



**REGULAR MEETING
CAYUGA LAKE WATERSHED INTERMUNICIPAL ORGANIZATION
WEDNESDAY, June 28, 2023 @ 7:00 via Zoom**

AGENDA

1. **Call to order.**
2. **Consider approval of Minutes, Financial Report, and Bills.**
Resolution to approve minutes and finance report.
RESOLVED that the CWIO approves the minutes of their 4/26/23 meeting and accepts the financial report ending 4/30/23 with a balance of \$253,339.83.
3. **Presentation: Community Science Institute** – Grascen Shidemantle
4. **Rural Communities Assistance Partnership** – Becky Sims (10-15 min)
5. **Draft Solid Waste Management Plan comments** – Roxy Johnston
 - See more about the draft plan at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/41831.html>
 - Resolution authorizing submission of comment letter.**
RESOLVED that the CWIO voting membership authorizes the comments letter regarding the draft Solid Waste Management Plan presented and discussed at the 6/28/23 CWIO meeting to be submitted to the DEC.
6. Chair Report
7. Committee Reports
 - a. Executive Committee
 - b. Education, Public Participation and Outreach Committee (EPPOC).
 - c. Technical Advisory Committee
 - d. State Outreach
8. Reports from Partners (Partner organizations are encouraged to give a short report of activities pertaining to water quality. For a significant time on the CWIO agenda, please contact CWIOchair@gmail.com in advance)
 - a. County Water Quality Advisory Committees (WQCC in Seneca, WRC in Tompkins, WQMA in Cayuga)
 - b. County Planning Departments
 - c. County Health Departments
 - d. County Soil and Water Conservation Service Offices
 - e. County Parks Departments
 - f. County Highway Departments
 - g. County Cornell Cooperative Extensions
 - h. County Legislators or Board of Supervisor Representatives
 - i. Individual Municipalities (elected or staff)
 - j. Cayuga Lake Watershed Network (CLWN)
 - k. Community Science Institute (CSI)
 - l. Finger Lakes Land Trust
 - m. Cayuga Lake Environmental Action Now (CLEAN)
 - n. Discover Cayuga Lake
 - o. Other Finger Lakes Intermunicipal Organizations or Associations
 - p. Finger Lakes Institute (FLI)
 - q. Finger Lakes PRISM (Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management)
 - r. NYS Water Resource Institute
 - s. Finger Lakes Water Hub

t. The Nature Conservancy

9. General Announcements

10. Adjournment



Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization (CWIO)

Wednesday, May 24, 2023

Held VIA ZOOM

Minutes

Members, Associate Members, and Ex-Officio Members Present: Susan Ainslie, Jackie Cassaniti, Tony DelPlato, Laurie Ervay, Kent Hubble, Margaret Johnson, Roxy Johnston, Darby Kiley, Robert Meek, Gary Mutchler, Kelly O'Hara, Stephanie Redmond, Mitch Rowe, Don Slocum, Dave Sprout, Liz Thomas, Michele Wunderlich.

Staff: Erin Norris

Stakeholders, Partners, and Committee Members Present: Doug Barnes, Michael Boggs, Grascen Shidemantle, Liz Kreitinger, Rebecca Minas, Bud Shattuck,

Agenda Item 1: call to order

Agenda Item 2: Resolution to approve minutes and monthly financial report

RESOLVED that the CWIO approves the minutes of their 4/26/23 meeting and accepts the financial report ending 4/30/23 with a balance of \$253,339.83.

Moved by: Don Slocum, Seconded by: Susan Ainslie Vote: unanimous in favor.

Agenda item 3: Presentation: Cayuga Lake Watershed Network -Liz Kreitinger, Lake Steward and Executive Director of the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network

Liz K had a presentation including their Mission Statement, information on their robust distribution list of ~1000 because "it takes a network to protect a watershed." There are 14 members on the CWLN board with 4 open seats which they are looking for those interested in water quality to fill. CLWN sees good opportunities to work together with CWIO. CLWN education and outreach efforts include frequent emails to their list, their newsletter titled "Network News", articles in news outlets, a comprehensive website, and community conferences and public events. Their James C. While Memorial Prize" went to Tom Casella this year for his volunteer work on the lake. Their "Dave Morehouse Award" will be announced soon.

Some of the CLWN programs include "Lake Friendly Living", "Embrace the Lake" cleanups, the HABs Monitoring Program, and Hydrilla Outreach and Education. They will soon celebrate CLWN's 25th Anniversary.

See more about CLWN at their website: cayugalake.org.

Agenda item 4: Appointment of Representative to Cayuga County WQMA

Resolution Recommending an Appointment to the Cayuga County WQMA from Watershed-Wide Organizations

RESOLVED that both the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network and the CWIO recommend the appointment of Keith Batman to the Cayuga County Water Quality Management Agency.

Moved by: Dave Sprout, Seconded by: Roxy Johnston Vote: unanimous in favor.

Agenda item 5: Risks from Salt Mining Under the Lake – Stephanie Redmond, Town Supervisor for Enfield, and member of CLEAN (Cayuga Lake Environmental Action Now).

Stephanie gave an overview of the CLEAN presentation given in April about their concerns and data illustrating potential risks to Cayuga Lake from the salt mine under the lake. The talk was presented by Dr. Raymond Vaughan and sponsored by Cayuga Lake Environmental Action Now (CLEAN). The video is available here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eooiq_Az1Cg. Much more information is available at the CLEAN website: <https://cleancayugalake.org>

Agenda item 6: Watershed Manager Report – Erin Norris

Erin’s May report is available online here: <https://cwio.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Watershed-Manager-Executive-Summary-May-2023.pdf>

Agenda Item 7 – Chair Report

- The CWIO Project Submission page is now open. Submitted project ideas are due by October 1. Proposed projects will then be ranked by either the CWIO Technical Advisory Committee or the Education, Public Participation, and Outreach Committee in the fall/winter. ANYONE can submit a project idea—munis, ngos, individuals, hoping strong participation by county depts such as SWCDs, Planning, health, and WQCCs.
- The letter approved by CWIO requesting completion of the TMDL was mailed to state contacts and representatives. CWIO and CLWN will be meeting in June with State Senator Lea Webb to discuss the TMDL more details.
- Liz is increasing direct outreach to County Legislators.
- Dues reminder letters were sent out in May. As of mid-May the dues income for 2023 was had \$30, 689 with a target of \$67,500 if 100% of the municipalities contributed.
- Liz reminded the membership that her 3-year term as Chair expires in 2023.
- Drafting of a Finger Lakes Action Agenda is proposed for the Finger Lakes Region. We don’t have much information yet, but will be able to comment once a draft is available.

Agenda Item 8 - Committee Reports

Executive Committee –

Executive Committee – They have decided to have the August CWIO meeting in person in the Village of Cayuga and possibly meet at a winery afterwards. The bylaws say CWIO should have 3 in-person meeting a year. The October meeting will be in-person in the Seneca County Community Room on 10/25 from 9am-12, including lunch. (More information to come.)

Agenda Item 9: Reports from Partners

- Cayuga County Water Quality Management Agency (WQMA): Michele Wunderlich – The legislation to have a monitoring buoy in Owasco Lake passed.
- CSI: Grascen said CSI also sent a letter to NYS about the TMDL for Cayuga Lake. They want to monitor 75% of Cayuga Lake for HAB’s, so they need more volunteers at the top of the lake.
- Tompkins County Health Department - Doug Barnes said the septic system and well sessions trainings filled up in 3 days, so they will try to expand that later.
- Darby said Rebecca Snyder shared a brochure her students developed about lead in drinking water. Darby will send the link.

Submitted by Jackie Cassaniti and Liz Thomas



Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization

Intermunicipal cooperation to protect the watershed.

June 14, 2023

Dear ____,

The Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization (CWIO) was formed as part of a state funded watershed management planning process whose mission is to:

Bring local governments in the Cayuga Lake watershed together to work collectively and collaboratively with partner agencies and organizations to monitor, protect, and restore water quality throughout the watershed in the face of a changing world.

Guided by planning documents, we identify and advance projects that will benefit water quality, assist local municipalities in accessing state funding, build project partnerships, and coordinate communications and water preservation efforts between the 57 municipalities that are part of the watershed and other water quality stakeholders.

Regarding the draft Solid Waste Management Plan:

CWIO wholeheartedly supports the move towards a circular economy. A fresh and innovative look at our waste streams to maximize opportunities for reduction, reuse, recycling, and even extraction of value from waste streams, are important steps towards creating a sustainable economy.

We do not support the goal of increasing land application of biosolids as described in the draft Solid Waste Management Plan. Biosolids are known sources of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) contamination. There is extensive knowledge regarding PFAS exposure and negative human health outcomes. There can also be negative impacts for farms where biosolids application leads to PFAS contamination of the soil or farm products. Maine's Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry¹, has a program to "support farmers facing PFAS contamination and to help them remain *viable*. Achieving that goal can be time-consuming, resource intensive, and costly" to the farmer. New York has no such program.

The draft Solid Waste Management Plan acknowledges that biosolids are a source of PFAS contamination. It references EPA's effort to determine safe levels and New York's work with

¹ <https://www.maine.gov/dacf/ag/pfas/index.shtml#impact>

SUNY ESF to quantify PFAS in biosolids. These are important steps but do not reduce contamination occurring from biosolid applications occurring now.

Considering the demonstrated negative impacts of PFAS on human health and agricultural operations, it is unwise to continue to apply biosolids to any land without testing and treatment to remove the risk of PFAS contamination.

We request the state suspend all land application of biosolids until they can be tested and determined to be free from PFAS contamination. We realize that this would increase biosolids landfilling and would not remove PFAS from the waste stream. It would, however, take this source of PFAS out of direct contact with our crops. It would also reduce PFAS contamination of our streams and lakes from runoff from agricultural lands. Pausing biosolid land application would provide time for New York to pass legislation banning the use of these compounds in manufacturing and give researchers time to develop viable treatment technologies to remove them from our waste streams.

CWIO supports the *PFAS discharge disclosure act*, Bill A03296, currently under consideration, but would ask for more. The proposed monitoring of New York State permitted (SPDES) discharges will help identify PFAS sources. It will also help downstream communities make informed decisions about the quality and usability of their water resources. It does not, however, provide an expedited path to reducing or removing PFAS from SPDES discharges. Many of the SPDES dischargers who will be subject to this bill are publicly owned municipal wastewater treatment facilities or small privately operated wastewater systems. As currently written, this bill will put the financial burden for testing on taxpayers and small treatment plant operators, not the polluters. Also, most of these facilities do not have the capability to treat PFAS. The required treatment upgrades will take years to complete and cost millions of dollars. The public has a right to know where PFAS are concentrating in their environment. However, providing that information without robust financial and administrative support from the state to remediate PFAS contamination would be a disservice to the public and the utilities.

We suggest the state initiate the following efforts prior to any increase in land application of biosolids:

- Identify the originating sources of PFAS contamination and stop that input.
- Pass legislation banning the use of PFAS in manufacturing and in products sold in New York.
- Development treatment technologies that are economically viable to remove PFAS from our wastewater discharges and drinking water systems.
- Develop a rapid response program that provides financial and technical support for treatment upgrades to wastewater utilities who discover PFAS in their effluent and to drinking water utilities who discover PFAS in their source water or finished product.

The draft Solid Waste Management Plan includes recommendations for monitoring, research, and legislations actions in its goals. Actionable dates extend into the 2030's. We request that the actions listed above be put in place prior to considering increased land application of biosolids.

CWIO applauds the state in their vision to reimagine waste and move towards a circular economy. With respect to biosolids though, we believe the goal of increasing land application without first removing the risk of PFAS contamination is counterproductive. Minimizing the spread of contaminants is the best way to reduce the cost of treating wastewater and the best way to protect downstream drinking water sources. It is also an excellent way to protect human health. We ask the state to alter their approach to biosolids and make an investment in stopping the sources of PFAS, developing viable/affordable treatment technologies, and expediting implementation of those technologies where they are needed.

With great respect and appreciation,

Elizabeth G. Thomas

Chair, Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization (CWIO)
c/o Town of Ithaca
215 N. Tioga Street
Ithaca, NY 14850
607-279-0675
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NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

Division of Water, Bureau of Water Resource Management
625 Broadway, Albany, New York 12233-3508
P: (518) 402-8086 | F: (518) 402-9029
www.dec.ny.gov

Tompkins County Water Resources Council
121 East Court St
Ithaca, N.Y. 14850

May 15, 2023

Dear Cynthia Brock:

Thank you for your letter to Commissioner Seggos about your concerns regarding water quality and the development of the Cayuga Lake TMDL.

In 2002, the Cayuga Lake Southern End segment was listed on the NYSDEC Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 303(d) list of impaired waterbodies due to phosphorus impairment. Consequently, a TMDL for phosphorus was drafted for Cayuga Lake in its entirety, to address this impairment on the Southern End and protect the remaining lake areas. Water quality monitoring and subsequent Cayuga Lake model was completed in 2013 and submitted to DEC in 2017. The draft Cayuga Lake TMDL was released for a 90-day public comment period in April 2021, during which time the DEC received over 500 public comments and suggestions. The review and response to public comments is currently ongoing. The TMDL is anticipated to be finalized this summer.

The pollutant of concern for the Cayuga Lake TMDL is total phosphorus. The TMDL was developed according to Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 303(d) which requires states to develop a TMDL for a waterbody/segment that does not meet the water quality standard for a specific pollutant. TMDLs identify sources of the pollutant of concern and include appropriate loading reductions of the identified pollutant so that the waterbody/segment will meet water quality standards, defined as the targets in the TMDL.

Currently, Cayuga Lake has two additional planning and research documents available to address harmful algal blooms (HABs) or other water quality concerns: (1) the Cayuga Lake HABs Action Plan (https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/water_pdf/cayugahabplan.pdf), and (2) the Cayuga Lake Watershed Restoration and Protection Plan (<https://www.cayugalake.org/the-watershed/restoration-protection-plan/>).

The HABs Action Plan for Cayuga Lake, published in 2018, identified the contributing factors that can fuel algal blooms, implementation recommendations, and new monitoring and treatment technologies. Grant applications that propose eligible projects that support the recommendations from HABs Action Plans receive priority points in several current NYS grant programs, including the Water Quality Improvement Project (WQIP) Program (<https://www.dec.ny.gov/pubs/4774.html>).



The Cayuga Lake HABs Action Plan implementation has been utilized to secure funding from various grants since its publication. Additionally, many of the phosphorus reduction recommendations in the draft TMDL echo the recommendations identified in the HAB Action Plan.

Substantial watershed implementation progress has been made in the Cayuga Lake watershed since the completion of the Cayuga Lake Model. Since 2013, numerous best management practice (BMP) and mitigation projects, totaling more than \$25 million dollars have been implemented throughout the Cayuga Lake watershed to improve or protect water quality. Projects include agricultural nutrient BMPs, land acquisition for the protection of source water, streambank stabilization, culvert replacements, ditch hydroseeding, septic pump outs, and sediment and erosion control practices. Detailed project summaries can be found in annual Regional Economic Development Council Awards booklets (2022 example: <https://regionalcouncils.ny.gov/2022-awards>).

Please note, the above summary of implementation progress does not include substantial NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets (DAM) funding to the Soil & Water Conservation Districts for implementation of the Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) program, the implementation of numerous agricultural BMPs on local farms through other state or federal grant programs, the funds distributed through the Finger Lakes - Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance (FOLLOWPA) for the six counties within the Cayuga Lake watershed, or the successful DEC-Agriculture and Markets eastern cover crops program.

DEC has monitoring programs designed to monitor and evaluate water quality in the lake and its watershed (Rotating Integrated Basin Studies (RIBS) program: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/30951.html>). Data from DEC's monitoring programs are available at the Division of Water (DOW) Online Monitoring Portal (<https://nysdec.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=692b72ae03f14508a0de97488e142ae1>). Since 2017, the DEC's volunteer citizen lake-science program, Citizens Statewide Lake Assessment Program (CSLAP), has been active in multiple locations in Cayuga Lake. As part of the data collection procedure, volunteers collect important information on lake clarity, algae, and nutrient levels. These critical data will allow us to assess the status of the lake into the future as the TMDL is implemented to ensure that watershed remediation actions are working effectively. The most current Cayuga Lake water quality data can be found at the DOW here: <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/c32878596a0a47deb5f97ea5e07ec9c5>.

DEC greatly appreciates your continued interest in these environmental issues and in water quality in Cayuga Lake. DEC will continue moving forward to address water quality concerns in cooperation with local stakeholders to protect the New York's waters. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Anthony Prestigiacomo at (315) 426-7452 or via email at anthony.prestigiacomo@dec.ny.gov.

Sincerely,



Karen M Stainbrook
Director, Bureau of Water Resource Management
Division of Water

CC: Thomas Vigneault
Dereth Glance

**CAYUGA LAKE WATERSHED INTERMUNICIPAL ORGANIZATION (CWIO) WATERSHED
MANAGER**

Date: June 13, 2023

This posting will remain open until a suitable candidate is found. The first review of applications may be as early as July.

Position Description

Working on behalf of the Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization (CWIO), the Cayuga Watershed Manager will identify and implement projects in the watershed to preserve and protect the water quality of Cayuga Lake. The primary work of the Watershed Manager will be to coordinate water quality improvement projects between the many different stakeholder groups as spelled out in both the Cayuga Lake Watershed Restoration and Protection Plan and the New York State Harmful Algal Bloom Action Plan.

Work is performed under the general direction and in accordance with policies and procedures established by CWIO. This position requires considerable exercise of independent judgement, transparency, and high integrity leadership. Attendance at CWIO Board and committee meetings as requested.

Duties include, but are not limited to:

- Working throughout the Cayuga Lake watershed to **advance a regional approach** to water resource management;
- **Identifying priority water quality improvement projects and assisting with project development and implementation;**
- Encouraging, facilitating, and coordinating **inter-municipal and inter-agency partnerships** to accomplish regional water resource initiatives that protect and preserve water quality;
- Initiating and advancing water quality improvement projects that **support the strategies identified in Cayuga Lake Watershed Restoration and Protection Plan, the Harmful Algal Bloom Action Plan** or other plans officially recognized by the state or CWIO that address water quality issues;
- Identifying and **pursuing sources of funding** to support actions that preserve and protect waters within the watershed;
- Assisting municipalities to **prepare grant applications, administer, and manage grant requirements;**
- **Encouraging the adoption of local land use regulations and best management practices** throughout the watershed that will protect and improve water quality within the Cayuga Lake watershed.

Required Qualifications include:

- Bachelor's degree in environmental science, watershed management, natural resources, or equivalent related degree;
- Demonstrated success in writing and securing grant funding for environmental, municipal, infrastructure or related projects;
- Project management experience that involves coordinating with multiple partners, assisting with budget development, managing budgets, and negotiating and contracting with vendors;
- Ability to build relationships across a wide range of potential partners that includes local governments; watershed and water quality groups; lake associations; county, state, and federal agencies; and funders;
- Knowledge of NYS water resource regulations, protection principles and practices, policies and programs, and environmental planning principles and practices;
- Under minimal supervision, makes decisions based on analysis, science, experience, and context;
- Willingness and ability to travel and to work occasional nights and weekends.

Desired Qualifications include:

- Good interpersonal and communications skills to work effectively with the public, advisory boards, elected officials, and those working on water quality concerns within the Cayuga Lake watershed;
- Knowledge of the principles of planning, land use, and public health as they relate to water resource preservation;
- Understanding of potential water quality contaminants, water quality monitoring, and water supply and onsite wastewater treatment as it relates to water quality concerns;
- Ability to develop and maintain good public and professional relations, under tight deadlines, and display good professional and rational judgement in dealing with controversial issues;
- Strong office computer skills;
- Ability to interpret and evaluate scientific and policy-related reports, regulations, and statutes;
- Ability to interpret and implement policies set by CWIO;
- Ability to exercise accurate independent judgement; communicate clearly and concisely in both written and verbal form;

- Ability to follow complex instructions given both orally and in writing.

Position Benefits and Salary

The CWIO Watershed Manager is a full-time position based at the Finger Lakes Institute at Hobart and William Smith Colleges. The salary for this position is \$59,000 per year and includes health insurance benefits.

How to Apply

Please upload a cover letter describing experience and education applicable to the position, resume, and contact information for three references to: [Interfolio site to be defined by HWS](#). Review of applications will begin on September 1, 2023 and will continue until a candidate is hired.

Institutional Information

Hobart and William Smith Colleges are committed to providing a non-discriminatory and harassment-free educational, living and working environment for all members of the HWS community, including students, faculty, staff, volunteers, and visitors. HWS prohibits discrimination and harassment in their programs and activities on the basis of age, color, disability, domestic violence victim status, gender, gender expression, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, veteran status, or any other status protected under the law. Discrimination on the basis of sex includes sexual harassment, sexual violence, sexual assault, and other forms of sexual misconduct including stalking and intimate partner violence, and gender-based harassment that does not involve conduct of a sexual nature.

Hobart and William Smith Colleges are a highly selective residential liberal arts institution located in a small, diverse city in the Finger Lakes region of New York State. With an enrollment of approximately 2,200, the Colleges offer 62 majors and minors from which students choose two areas of concentration, one of which must be an interdisciplinary program. Creative and extensive programs of international study and public service are also at the core of the Colleges' mission.