

This is the text of an email message Michael Black sent to the Torrey Town Clerk on November 5, 2020 relating to Greenidge Generation's possible role in harming fishing in Seneca Lake.

Seneca Lake was known as the Lake Trout Capital of the World since the mid 60's as the Memorial Day Lake Trout Tournament was begun . I started fishing the derby in either 1972 or 73, fishing with my late father and brother . I graduated from SUNY Geneseo in 1976 and had already started fishing with two lifelong friends I made at the University. Every Memorial Day weekend my two friends would meet at my cottage to fish in the derby along with a few other relatives and friends . As the years went by , we were joined at the derby by their kids , we sometimes fished the week leading up to Memorial tournament . I fished for Lake Trout off my dock starting in April or May depending on whether it was or warm or cold spring .

My style of fishing has changed little over the last 50 years. I leave my poles on my dock and using a rowboat I would pull the fishing line out some fifty or seventy feet from my dock . I fished using saw bellies (Alewives) that I bought from local bait and tackle stores or caught myself (usually not until June) . The sawbellies are a fragile fish that work best while they are alive and healthy. I would hook them just under their skin so that they can still swim and seem like all the other sawbellies living in the lake. After dropping the bait into the lake. I would row back to shore and place a piece of aluminum foil at the tip of the pole and sneak the line by the reel into a rubber band . When a lake trout or rainbow trout or brown trout grab the bait, they'd run with it in their mouth . They stop and then swallow the fish , when they start to run with the bait , my aluminum foil would be pulled into the water and also pulled out of the rubber band.

The rubber band tells me if I had a fish hit my pole , the foil could blow off or I could have had a hit by a bass or a perch who don't run with the bait . If the foil is out a foot and a half and the line has been pulled out of the rubber band, I know something hit my bait . If the foil was missing or twenty yards away in the water, I knew I had a trout on the line . Once I knew a fish hit my bait, I would grab my row boat and pole and row out and try and land the trout . Later in the nineties I raised my dock to some five feet off the surface of the lake and after that I could reel in my pole from my dock without going out in my row boat .

The reason I'm explaining all of this is to impress upon those reading this that I haven't changed my style of fishing since the 70's and that I fished in the same spot for all these years .The most lake trout I have caught in one day during the derby was twenty lake trout and the most trout ever caught in one day at my lower cottage was 24 . Those were extra ordinary days of fishing , during the 70's and 80's and early 90's I would average between fifty and seventy lake trout caught around the derby . For the season I would often catch more than 100 lake trout , rainbows and browns and later land lock salmon only accounted for about ten % of my trout. The lake trout was by far the most fish I caught using my method .

Over the last five years the fishing in Seneca Lake has gone to Hell , three of these years I caught one or two trout for the entire derby and the week leading up to it . I have fished harder than I have ever fished before and I'm not catching any trout . I have gone from catching over 100 lake trout from April to July to catching one or two and fishing harder than ever before .

Where fishermen used to come from all over the northeast to fish in this derby, today they are no longer coming here . They aren't filling our hotels and motels and bed and breakfasts or renting cottages on the lake to fish in the derby. They aren't spending their money at restaurants and bait stores and gas station's ! Where I use to see perch and rock bass swimming under my dock , today I see few if any . Seneca Lake used to have some of the best perch fishing in the country and today I rarely see any of them . I haven't caught a perch or a rock bass in ten years at least .

Now do I believe that it is just Green Ridge power plant that is at fault , no I don't but I believe it has had a hand in the destroying of the fishing in this largest of the finger lakes . The two salt plants at the end of the lake and a few other factories pollute the lake on a daily basis . The grape farmers along the lake are also suspected of allowing pollution to seep into the lake as does road salt from our highways . Cottages and business along the shores of the lake also add to the pollution as well .

Green Ridge's positives for the finger lakes is minimal compared to damage that it is doing to our lake and for that reason I would ask that we close down a plant that doesn't serve the greater good and does great damage to Seneca Lake . Thank You for reading my letter !