



Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization
(CWIO)

News **June 2021**

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Summary of the 5/26 meeting of the Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization (CWIO).

- CWIO members continued to discuss the TMDL and how to comment. Roxy Johnston gave an overview of the concerns. For more, see below.
- CWIO members passed a resolution in support of the proposed Finger Lakes National Heritage area.
- CWIO members approved spending up to \$7,000 to build a website for the organization that will have an editing dashboard to make it easier to update.
- Ian Smith continues to work on funding applications for projects within, or applicable to the watershed.
- The organizational assessment work by the Consensus Building Institute is on-going. Ona Ferguson, from CBI, will be guiding the CWIO through discussions of its bylaws and other organizational documents at the CWIO meeting on August 25 at 7:00.
- The Fair Funding Formula (FFF) was presented and discussed. The CWIO will need to take action this summer if the formula is to be implemented for 2022 in order for municipalities to have their new dues amounts in time for 2022 budget planning.

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

The DEC has extended the deadline for comments on the TMDL to July 8 at 5:00. Please see the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network’s webpage [for more details on how to comment](#). Model letters and comments are also

available on that page. The CWIO encourages all municipalities within the watershed to review the TMDL document and comment.

As a review, the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) released the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for phosphorus in Cayuga Lake. TMDLs 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.

Example [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.

7/30/21 deadline: New Round of Water Quality Improvement Program (WQIP) Land Acquisition Funds Now Available.

If municipalities know of certain lands to acquire that would benefit water quality if preserved, grant applications are now being accepted for the [Consolidated Funding Application \(CFA\)](#) until 4 p.m. on July 30, 2021, which includes funding for WQIP land acquisition projects for source water protection. For additional information, including program details, requirements, maximum award amounts, required match, and project type descriptions, view DEC's [WQIP webpage](#).

New DEC Efforts to Protect Drinking Water Sources.

Earlier this month, [DEC and the New York State Department of Health \(DOH\) announced a new initiative](#), the Drinking Water Source Protection Program (DWSP2), in collaboration with the Departments of Agriculture and Markets and State to assist municipalities with developing and supporting drinking water source protection programs. As part of DWSP2, communities can take advantage of a number of implementation strategies to protect their source of drinking water. Implementation strategies may include zoning ordinances, intermunicipal agreements, training, or land acquisition. For communities who choose to use land acquisition as an implementation strategy, WQIP land acquisition funds could be a great resource for them to protect their source water. Up to 40 volunteer communities, including the city of Ithaca, will work with technical assistance partners to develop programs that proactively protect public drinking water supplies. To [learn more about DWSP2](#), visit the DEC website.

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo continues to increase investments for clean water infrastructure projects, including the State's unprecedented \$4 billion commitment to ensure that all New Yorkers have access to clean water. As part of the state's Environmental Protection Fund, the WQIP supports projects to

improve water quality, reduce the potential for harmful algal blooms (HABs), and protect drinking water across the state. DEC has announced more than \$37 million for 37 land acquisition projects to date. In addition to land acquisition projects for source water protection, WQIP grants are awarded for municipal wastewater treatment, nonagricultural nonpoint source abatement and control, salt storage, and aquatic habitat restoration.

US EPA Announces \$9 million in Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Funding Will be Available Soon.
(note: Cayuga Lake is part of the Great Lakes Watershed)

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced that they will be offering \$9 million in grant funding applications for approximately 24 projects aimed at addressing stormwater runoff carrying pollution from the land into water bodies. These projects will also support innovative efforts to reduce nutrients from agricultural runoff in the Great Lakes basin. EPA will post a Request for Application (RFA) to their [RFA website](#), where interested applicants can find a summary of the funding opportunities. Once the RFA is open, applicants will have approximately 60 days to submit their applications on [Grants.gov](#). The funding is made possible by the [Great Lakes Restoration Initiative](#).

There are three categories applicants may apply.

- [Green infrastructure](#) in shoreline communities; *special consideration given to projects benefitting underserved communities*
- [Riparian](#) restoration to reduce runoff
- Legacy phosphorus in agricultural settings

7/8 deadline: U.S. Forest Service Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) Program

The USDA Forest Service is now requesting applications for the Fiscal Year 2021 [Great Lakes Restoration Initiative \(GLRI\) Grant Program](#). They anticipate that up to \$5.4 million in new funds will be available for reforestation, ecosystem restoration and forest health improvement in the Great Lakes Basin. Submit applications by **6 p.m. Eastern on July 8th** in Grants.gov. The [Forest Restoration](#) (FR) RFA funds include projects that:

- Reduce Runoff from Degraded Sites through green infrastructure that includes trees, or
- Restore and Connect Coastal and Riparian Forest Habitats.

Applicants can be State agencies, sovereign Tribal Nations, nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, and local governments that work within the U.S. portion of the Great Lakes Basin.

10/8 deadline: Regenerate NY Cost-Share Grants Available for Forest Landowners

Please share with residents within your municipalities:

For owners of between 10 and 1,000 acres of forest land with an interest in improving your woods: DEC's Regenerate NY program provides cost-share grants to New York landowners looking to enhance forest regeneration. DEC encourages landowners who want to plant trees, control competing vegetation, restore a degraded forest stand, or exclude deer, to apply for project funding. Interested landowners can **apply until October 8th** or until funds run out. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. To find out more about getting funding for your forest, [please visit DEC's website](#). Applicants will need to apply through Grants Gateway. [Check out the Regenerate NY webpage on DEC's website for more information](#).

7/30 deadline: NY Smart Growth Comprehensive Planning Grant Program

The NYSDOS is seeking applications to advance the preparation of municipal comprehensive plans to establish land-use policies which support smart growth and clean energy principles for the community. Eligible activities include those needed to develop a new Comprehensive Plan or

a Comprehensive Plan update that is consistent with Smart Growth Principles. Up to \$1 million is available. Eligible applicants include villages, towns, cities; counties, regional planning entities, and eligible not-for-profit organizations on behalf of a municipality. For more information, visit the NYSDOS [Smart Growth Comp Planning webpage](#).

7/30 deadline: Local Waterfront Revitalization Program:

NYS Department of State (NYSDOS) is seeking applications to advance strategies for community and waterfront revitalization. Up to \$27.75 million is available this round. Eligible projects include: Preparing or Updating a Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP); Preparing an LWRP Component, including a Watershed Management Plan; Updating an LWRP to Mitigate Future Physical Climate Risks; and Implementing a Local Waterfront Revitalization Program or a completed LWRP Component. Eligible applicants include villages, towns, or cities located along New York's coasts or inland waterways as designated pursuant to Executive Law, Article 42, and counties with the consent and acting on behalf of one or more eligible villages, towns or cities. For more details, visit the NYSDOS [LWRP webpage](#).

7/30 deadline: Water Quality Improvement Projects (WQIP):

WQIP funds implement projects to address documented water quality impairments or protect a drinking water source. A total of \$65 million is available. Eligible project types include: Wastewater Treatment Improvement, Non-Agricultural Nonpoint Source Abatement and Control, Land Acquisition for Source Water Protection, Salt Storage, Aquatic Connectivity Restoration, and Marine District Habitat Restoration. Eligible Applicants include: Municipalities (eligible for all project types), Soil and Water Conservation Districts (eligible for all project types) and Not-for-Profit Corporations are eligible for Aquatic Connectivity Restoration, Marine District Habitat Restoration, and Land Acquisition for Source Water Protection only. All eligible applicants are encouraged to apply. For more information, view DEC's [WQIP webpage](#).

7/30 deadline: Non-Agricultural Nonpoint Source Planning and MS4 Mapping Grant (NPG):

NPG funds production of planning reports for nonpoint source water quality improvement projects and mapping of Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4). A total of \$3 million is available this round. Eligible grant categories include: 1) Nonpoint Source Planning Reports which include: Decentralized Wastewater Treatment Facilities for Failing On-Site Treatment Systems, Green Infrastructure, Stormwater Retrofits, Streambank/Shoreline Stabilization, In-Waterbody Controls for Nutrients, Bathing Beach Restoration and Stream Culvert Repair and Replacement. 2) MS4 Mapping. Eligible applicants include: Municipalities; Soil and Water Conservation Districts (except for Decentralized Wastewater Treatment Facilities for Failing On-Site Treatment Systems) for Nonpoint Source Planning Reports and Municipalities; Soil and Water Conservation Districts; Regulated traditional MS4s for MS4 Mapping projects. For more details, view DEC's [NPG webpage](#).

7/30 deadline: Climate Smart Communities (CSC):

The CSC Grant Program provides funding for municipalities to address climate change mitigation (reduction of greenhouse gas emissions) and climate change adaptation (reduction of risk associated with climate change hazards) at the local level. Projects are divided into two categories. 1. Implementation: These projects either reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the non- power sector (e.g., transportation, refrigerants, food waste) or reduce risks to residents, infrastructure, and/or natural resources from hazards linked to climate change (e.g., cooling centers, **flood plain restoration, reduction of flood risk**) and 2. Certification: This category includes inventories, assessments, and planning projects that build local capacity to respond to climate change. These projects also move municipalities toward being designated as certified Climate Smart Communities, if they choose to become certified. Up to \$11 million is available this round. All municipalities in New York State are eligible. Visit the [CSC grants page](#) on the DEC website for more info.

TRAININGS and MODEL LEGISLATION

6/9 at 1:00 - Drinking Water Source Water Protection and the Role of Watershed Rules and Regulations: Protecting public drinking water at its source is among the most important aspects of long-term health of a community and yet many communities don't realize how many gaps there are in existing laws that can allow for degradation. Watershed Rules and Regulations (WRRs) allow for specific protections tailored to a water supply's particular risk.

Hear the perspective of Steve Lynch, Director of County Planning for Cayuga County which has completed a multi-year stakeholder process to draft WRRs for Owasco Lake. Martin Daley Director of Water Quality Programs for the Capital District will speak as well as Dan Shapley from Riverkeeper.

[Register here](#)

6/9/2021 3:00 - Soil and Water Conservation District Municipal Assistance Programming – presented by the Black River Watershed.

This Brian Steinmuller, Assistant Director of the NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee (SWCC), will discuss County SWCD municipal assistance programs including stormwater pollution prevention, green infrastructure, North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative (NAAC), stream corridor and floodplain management, forestry management and more. Brian will also discuss how SWCDs and municipalities can cooperate and coordinate programs through Intermunicipal Agreements (IMAs).

[Register here](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_N1FwehH-REq-meTS21U2uw): https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_N1FwehH-REq-meTS21U2uw

NY Department of State – Model Local Laws to Increase Resilience.

The Department of State worked with the Department of Environmental Conservation and other partners to create model local laws to help local governments be more resilient to storms and flooding. Cities, towns, and villages are invited to adapt model local laws to meet the resilience needs of the community with the assistance of their municipal attorneys. [See more information](#) at <https://dos.ny.gov/model-local-laws-increase-resilience>.

Wetlands: Values and Threats

[This webinar](#) discusses an array of wetland types, the ecological, water resource, and carbon storage values of wetlands; threats to wetlands, including threats from climate change; and how to protect wetlands through establishment of buffer zones, stormwater management, and maintaining surrounding natural areas.

Wetlands: Mapping, Identification, and Field Verification

[This webinar](#) discusses existing state and federal wetland maps and how municipalities can use online resources to identify additional wetland locations through the analysis of topographic maps, soils, and aerial photos. The video provides 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.

Wetlands: Regulatory Status and Local Protection Strategies

This presentation was part of a 3-part series. View and [listen to a recording of this excellent presentation](#) on what local governments can do to protect wetlands.

Educational Webinars (provided by a partnership of the DEC's Hudson River Estuary Program and Cornell University)

These webinars are excellent training materials for municipal boards and staff.

- Model Local Laws to Increase Resilience (April 20, 2021) - [webinar recording Part 1 \(Intro to the Community Risk and Resiliency Act\)](#) | [webinar recording Part 2 \(Model Local Laws\)](#) | [Model Local Laws Guidance](#) (leaves DEC website)
- [Critical Environmental Areas \(Mach 23, 2021 webinar recording\)](#) | [CEA Fact Sheet](#) | [CEA Training and Assistance Application](#)
- [Open Space Inventories and Plans \(February 23, 2021 webinar recording\)](#)
- [Natural Resource Inventories \(January 26, 2021 webinar recording\)](#)
- [Streams 101 \(July 23, 2020 webinar recording\)](#)
- [Best Practices for Local Environmental Reviews \(June 17, 2020 webinar recording\)](#)
- [Wetland Conservation \(March 18, 2020 webinar recording\)](#)
- [Stormwater Management \(February 26, 2020 webinar recording\)](#)
- [Biodiversity Conservation \(November 20, 2019 webinar recording\)](#)
- [Conservation Advisory Councils and Boards \(September 25, 2019 webinar recording\)](#)

RESEARCH AND MONITORING

DEC Launches NY Harmful Algal Bloom Notification and Reporting System NYHABS

The DEC is, once again, using an online Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) map and reporting system to inform the public about HABs locations in New York. Dubbed "NYHABS," the reporting system features an interactive map that is updated daily with reports of HABs.

DEC is asking the public and trained algal bloom samplers to [send reports of HABs with photos electronically via a simple, mobile phone-friendly form](#). After DEC and Department of Health (DOH) evaluate the reports, they are posted to [NYHABS](#).

For more information about HABs, visit DEC's [Harmful Algal Blooms \(HABs\) webpage](#). Download the HABs brochure and program guide - which includes information and links to resources regarding bloom prevention, management and control.

NEWS AND REPORTS - from Our Watershed Partners and Stakeholders

Cayuga County – HABs Alert Press Release

The Cayuga County Health Department has issued a press release titled *Harmful Algal Blooms: Know It, Avoid It, Report It*. This is a useful education document applicable to all municipalities within the watershed with very few edits. The full document is attached to the end of this newsletter.

Cayuga County – Minutes from the County Water Quality Management Agency - April

<http://www.cayugacounty.us/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Minutes/04012021-1683>

Tompkins County – Finger Lakes Land Trust Acquisition of Easement on Lounsbery Property Will Help Protect Ithaca’s Water Supply

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and Finger Lakes Land Trust (FLLT) today announced the acquisition of a conservation easement on 126 acres in the town of Caroline in the Six Mile Creek Watershed as part of New York State's Water Quality Improvement Project (WQIP) Program. DEC awarded FLLT more than \$641,000 in a WQIP grant for this and other projects in the Six Mile Creek Watershed to help protect the city of Ithaca's public drinking water supply.

The Lounsbery property covers approximately 48 acres of forested lands and more than nine acres of wetlands. These naturally occurring features contribute to critical source water protection, helping to slow down runoff after storm events, filtering and absorbing pollutants, and reducing drinking water treatment costs. Buffers also provide valuable wildlife habitat.

[See the full press release](#)

Data Solicitation for the 2020/2022 Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 303(d) List

The 303(d) list is a state's list of impaired and threatened waters (e.g. stream/river segments, lakes). States are required to submit their list for EPA approval every two years. For each water on the list, the state identifies the pollutant causing the impairment, when known.

The public is invited to provide water quality data or information. This data solicitation period began May 19, 2021 and will close on September 27, 2021. DEC will then begin compiling a Draft Section 303(d) List, which will be made available for public review and comment in December 2021. States are required to submit their next Section 303(d) Lists to the US Environmental Protection Agency by April 1, 2022. Additional information regarding the Section 303(d) List process can be found in the [May 19th Environmental Notice Bulletin](#) and on [DEC’s website](#).

RELATED WATER NEWS FROM OTHER REGIONS

TMDL for Chesapeake Bay - Update

Cayuga Lake is not the only water body in NY with a TMDL. On May 25, 2021, DEC submitted the Final Amended Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) for the Chemung and Susquehanna River Basins for the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) to the Environmental Protection Agency. The public can view the final plan and appendices on DEC’s [Chesapeake Bay Watershed Program webpage](#).

Seneca Lake Watershed: The DEC and Great Lakes Research Consortium Supports Innovative Projects to Protect Health of the Great Lakes.

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and Syracuse-based Great Lakes Research Consortium (GLRC) today announced \$121,741 in grant awards for five research projects that will help restore and protect the health of New York’s Great Lakes and surrounding communities.

The Seneca Watershed Intermunicipal Organization is awarded \$23,000 to collaborate and evaluate optimizing the design of phosphorus sorption technology for deployment in agricultural settings in the Great Lakes region. In collaboration with the Finger Lakes Institute at HSW, the Yates, Seneca, and Ontario County Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and Seneca Farms Biochar in Odessa, Seneca



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For Immediate Release: Thursday, June 3, 2021

Harmful Algal Blooms: Know It, Avoid It, Report It

As the summer months are approaching, the Cayuga County Health Department would like to remind the public that we can all take steps to prepare ourselves for the presence of Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) on local water bodies and the potential health effects to humans and pets if exposed. Skaneateles, Owasco and Cayuga Lakes all experienced HABs last summer.

Weather influences where harmful algae blooms will occur. With extended periods of calm and sunny days, blooms can accumulate at the surface in any location. Wind and waves may cause them to form along shorelines or in protected areas. Shifts in wind direction can move a bloom from one location to another. Periods of cool rainy weather can often lead to the disappearance of a bloom. There are a few things you can do before and while you are recreating on local lakes to limit your potential exposure to HABs:

KNOW IT

Bodies of water that are discolored with a paint-like or filmy appearance or floating scum should always be avoided as they are potentially harmful. Images of these types of blooms as well as non-harmful blooms can be viewed by visiting: [Harmful Algal Blooms \(HABs\) - NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation](#)

AVOID IT

Always stay away from blooms in lakes or streams. Never swim, fish, boat, wade or eat fish caught in areas with blooms. Bloom or no bloom, never drink, prepare food, cook, or make ice with a private water supply drawn directly from a lake. During a bloom, private water supplies drawn directly from the lake should not be used for showering, bathing, or washing dishes. Public water supplies that draw water from surface water are treated, disinfected and monitored. The public would be notified by the Cayuga County Health Department if public water supplies are adversely impacted by HABs.

REPORT IT

If you think that a bloom may be harmful, report it through the following link: on.ny.gov/habform

If you feel that you or your pets are experiencing symptoms such as diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, irritation of the skin, eyes, or respiratory system due to exposure to a harmful bloom please contact your health care provider or veterinarian. More information regarding harmful algae blooms can be found at www.cayugacounty.us/health. If you have questions or to report any symptoms you think may be related to exposure to harmful algal blooms, contact the Cayuga County Health Department at (315) 253-1560.

Watershed Steward Ian Smith will lead this innovative project to inform the design of field-scale systems that would be USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service-approved best management practices for mitigating phosphorus and HABs.

Pollster Results Show Strong Voter Support of Clean Water Regulations

[A poll](#) of 506 respondents in Erie, Lucas, Ottawa and Sandusky Counties in Northwest Ohio to understand the depth of public knowledge and interest on the causes of Lake Erie algae blooms; the growth of CAFOs and related manure runoff pollution; voters' willingness to support enforceable regulations to reduce agricultural runoff pollution from commercial fertilizers and manure; and the importance of these issues for voters' decisions.

- **93% of voters say access to safe clean water is very important. That's the #1 issue**, ranking above health care, jobs and wages, and COVID-19.
- **Clean water in general is thus as important as ever—and so is cleaning up Lake Erie, specifically.** Asked about cleaning up Lake Erie, a total of 86% say this is very (71%) or fairly (15%) important
- **81% of voters favor putting into place enforceable regulations** to reduce runoff pollution from commercial fertilizers and manure from CAFOs.
- **A majority of voters say this will be a major issue as they consider candidates to support.**

WHO'S WHO IN THE WATERSHED – Focus on the Community Science Institute.

If your municipality helps financially support the Community Science Institute, your money is being well spent. The mission of the Community Science Institute (CSI) is to foster and support environmental monitoring in partnership with community-based volunteer groups in order to better understand our shared natural resources and how to manage them for long-term sustainability and protection.

They do this through:

- Volunteer monitoring partnerships
- Their certified water testing laboratory where they test stream and lake samples for over a dozen parameters of water quality including pathogenic bacteria, nutrients, and sediment.
- Outreach and education using the data collected in the monitoring partnership as well as other scientifically based information.
- Developed a public water quality database with over 80,000 pieces of certified data that can be explored through interactive maps and graphs and used by residents, agencies and local governments.

Their website is a trove of science-based information. [Check it out.](#)