



Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization

Intermunicipal cooperation to protect the watershed

January 26, 2022

The Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization (CWIO)—an organization officially recognized by New York State—encompasses 57 governments that work collaboratively to protect waters within the watershed. CWIO acted on the following resolution on January 26, 2022:

WHEREAS the preservation of rare tracts of undeveloped lands along the shores of Cayuga Lake is important not only for water quality protection, but for habitat preservation and public access; and

WHEREAS Camp Barton is an approximately 130-acre Boy Scout Camp on the steeply sloped west side of Cayuga Lake on a designated Scenic Byway in the Finger Lakes region with nearly 2,600 feet of lake frontage and the scenic Frontenac Creek in the Town of Covert, Seneca County; and

WHEREAS the Baden-Powell Council of the Boy Scouts of America must raise funds very soon by selling land to offset its legal obligations; and

WHEREAS if sold, this property would most likely result in the construction of single-family homes with separate septic systems; and

WHEREAS clearing the natural vegetation from land with steep, wet slopes such as this to accommodate buildings, pavement and drainage requirements often increases surface water runoff and runoff velocity which contributes to both higher amounts of nutrients running into the lake as well as increased erosion and resultant sediments. Preserving the natural existing woodlands more efficiently filters water and slows stormwater runoff; and

WHEREAS emerging patterns of harmful algal blooms (HABs) show that spikes in HABs often occur after high stormwater runoff events; and

WHEREAS, harmful algal blooms (HABs) negatively affect the health and recreational use of Cayuga Lake, and the Community Science Institute (CSI) has documented 102 HABs in Cayuga Lake in 2021 which is a 250% increase since 2018, and CSI also noted that “This year stood out due to the occurrence of widespread bloom events and many ‘late season’ blooms,” and

WHEREAS the Village of Trumansburg has a public drinking water well on the Camp Barton property that supplies public water for the Village of Trumansburg and beyond. Protecting this drinking water source from development is critical to the health of those within the water districts; and

WHEREAS approximately 90% of the Cayuga Lake waterfront is under private ownership and inaccessible to the public, and

WHEREAS Camp Barton is one of the few remaining undeveloped lakeshore properties on Cayuga Lake, and

WHEREAS the Town of Covert in Seneca County and the Town of Ulysses and Village of Trumansburg in Tompkins County have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to pursue alternative solutions, and have sent a letter to Governor Kathy Hochul asking for sufficient funding to purchase the property and protect it for use by the public and the Boy Scouts under joint management by the municipalities; and

WHEREAS the following list of state, local, and non-profit plans and documents support the preservation of Camp Barton as its existing use or one with lower impact;

- Boy Scout land, and specifically Camp Barton, have been identified as a state priority in the NYS DEC's 2016 *Open Space Conservation Plan* and specifically mention "NYS Parks is interested in acquiring this property"(pages 125, 150)¹.
- In the New York State DEC's *Harmful Algal Bloom Action Plan for Cayuga Lake*², the following goals and actions are recommended:
 - Section 13.3.1 Priority 1 Projects, mid-term goal 10 (page 76): "...conserve lands within the watershed to protect and maintain existing buffers..."
 - Section 13.3.2 Priority 2 Projects, section 13.8 Coordination Actions (long-term #2 page 81): "... facilitate acquisitions of conservation easements to implement watershed protection strategies...for water quality protection."
- The Finger Lakes Land Trust lists preservation of undeveloped shoreline as one of the top 10 Conservation Strategies³.
- Two of the goals in the *2017 Cayuga Lake Watershed Restoration and Protection Plan*⁴ is to "preserve open space, wetlands, and riparian areas for effective water quality protection." and to "Protect and expand public access to the lake" (page 16).
- "Recommendations for Action and Next Steps" in the *2017 Cayuga Lake Watershed Restoration and Protection Plan*⁴ (pg 20) are "identifying and preserving critical resource areas." and "Encourage state and local efforts to provide public access to the lake and its tributaries."
- The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation's draft *Total Maximum Daily Load for Phosphorus in Cayuga Lake (TMDL)*⁵ lists section 7.8.3 Land Conservation (page 79) as part of the recommended phosphorus management strategies.

Now therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization hereby requests that Governor Kathy Hochul include funding in the NYS 2022 budget for the purchase of this unique, natural resource and supports management of the property by the municipalities, thereby protecting it from development and environmental degradation for future generations, and further

RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Honorable New York State Governor Kathy Hochul, the Honorable New York State Senators Pamela Helming, Tom O'Mara, Peter Oberacker, the Honorable New York State Assemblyperson Anna Kelles, NYS Senate Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Assembly Leader Carl Heastie, the New York State Commissioner of Parks, Recreation, and Historic

¹ https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/lands_forests_pdf/osp2016final1.pdf

² https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/water_pdf/cayugahabplan.pdf

³ <https://www.flit.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/FLLT-Bookletlo-res.pdf>

⁴ https://www.cayugalake.org/wp-content/uploads/clwrpp_2017_final_4_30_17.pdf

⁵ [https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/water_pdf/draftcayugatmdl\(1\).pdf](https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/water_pdf/draftcayugatmdl(1).pdf)

Preservation, Erik Kulleseid, New York State Association of Counties, the Towns of Covert and Ulysses and the Village of Trumansburg.

Vote

Moved by: Elizabeth Thomas – Chair and Town of Ulysses

Seconded by: Kent Hubble – Village of Cayuga Heights

Vote:

ayes: Michael Allinger – Supervisor, Town of Newfield

Jackie Cassaniti, Town of Caroline

Tony Del Plato, Village of Interlaken

Carolyn Greenwald, Village of Lansing

Kent Hubble, Village of Cayuga Heights

Margaret Johnson, Town of Ithaca

Roxanna Johnston, City of Ithaca

Darby Kiley, Tompkins County

Stephanie Redmond, Town of Enfield

Mitchell Rowe, Seneca County

Don Slocum, Town of Genoa

Elizabeth Thomas, Town of Ulysses

Michael Reynolds, Town of Covert

Tom Vawter, Town of Lansing

nays: none

abstentions: none

Date: January 26, 2022

Submitted by: *Elizabeth G. Thomas* on behalf of the Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization



c/o Town of Ithaca

215 N. Tioga Street

Ithaca, NY 14850

607-279-0675

liz.graeper.thomas@gmail.com



