



Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization
(CWIO)



News **February 2023**

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Summary of Recent CWIO Activities

- CWIO Learns About Ditches.** Dr. Rebecca Schneider presented to CWIO about the interaction between ditches and water quality of the lakes and tributaries and the role municipalities and their Highway Departments have in protecting water.

Ditch resources for your municipality to understand and implement to help in our shared efforts to protect water quality:

[Re-Plumbing Roadside Ditches in the Finger Lakes](#) –Presented by Dr. Rebecca Schneider, organized by the Finger Lakes Land Trust

[Guidelines for Municipal Maintenance of Roadside Ditches](#) – from the Cayuga County Water Quality Management Agency.

[Ditching Best Management Practices](#) (BMPs) – by David Orr, Director of the Cornell Local Roads Program

[Roadway and Right-of-Way Maintenance](#) – NYS DEC. This document is from 1997 but has some good guidelines too.

- Next CWIO Meeting:** Wednesday, March 22 at 7:00 by zoom.
- CWIO activities of late:**

- The project team for the roadside ditch improvement in the Town of Ulysses continues to meet and fine-tune the project goals and timeline.
- Another ditch project in the watershed which takes place in Seneca County and is led by the Seneca Lake Steward, Ian Smith, has also progressed with the project team meeting to discuss methodologies and timelines for additional data collection and deliverables.
- The Watershed Manager held a kickoff meeting with students from Cornell's master's in public administration (MPA) class which will build on previous work carried out by students from Cornell's CIPA class in 2021. This project looks to fill in the gaps of that work and look into additional local water resource protection laws and ordinances in order to provide further guidance and address planning goals and actions set forth in watershed plans.
- The Watershed Manager met with members and partners in Cayuga County and Tompkins County to discuss possible projects related to stream restoration, erosion control and shoreline stabilization.
- The Technical Advisory Committee is working to finish the project ranking matrix that will be used to score projects ideas submitted by CWIO municipalities and our partners within the watershed.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES and FUNDED WORK

3/1/23 1:00 - Navigating Grant Funding: Municipal Success Stories

Hear about successful strategies to access and manage grant funding from your peers. This webinar will highlight strategies from municipalities of various sizes, across New York State, have used to secure grant funding. Municipalities will share information such as how they access grant funds, what barriers they've had to overcome, lessons learned, the skill sets needed, and who are the key players necessary to access grant funding. [Register here](#)¹.

NYS DEC Offers New *Funding Finder*

The tool enables grant seekers to filter grant opportunities based on criteria that meets their specific needs. [Download the file here](#). See the [user guide here](#).

3/1/23 NY Sea Grant and DEC Grants Available to Support Great Lakes Action Agenda Projects

New York Sea Grant, in partnership with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), has funding available for projects that apply an ecosystem-based management approach to address local watershed challenges. Projects will implement the goals of [New York's Great Lakes Action Agenda](#) and address actions specifically identified in locally supported plans pertaining to water quality, natural resources, or sustainable land uses. A total of \$460,000, with up to \$50,000 per project, in New York Great Lakes Basin Small Grants will be awarded.

County and local government or public agencies, municipalities, and regional planning and environmental commissions, not-for-profit organizations, and educational institutions are eligible to apply.

Applications are due by 4:30 p.m. EST on March 1, 2023; [instructions](#) are online at the New York Sea Grant website. Read the [full press release](#)².

2/28/23: 2023 Household Hazardous Waste Grant Program Accepting Applications

The NYS DEC is offering a grant opportunity to reimburse eligible applicants up to 50% of the costs of holding household hazardous waste (HHW) collections programs. Household hazardous wastes are materials found in household waste that would be regulated as hazardous waste if they were generated at a business or industrial site like, pesticides, automotive fluids, home hobby chemicals, and compact fluorescent bulbs.

¹ <https://meetny.webex.com/webex/register/r67136d86c6e6c72040e37d00a8fbef87>

² <https://www.dec.ny.gov/press/press.html>

Eligible applicants include counties, cities, towns, or villages, local public authorities and public benefit corporations, school districts, supervisory districts, improvement districts, Native American Tribes or Nations residing in NYS, and any combination of the above. There is no minimum award amount, and the maximum award amount is \$2,000,000.

Applications are due by 3:00 p.m. EST on February 28th, 2023; Find more on instructions for [how to apply](#)³ or reach out to RecyclingGrants@dec.ny.gov or 518-402-8678.

4/7/23 - DEC Announces Annual 'Buffer in a Bag' Program: Free Seedlings Available to Qualified Landowners for Streamside Plantings

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Basil Seggos today announced that the application period for the Trees for Tribes' "Buffer in a Bag" program is now open. Qualifying private and public landowners may apply for a free bag of 25 tree and shrub seedlings for planting near streams, rivers, or lakes to help stabilize banks, protect water quality, combat climate change, and improve wildlife habitat.

Applications are due by 3 p.m. on April 7, 2023. Contact treesfortribs@dec.ny.gov with questions or visit DEC's [Trees for Tribes webpage](#) to learn more.

Biden-Harris Administration Announces \$2 Billion in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Funding to States and Territories to Address Emerging Contaminants like PFAS in Drinking Water

The administration announced the availability of \$2 billion from President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) to address emerging contaminants, like Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) in drinking water across the country. This investment, which is allocated to states and territories, will be made available to communities as grants through EPA's Emerging Contaminants in Small or Disadvantaged Communities (EC-SDC) Grant Program. [See more on the program.](#)

Regenerate New York Forestry Cost Share Grant Program: Funding for Private Landowners to Grow the Forests of the Future.

Round 3 of this program to support the regeneration of forests on private lands will be open soon. Keep watch for grant release dates and learn more at their [website](#).

TRAINING, WATERSHED PLANNING, MODEL LAWS, POLICIES

Learning Modules on Hazard Mitigation Planning and Water Resource Management.

The US Environmental Protection Agency has a new Hazard Mitigation Planning and Water Resource Management Module. Those who are interested in integrating water quality issues and/or nature-based solutions into state or local Hazard Mitigation Plans (HMPs) are encouraged to use this resource. [Visit the site](#)⁴ to begin the course.

4/20 8am-noon - NYSDEC Endorsed 4-Hour Erosion & Sediment Control Training

Need this training for your municipal staff or boards? [Register here.](#)

³ https://grantsgateway.ny.gov/intelligrants_NYSGG/module/nysgg/goportals.aspx?NavItem1=4&ngoid=5002343

⁴ <https://www.epa.gov/watershedacademy/hazard-mitigation-module>

MONITORING and RESEARCH

3/11/23 9:00-noon – Bob Brower Symposium: Climate Change Impacts on Watersheds

Hosted by the Owasco Watershed Lake Association (OWLA), this hybrid meeting is offered in person at the Auburn Public Theater or by zoom. [Register here](#). Topics:

- ∞ Climate Change Basics - Matthew Marko, Director, NYS DEC Region 7
- ∞ Status of Owasco Lake from Monitoring Data 2022 - Dr. John Halfman, Professor, Hobart William Smith Colleges, and Research Scientist, Finger Lakes Institute.
- ∞ Behavioral Science of Agricultural Practice Change - Katri Haantera, Senior Behavioral Scientist, and Marissa Jordan, Evidn
- ∞ The Value of Long-Term Lake Monitoring - Dr. Andrew Brainard, Senior Research Scientist, Upstate Freshwater Institute.
- ∞ Invasive species and emerging contaminants that impact our water quality.

3/16/23 7:30: Threats to Our Forests by Invasive Species

Healthy forests help to keep streams and waterbodies healthy too. The Finger Lakes Land Trust is hosting a presentation to hear more about the threats to forests throughout the Finger Lakes. [See more and register](#).

4/4/23 at 7:30: Harmful Algal Blooms in the Finger Lakes

The Finger Lakes Land Trust is hosting Lisa Cleckner, Director of the Finger Lakes Institute at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, for a presentation on recent research and monitoring programs focused on harmful algal blooms across New York as well as the environmental health implications for humans and other organisms. [More information and registration](#).

4/27/23 4:00-6:00 - The Salt Mine Under the Lake: What are the Risks and Options?

Save the date: Professor Raymond Vaughan, Professional Geologist and Environmental Scientist will present on this topic at the Tompkins County Library. Sponsored by Cayuga Lake Environmental Action Now ([CLEAN](#))

2022 Water Quality Monitoring Report for Owasco Lake

See both the [slides](#) and [monitoring report](#)⁵ for Owasco Lake. Both have good information in this that is applicable to Cayuga Lake as well.

Evaluation of a Method for Water Quality Monitoring by Citizen Scientists using Benthic Macroinvertebrates

The program's creator, Alene Onion, recently published a methods article documenting the Water Assessments by Volunteer Evaluators ([WAVE](#)) [program's methods](#)⁶ at the DEC.

⁵ <http://people.hws.edu/halfman/Data/Halfman%202022%20Owasco%20Water%20Quality%20Report.pdf>

⁶ https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/NYSDEC/2023/02/03/file_attachments/2400136/s00267-022-01753-1.pdf

NEWS AND REPORTS

Cayuga Lake Watershed:

The 2022 Community Science Institute (CSI) Water Bulletin

[This bulletin](#)⁷ from CSI has a great article explaining the Clean Water Act history and the important role the public has in making sure the act is enforced. In addition, read about the impacts of drought on monitoring efforts, the impact of weather on Harmful Algal Blooms, and more.

CSI January Update

[Read the CSI articles](#)⁸ about how deicers affect water quality, updates on their monitoring program, and how to volunteer which is important because this organization uses lots of volunteer labor.

Finger Lakes Land Trust Adds to Bell Station Lands

Thanks to the work of many partners concerned about the watershed, the FLLT acquired the Bell Station Lands in Lansing in 2022. And now they are working to build on that by adding a tract of land called Cedar View. [See the short video](#) which explains more.

Cayuga County (Owasco, Cayuga and Skaneateles Lakes)

Cayuga County Water Quality Management Agency (WQMA) Annual Report 2022

The Cayuga County Water Quality Management Agency issued its 2022 Annual Report highlighting the work including:

- a new boat cleaning station to help reduce the spread of invasive aquatic weeds,
- their robust work at fighting invasive species that impact the lake,
- continued work on their inventory of culverts within the watershed,
- increase awareness of water issues via their newsletters/blogs/social media/website,
- assistance with a nutrient-treating septic system at camp Y-Owasco,
- Cayuga County Planning provided training to Planners on the prevention of sedimentation and erosion considerations within zoning codes,
- progress on adding storm water pollution prevention plan (SWPPP) to the project approval process,
- assistance with the transfer of ownership of the Fillmore Nature Preserve—land that when preserved helps protect water quality,
- highlighted agricultural producers using Best Management Practices that are water protective.
- review developing educational brochures for homeowners to encourage Best Management Practices (BMP) that are water protective,
- maintenance of the demonstration rain garden in Emerson Park
- and more!

Seneca and Keuka Lake Watersheds

Ontario County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Annual Report.

This Ontario County Soil and Water Conservation District [Annual Report for 2022 is available](#) and includes articles on

- ∞ Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Treatment and Outreach,
- ∞ 2022 Achievements (wow!),
- ∞ Completed new Manure Storage,
- ∞ Water and Sediment Control Basins Completed,
- ∞ Check out their projects page on their website,
- ∞ Agricultural Outreach and Education Goals,

⁷ <http://www.communityscience.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Final-2022-Water-Bulletin.pdf>

⁸ <https://mailchi.mp/f7a4cf3ff750/csi-monthly-update-november-5384645>

- ∞ Canandaigua Lake Watershed Inspection Program Report.

Skaneateles Lake Watershed

Skaneateles Lake Association – January News and Accomplishments

See the Skaneateles Lake Association [January news](#)⁹. Highlights include reports on their monitoring program and invasive species prevention, as well as:

SLA and key partners established a Four Pillar plan to address HABs

- ∞ Promote a Watershed Wide Intergovernmental Organization
- ∞ Empower Lake Protection through Community Outreach & Education
- ∞ Establish a Water Quality Protection Fund that helps address HABs - the SLA Legacy Fund
- ∞ Form a Nutrient Management Committee to reduce impacts of HABs

And an outline of their watershed improvement projects:

- ∞ Working on nutrient reduction strategies - supported through Onondaga County.
- ∞ Exploring Fisher Brook as upcoming candidate for a nutrient reduction project based on data provided by Syracuse University showing comparatively higher levels of phosphorous.
- ∞ Receiving \$45,000.00 from Great Lakes Commission for sediment & nutrient reduction efforts on Willow Creek.
- ∞ Identified \$66 million in potential projects and submitted as part of Clean Watershed Needs Survey hosted by the Environmental Facilities Corporation

Nine Element Plan - a memo is being drafted for the Watershed Advisory Committee giving an overview of best management practice scenarios in watershed management.

Great Lakes

The World's 'Great Lakes' are Exhibit A for Why Wetlands Matter

World Wetlands Day celebrates the ability of wetlands to preserve important freshwater lakes, which is critical to the Great Lakes basin and the 30 million people who live around them. [Read the full story](#)¹⁰.

Road salt, a stealthy pollutant, is damaging Michigan's waters

It's no mystery where most salts are coming from. Water softeners and fertilizers are sources of chloride, but the major contributor, are the salts spread on roads, parking lots, and sidewalks to keep the pavement free from ice. A little salt can cause a lot of harm to waterways. The U.S. EPA recommends water quality standards for rivers and lakes to prevent death and damage to fish, mussels, insects, and other aquatic species. [Read the full story](#)¹¹.

Lake Erie algae in 2022 worse than predicted.

A year-end [report](#)¹² from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) said that Lake Erie algae blooms were more severe than expected due to an increase in algae biomass that fostered Microcystis blooms.

⁹ <https://mailchi.mp/7e8e414a4603/sla-january2023?e=59a52d2bfc>

¹⁰ <https://www.cleveland.com/opinion/2023/02/on-world-wetlands-day-the-worlds-great-lakes-are-exhibit-a-for-why-wetlands-matter-ted-lawrence.html>

¹¹ <https://www.michiganradio.org/environment-climate-change/2023-01-26/road-salt-a-stealthy-pollutant-is-damaging-michigans-waters>

¹² <https://www.monroenews.com/story/news/local/2023/02/01/lake-erie-algae-in-2022-worse-than-predicted/69858414007/>

New York

New York sets 2030 conservation goal to conserve land and water.

Governor Kathy Hochul signed legislation in December 2022 that establishes the goal to support and contribute to national efforts to conserve at least 30% of U.S. land and water by 2030. This legislation will promote biodiversity and preserve wildlife, forests, and clean water sources, which are all essential to New York's health and economy.

Legislation S.6191A/A.5390B establishes the goal and requires the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation to develop strategies and a methodology to achieve the goal while collaborating with a broad group of stakeholders. These efforts will build on the State's existing conservation efforts.

Ten NYS Communities Completed Action Plans to Protect Their Drinking Water Source in 2022

Over the past 12 months, 65 municipalities in New York have been developing action-oriented, community-driven Drinking Water Source Protection Program (DWSP2) plans to protect their drinking water sources. Ten of these communities completed their plans, received formal acceptance from DEC and the Department of Health, and are moving forward to implement their identified actions.

Communities that participate in DWSP2 receive free technical assistance to update their source water maps, assess potential contaminants in their watershed, identify effective actions to address those potential contaminant sources, and implement their source water protection actions. In doing so, **these communities are becoming more competitive for future funding opportunities** and better prepared to stay at the forefront of public health.

DWSP2 is currently offering open enrollment into the program, which includes free technical assistance. Visit DEC's [DWSP2 webpage](#)¹³ for more information or contact source.water@dec.ny.gov.

Find Water-Related Information on the DEC Information Locator

DEC's online *DECinfo Locator* tool provides access to DEC documents and public data about the environment and outdoor recreation resources.

Water-related data layers:

- ∞ Wastewater Facilities (SPDES permits).
- ∞ Water Withdrawal Annual Reports.
- ∞ Dams and Associated Regulatory Program Data.
- ∞ Water Inventory/Priority Waterbody List (WI/PWL).
- ∞ Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs).
- ∞ Regulatory Tidal Wetlands.
- ∞ Water-Related Activities (such as boat launches and fishing access sites).

To learn more and access the mapping application, visit the [DECinfo Locator webpage](#)¹⁴.

NYSDEC highlights accomplishments in Great Lake watersheds across New York

See [the DEC report](#)¹⁵ on their work across the Great Lakes in New York and their watersheds. The most recent report highlights work done on the Genesee River to help reduce phosphorus pollution caused by runoff and other sources, among other projects.

¹³ <https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/115250.html>

¹⁴ <https://www.dec.ny.gov/pubs/109457.html>

¹⁵ <https://www.rochesterfirst.com/environment/nysdec-highlights-accomplishments-in-great-lake-watersheds-across-new-york/>

FEDERAL

EPA Announces Plans for Wastewater Regulations and Studies, Including Limits for PFAS, New Study for Nutrients

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has just released Effluent Guidelines Program Plan 15 (Plan 15), which lays out how the Agency will work to protect the nation's waterways by following the science and the Clean Water Act to develop technology-based pollution limits and studies on wastewater discharges from industrial sources.

Of interest in the Finger Lakes:

- ∞ a new study of publicly owned treatment works (POTW) influents to characterize the PFAS concentrations from industrial dischargers to POTWs and inform implementation of pretreatment programs to address them; and
- ∞ a new study on concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) to make an informed, reasoned decision on whether to undertake rulemaking to revise the ELGs for CAFOs.

[Read the entire press release.](#)¹⁶

EPA considers tougher regulations on livestock farm pollution

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency says it will study whether to toughen regulation of large livestock farms that release manure and other pollutants into waterways. Runoff of waste and fertilizers from the operations — and from croplands where manure is spread — fouls streams, rivers and lakes. It's a leading cause of algae blooms that create hazards in many waterways and dead zones in the Gulf of Mexico and Lake Erie. [Read the full story](#)¹⁷.

EPA Announces Financial Capability Guidance to Support Communities and Ensure Clean, Affordable Water

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced its updated [Clean Water Act Financial Capability Assessment \(FCA\) Guidance](#) to help communities ensure public health protections and financial feasibility as they make plans to comply with the Clean Water Act (CWA). The Guidance outlines strategies for communities to follow to support affordable rates while planning investments in water infrastructure essential to protecting our Nation's waters.

¹⁶ <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-announces-plans-wastewater-regulations-and-studies-including-limits-pfas-new-study>

¹⁷ <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/economy/epa-considers-tougher-regulations-on-livestock-farm-pollution>