented business employees, they are probably more familiar with the lake ecology and economy than anyone else in Saratoga Springs. At one marina, the combined years of lake use between the employees was 120 years. It was not uncommon to find that, not only had these men been working at the lake for periods of time best measured in decades, but also that they have recreated on it since childhood. So, when Point Breeze tells us, "This lake would be totally f#*\$^ if they build a pipe into it" (4-14-07) and South Shore Marina asserts "If you pull 12 million gallons a day out of this lake it will be a f*#!ing frog pond in three weeks" (4-11-07), we opine that this is in fact the case. These interviewees have been working on the lake since 1977 and 1985 respectively. It is these men, not the lawyers, politicians, and activists, whose advice we should seek when planning the future of Saratoga Lake.

When asked, Point Breeze, “Do you think there might be too much boating on the lake?” the manager pointed out the window and responded, “Do you see too many boats on the lake?” There was nothing on the water except ice (3-11-07).

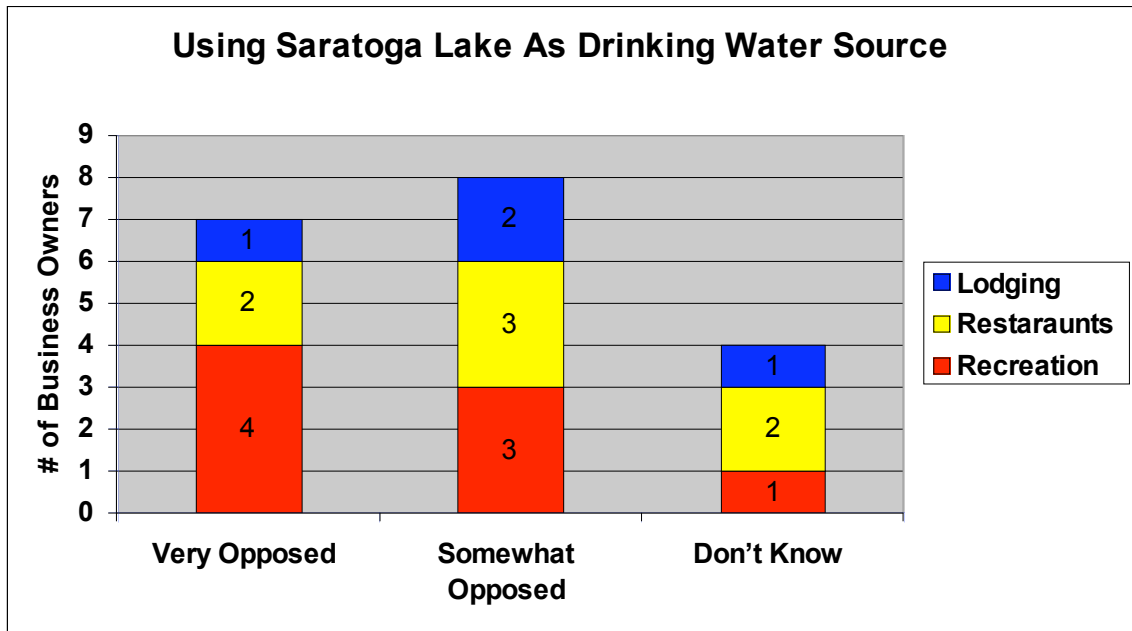
Rowers have no significant concerns or anxieties about the future of their mode of recreation. In the Saratoga High School, 1/13 kids is on the crew team, and in recent years rowing has been the #1 most recruited sport for tier one universities. Rowing has a long history in Saratoga Springs, and all signs indicate that it will remain that way. Hunters and fishermen tend to think that rowers are oblivious to their surrounding, but this is more of a minor complaint than a threat (Chase, SRA, 3-10-07).

While tourists, boaters, and bathers tend to frown upon weed beds in the lake, bass fishermen cite them as an important factor in the vitality of the fishing industry. It is in these beds that bait fish grow and feed. In the absence of weed beds, bait fish are less likely to survive, and negatively affect the survival rate of bigger fish.

Using Saratoga Lake as a Drinking Water Source-

The second part of this open ended interview was to determine what the business owner’s attitudes were towards using Saratoga Lake as a drinking water source for the greater Saratoga Springs area. We did this by asking them if they “strongly agree,” “somewhat agree,” “are undecided,” “somewhat opposed,” or “strongly opposed” to using Saratoga Lake as a drinking water source. Many of the owners felt this was not a necessary question because the issue has already been resolved but we felt it shed important light into the business owner’s attitudes towards perceived threats and

limitations on recreation. The most poignant revelation in this data is the lack of positive answers in using Saratoga Lake as a drinking water source and the overwhelming majority of recreation based businesses that are strongly opposed to using Saratoga Lake as a drinking water source.



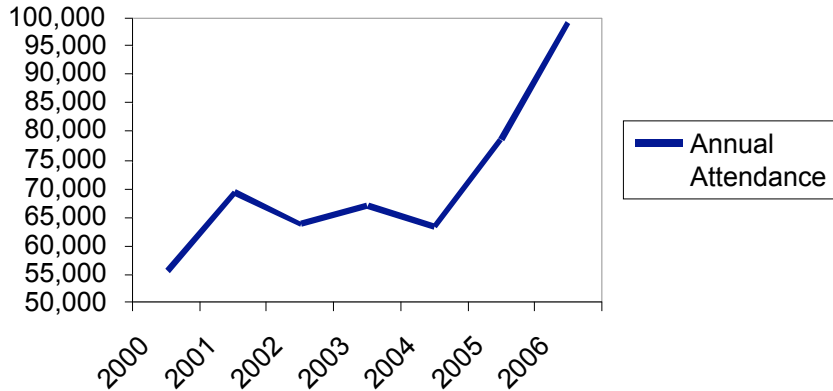
The Future of Recreation on Saratoga Lake:

Saratoga State Park Boat Launch Data-

We contacted people associated with the SPA state park who are responsible for maintaining the state boat launch as well as monitoring its use. We were provided with the attendance, paying and non-paying, numbers for everyone who entered the state boat launch area. The number of boats being launched at the State Boat Launch has increased by 55,000 over the past seven years (Gomez 4-10-07). The boat launch data is important to the future of Saratoga Lake because one of the concerns the business owners had about

the future of recreation was the over use of the Lake because it is only 6 miles long and 1.5 miles wide at its widest point.

Saratoga State Park Boat Launch



This data also helps legitimize the New York State Department of Transportation's project on the Route 9P Bridge. We were provided with estimated yearly data on how many cars the NYSDOT projects to pass over the bridge. In 2003 there was an average of 618 cars passing over the bridge an hour on any summer weekend afternoon. By 2038, the NYSDOT projects that number to have increased by 152 cars to a total of 770 cars an hour during the same time period (NYSDOT 11-14-03). It would be impossible at this point in time for 770 cars to pass over the narrow, 2 lane bridge that is now in place.

Between the Saratoga State Park Boat Launch data and the numbers predicted by the NYSDOT it is evident that governmental organizations are beginning to address the issue of increased recreation on the lake. This is a contradictory point as some governmental organizations are still pushing for the use of Saratoga Lake as a drinking water source.

This is a good example of the governmental jurisdictional threats that a few of the business owners reported as potential threats to the future of Saratoga Lake.

Conclusion:

The recreation economy on Saratoga Lake is primarily affected by boating, regattas, and bass fishing. According to our calculations, these three industries generate \$20.2 million. In addition to these three factors, Allerdice Hardware Store, Barrymore's Liquor Store, and the two Stewarts Markets each depend on recreation oriented customers for between 8%, 34%, and 60% of their gross annual income respectively, for a total of \$1.58 million. Thus, the net effect of recreation on the Saratoga Lake economy was calculated at \$21.78 million.

In addition to putting a dollar value on lake recreation, we also aimed to illuminate the opinions, concerns, and predictions of the business owners and employees with regard to future threats to recreation. A resounding 100% of the recreation based businesses we interviewed cited overdevelopment as a major concern. Many businesses claimed that overuse was also a problem, as well as seasonal property owners, who they believe have proportionally more leverage than full time residents in local issues because of sheer numbers.

We all but prompted our interviewees to cite the drinking water plan as a major problem, but to our surprise, only 38% of respondents believed agreed that it was in fact a problem. Because all of the business owners grew up in the area, they have a keen awareness of local political developments. Among the marinas, virtually all of the employees believe the proposed development plan has been scrapped. Officially, the plan is still on the drawing board, however, the more recreationally oriented businesses

assert that the micro-chip plant will be built and consequently, the Hudson River will have to be the future water source. At this point, only time can tell.

Acknowledgements:

We would like to thank Bob Turner and Karen Kellogg, our fearless and supportive advisors, our classmates, and all of our interview subjects especially Tim Blodgett of Saratoga Tackle and Archery.

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Blodgett, Tim. Owner of Saratoga Tackle & Archery. Conducted 3-1-07, 4-24-07

Bruce. Manager of Stewarts 9P North. Conducted 3-28-07

Chase, Chris. Executive Director, SRA. Conducted via email 3-6-07

Gomez, Jorge. Saratoga State Park. Conducted via email 4-10-07

Lee. Owner of Lee's Park Campground. 3-24-07

Mangino, Roger. Owner of Mangino's Ristorante. Conducted 3-27-07

Nick the Fisherman. Fisherman in Saratoga Tackle & Archery. Conducted 4-26-07

Rodriguez, Richard. Owner of Chameleons on the Lake. Conducted 4-21-07

Rosenbarker, Gerry. Elite Angling of the Capital Region. Conducted 4-17-07

Verros, Pete & Barbara. Owners of Verros Anchor Inn and Tavern. Conducted 4-17-07