



News

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Summary of the 4/28 meeting of the Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization (CWIO).

- The long-awaited draft of the Total Maximum Daily Load for phosphorus going into the lake was released by the DEC in early April with a comment **deadline of May 24**. The CWIO asks

municipalities to write to waterlog@dec.ny.gov to ask for an extension for the comment period to 90 days.

The CWIO is working with others throughout the watershed to compile comments on the TMDL. Municipalities are encouraged to engage and comment as well. **See more about how to comment below.**

- Ian Smith has identified several projects that may be eligible for grant funding. The CWIO authorized Ian to continue to work on projects that can be implemented or funded in 2021.
- Adam Effler, Executive Director of the Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council gave a summary of some of the work accomplished in that watershed. See the excellent summary of some of their actions in the [2020 report from the Owasco Lake Inspection and Protection Division](#).
- Shawn Murphy from Cortland County Soil and Water Conservation District office has organized an agriculture committee for the CWIO. Thanks Shawn and all who have volunteers to help with this important group.

A recording of the CWIO meeting is available [here](#) (password QaW@?Lt2).

TOTAL MAXIMUM DAILY LOAD (TMDL) for Phosphorus in Cayuga Lake.

Why the TMDL Matters to Municipalities and How to Comment

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has recently released the Total Maximum Daily Load ([TMDL](#)) for phosphorus in Cayuga Lake. TMDLs are supposed to give guidance on how to reduce phosphorus inputs into water bodies.

Why does this matter to municipalities? Local governments are expected to take part in this effort. For example, the management of ditches and drainageways may need to be adjusted. Changes in stormwater management are recommended, and land use local laws will be needed to slow the migration of phosphorus into the lake.

The draft TMDL has gaps that should be of concern to local governments because the document is unclear who will take the lead on implementation of the plan and who will fund the needed changes.

While the draft TMDL is largely voluntary as proposed, if phosphorus levels are not reduced in a timely way, the state may be forced to make compliance mandatory.

Comments on the draft TMDL are due May 24 at 5:00

The Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization (CWIO) and the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network (Network) and many other organizations and individuals throughout the watershed are working together to review the TMDL and collect comments. [These comments are posted on the Network's webpage](#). Please feel free to pull comments that are relevant to your particular municipality or organization to submit to the DEC. The comments come from individuals with varied levels of expertise and not all are fact checked.

See the draft TMDL: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/23835.html> (scroll down to “Cayuga Lake TMDL/Phosphorus)

How to submit comments:

- by mail to: NYS DEC – Division of Water, Bureau of Water Resource Management, 625 Broadway, 4th Floor, Albany, NY 12233-3508
- by email to: waterlog@dec.ny.gov
- See draft comments, resolutions, submission letters, and other information [here](#).

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES.

5/7 Finger Lakes News from Washington and Albany

Congressman John Katko (NY 24th) will speak about federal water quality initiatives and funding opportunities, followed by Aimee Clinkhammer of the NYS DEC Finger Lakes Watershed Hub who will present on local watershed planning efforts. Both will take questions moderated by Olivia Green of the nature conservancy.

Friday, May 7 at 1:00. Register [here](#)

\$48.9 Million for Clean Water Systems and Drinking Water Infrastructure

[Governor Andrew M. Cuomo has announced](#) that the New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation Board of Directors has approved more than \$48 million in grants, interest-free loans, and low-cost loans to support drinking water and wastewater infrastructure projects across New York State.

The Board's approval includes financing through the Clean and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds and grants that are part of the Water Infrastructure Improvement Act program. For more information, visit [EFC's website](#).

Grant Opportunity for Waterfront Septic System Replacements – Cayuga County

New York State's Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC), has opened Round 2 of the State Septic System Replacement Fund Program which provides funds to replace old or substandard septic systems located on or near lakefront properties. Cayuga County is participating in this program and eligible properties include those located within 250 feet of Owasco Lake, Lake Como, Cayuga Lake and Skaneateles Lake.

This funding provides reimbursement of 50% of costs, up to \$10,000, for design and installation of a new septic system. All designs must be approved by the County Health Department prior to construction. Funding will be available for three years, or until exhausted. To apply for the program complete and return the application form which can be found at the following link: [Septic-Grant-Program-PDF \(cayugacounty.us\)](#) or on the Cayuga County website.

Property owners with aging or substandard septic systems are encouraged to apply to help improve water quality.

Individuals with questions may contact the Cayuga County Health Department at 315-2531560.

TRAININGS and MODEL LEGISLATION

5/12 Wetlands: Mapping, Identification, and Field Verification

In the second session of the Wetlands webinar series we will discuss existing state and federal wetland maps and how to use online resources to identify additional wetland locations through the analysis of topographic maps, soils, and aerial photos. We will walk through examples of map analysis to predict the occurrence of wetlands and discuss tips for conducting a field visit to verify those predictions through on-the-ground observations of plants, soils, and other indicators.

Wednesday, May 12, 3:00-4:30pm ([Register here](#))

Presenters: Ingrid Haeckel, DEC Hudson River Estuary Program and Cornell University; Gretchen Stevens, Hudsonia Ltd

5/19 Wetlands: Regulatory Status and Local Protection Strategies

This wetlands webinar will discuss the state and federal regulatory protections for wetlands, including recent changes, and the potential for local regulations, how to address wetlands in environmental reviews of land development projects, and approaches for crafting and adopting local laws and zoning for wetland protection.

Wednesday, May 19, 3:00-4:30pm ([Register here](#))

Presenters: Roy Jacobson, DEC Division of Fish and Wildlife, Habitat Protection Section; Gretchen Stevens, Hudsonia Ltd; Emily Svenson, Gordon and Svenson LLP

RESEARCH AND MONITORING

Replumbing Roadside Ditches: Simple Solutions to Reduce Flooding, Drought and Water Pollution

If you were not able to attend Professor Rebecca Schneider's presentation, it can be seen here:

<https://www.fllt.org/watch-a-recording-of-re-plumbing-roadside-ditches-by-dr-rebecca-schneider/>

DEC to Evaluate Ultrasonic Sound Wave Treatment to Combat HABs

[DEC has announced](#) the start of a new research project to evaluate the potential efficacy of ultrasonic devices to reduce harmful algal blooms (HABs) on Lake Agawam in the village of Southampton. DEC is undertaking the research project in partnership with the village of Southampton. This research supports the [HABs Action Plan \(PDF\)](#) that DEC developed for Lake Agawam in 2020.

NEWS AND REPORTS - from Our Partners and Stakeholders

Drinking Water Source Protection Program

Thanks to the City of Ithaca and in our neighboring watershed, the City of Auburn for volunteering to be part of the DEC's and state Department of Health's new initiative to protect drinking source water. [See the press release.](#)

NYS DEC Look for Zero Public Awareness Campaign to Reduce Phosphorus Use in Fertilizers.

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Basil Seggos today announced the launch of the annual "Look for the Zero" public awareness campaign to encourage homeowners to go phosphorus-free when using lawn fertilizer. DEC is encouraging consumers to review bag labels for phosphorus content when shopping for fertilizer. Fertilizer labels have three numbers and the number in the middle is the percentage of phosphorus in the product, such as 22-0-15. More than 100 water bodies in New York State cannot be used or enjoyed because of phosphorus overuse. [See more information in the DEC press release](#) including a public service announcement.

NYS Winners of the Environmental Excellence Awards

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Basil Seggos recognized four organizations and institutions as winners of the 17th annual Environmental Excellence Awards.

The Upper Susquehanna Coalition (USC) developed its water quality improvement program in 2018 to reduce and prevent pollution in local waterways throughout the Chesapeake Bay, serving 18 New York counties. Methods include Best Management Practices for agriculture, flood retention, wildlife/habitat restoration, and riparian and wetland restoration. The program has implemented 200 acres of riparian buffer, more than 12 acres of wetland, and 440 acres of rotational grazing.

[See the press release.](#)

Acquisition of Critical Lands to Protect Water Quality in Dutchess County

[DEC and Winnakee Land Trust \(WLT\) have announced](#) the acquisition of two parcels totaling 333 acres in the town of Red Hook adjacent to the Saw Kill as part of New York State's [Water Quality Improvement Project \(WQIP\) Program](#). This partnership will help protect the public drinking water supply at Bard College, which serves 1,400 residents. DEC awarded WLT more than \$1.2 million in a WQIP grant for the acquisition.

This project will limit future logging and provide for the development of a management plan to remove invasives, restore vegetation, and mitigate potential impacts to the adjacent waterway, protecting the public drinking water supply.

WHO'S WHO IN THE WATERSHED – Focus on Soil and Water Conservation Districts

The following is a combined report from county Soil and Water Conservation District offices throughout the watershed including a bit of history of districts and the various services they provide along with some of the work they have helped implement across the Cayuga Lake Watershed.

Their collective contact information is found on the last page and they invite you to reach out should you have any questions about the types of services they provide or ways they can partner in the future.