



**Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization
(CWIO)**



CWIO News November 2023

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FROM THE CHAIR

We have a Watershed Manager!! His name is Isaac Walker and he will begin work for CWIO on 11/27. He has a degree in Environmental Science with a minor in Watershed Management and is currently employed as an Ag Resource Specialist at the Bradford County Conservation District office in Pennsylvania. We welcome Isaac with enthusiasm. This was a very competitive process with numerous strong candidates for the position. Wishing we had funding to hire more than one person. Maybe someday!

PROJECTS--If you have a project that CWIO can assist with, please submit it through the [project submission form](#) because soon we will again be able to assist again.

TRAINING and EVENTS—there are some excellent training opportunities listed below **coming right up**. Many qualify as training credits for municipal boards. Please forward on to your elected and appointed officials and staff. **See critical dates for registration below.**

CWIO MEETING SUMMARY

Implementation of the Owasco Watershed Clean Water Plans – Adam Effler, the Executive Director of the Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council (OLWMC) gave an inspiring review of the progress made to protect the Owasco Lake watershed via their 9 Element Plan. [See the slides](#)¹. There

¹ https://cwio.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/CWIO-Presentation_Owasco9EP_102523.pdf

are a number of innovative techniques being used to implement that Clean Water Plan. In the Cayuga watershed, we do not have a 9 Element plan but instead a TMDL (total maximum daily load for phosphorus) which is still in draft form. Both 9Es and TMDLs are Clean Water Plans.

Tony Prestigiagiacomo from the DEC Finger Lakes Hub sent me a follow up email reminding us that the *Cayuga Lake HABs Action Plan* is also recognized as a Clean Water Plan and that grant proposals submitted are eligible for extra points by referring to the *HABs Action Plan* as well as the *draft TMDL*.

Drinking Water Source Protection Plans – Why a municipality may want to consider adopting a DWSP²—Rebecca Minas from Barton and Loguidice gave an update on the [state’s offer for free assistance](#)² to assist municipalities to develop these plans. DWSP² plans are replacing what used to be SWAPs (Source Water Assessment Plans) and can help municipalities identify threats to their water, and also help in acquiring funding to implement the plans.

CWIO Organizational 2024—Since 2023 is a local election year, and since Isaac will not be on board until the end of 2023, CWIO opted to elect leadership and adopt a work plan and budget early in 2024. We are looking for nominations for CWIO Chair and Vice Chair as well as people (both voting members and CWIO partners) who are willing to serve on committees and as committee chairs.

Please let me know if you have ideas!

The next meeting will be on 11/15. The December meeting is on 12/20.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES, FUNDED WORK, and ASSISTANCE

11/1/23--DEC Invasive Species Grant Program Funding Available

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) recently announced that \$3 million is available in the third round of the State’s Invasive Species Grant Program (ISGP). This grant program, supported by the State Environmental Protection Fund (EPF), is designed to advance projects that target both aquatic and terrestrial invasive species across the state, with six funding categories that address invasive species spread prevention; early detection and rapid response; research; management planning; and education and outreach. DEC is accepting applications for these grants through **Nov. 1, 2023**. [For more information and to apply](#)

11/9/23--Explore State and Federal Funding: Municipal Infrastructure Roundtable Discussion

Learn about funding opportunities for safe and clean water management and other community investments from state and federal agency representatives. Funders will be available to address specific project funding questions. [Go to SU-EFC’s website for more information and to register to attend.](#)

11/14/23--Municipal Options for Financing Open Space Protection

Many municipalities are interested in protecting forests, farms, streams, and other open spaces that are important to their residents. [Open space planning](#) is an important step for a community to identify priorities and assess a range of potential policies to achieve conservation goals. Evaluating financing options to protect priority lands and waters is a next step to establish a municipal land protection fund. In the Hudson Valley, communities are using bonds, community preservation funds, general appropriations, and tax incentive programs to protect open space.

² <https://cwio.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/DWSP2-opportunity10-25-23.pdf>

In this interactive forum, local leaders from New Paltz, Red Hook, Bethlehem, and Kingston will share case studies on developing and implementing local open space finance policies. Speakers will share experiences with building community support, lessons learned, and how funds have been used to achieve conservation of local priorities. Presentations will be followed by facilitated discussions.

Tuesday, November 14, 2:00-5:00 pm, This event is HYBRID. The hybrid portion of the program will last approximately 2 hours. Kingston City Hall or Webex. [Click here to register via Webex.](#)

11/17/23--Transformational Habitat Restoration and Coastal Resilience Grants

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has \$240 million available for habitat restoration and coastal resilience projects under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act. While these grants cover saltwater areas at risk, freshwaters also qualify. Funding will support efforts such as reconnecting rivers to their historic floodplains, and building living shorelines that protect shores from erosion. Submit applications by **November 17, 2023**. [Find more information on NOAA's website](#)³.

Grants to Land Trusts for Forest Conservation Easements

DEC Commissioner Basil Seggos has [announced more than \\$1.35 million in grants to 6 land trusts to help protect local forests](#)⁴ that are key to achieving the state's objectives to protect open space and reduce the emissions that cause climate change. Grant funding will be used to acquire new easements to help keep forests as forests, which provide stormwater mitigation, temperature regulation, carbon sequestration, and climate resiliency.

The grants, managed by DEC in partnership with the Land Trust Alliance, were made available through the [Forest Conservation Easements for Land Trusts \(FCELT\) Grant Program](#)⁵.

TRAINING, RESOURCES, and WATERSHED PLANNING

10/30 and 11/6/23--Protecting Wetlands and Streams in Your Community

Protecting wetlands and streams is vital to safeguarding water resources, but gaps in federal and state regulations leave many wetlands and streams vulnerable to degradation and loss. The Supreme Court's recent Sackett ruling significantly rolled back federal protection for wetlands and streams. New York State is meanwhile set to expand some protection for wetlands, but major gaps remain, especially for smaller wetlands, seasonal streams, and adjacent buffers around these sensitive water resources.

This program will cover:

- the importance and functions of wetlands and streams in the Hudson Valley;
- status and changes to federal and state wetlands and stream regulations; and

³ <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/grant/transformational-habitat-restoration-and-coastal-resilience-grants>

⁴ <https://www.dec.ny.gov/press/128590.html>

⁵ <https://landtrustalliance.org/resources/connect/field-services/new-york/new-york-state-conservation-partnership-program>

- ways local government can provide more comprehensive protection for these key water resources.

Monday, October 30, 6:00-7:30 pm (in-person) - [register via Survey Monkey](#) - in partnership with Columbia County Planning Department

Thursday, November 9, 1:00-2:30 pm (virtual) - [register via Webex](#)

11/13/23 – 6:00-7:30 Municipal Tools and Resources to Make Informed Decisions in Your Community

If you're a member of a municipal board and involved in land use planning or water resource management, this session is for you. Learn how to use mapping tools and resources to make informed decisions about your community.

The Tompkins County Water Resources Council (WRC) is hosting an online session to teach you about mapping tools and resources that can help your municipal board understand land uses and environmental resources. The session will describe and show you how to navigate a number of county, state, federal, and other resources, such as the county Natural Resources Inventory, NYS DECinfo Locator, and USGS StreamStats.

Questions these resources can help answer:

- Have you ever wondered if there are wetlands on a site you are reviewing or if an adjacent stream is regulated?
- Did you know that the state has an online resource that can auto-populate some of the responses on an environmental assessment form for SEQR (State Environmental Quality Review)?
- Are you curious about the ecological health of the stream running through your property?

When: Monday, Nov. 13, from 6:00-7:30 PM

Registration: This session is FREE, but registration is required to receive the Zoom link. If you register by 11/8, we will send out information for you to practice navigating the online resources. [Register](#)⁶. The session will be recorded and posted to the WRC website: tcgov.co/wrc

11/14--Free Technical Assistance to Protect Drinking Water Sources

Free technical assistance is available for municipalities to protect public drinking water supplies through the [Drinking Water Source Protection Program \(DWSP2\)](#). Up to 30 volunteer communities will work with technical assistance providers to develop and implement Drinking Water Source Protection Programs that proactively protect their public drinking water sources.

Public water suppliers can apply by submitting an [online application](#) by **November 14 at 4 p.m.**

⁶ https://cornell.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_yeesPJNmQEC-gitWEyK6Wg#/registration

11/2 and 11/16--Local government training workshop: Crosswalking Water Resources for Climate Smart Communities

This workshop is geared towards planning, zoning and municipal boards, supervisors, mayors, code enforcement officers, conservation advisory boards, and floodplain managers, but anyone interested in learning more about some federal and state programs and how they can be utilized to maintain and enhance water resources and floodplains is encouraged to join. For most municipalities, this local government workshop fulfills state law required training for local planning officials. A certificate of participation may be requested for the number of hours of attendance.

To register, click on the location that works best for you!

11/2--Auburn, NY⁷ 9:00am-4:30pm

Register by October 28, 2023

11/16--Watertown, NY⁸ 9:00am-4:30pm

Register before November 6, 2023

[See the full announcement and registration information⁹.](#)

11/2 and 11/8--The SEQR Process and Habitat Conservation

In New York, [State Environmental Quality Review \(SEQR\)](#) requires all state and local government agencies to equally examine environmental impacts along with social and economic considerations during discretionary decision-making, including the review of proposed development projects. The SEQR process provides an important opportunity for local decision-makers to identify and avoid, minimize, or mitigate potential impacts to valuable natural areas.

November 2, 5:30-8:30 pm, DEC Stony Kill Farm Environmental Education Center, Wappingers Falls, NY. [Register via SurveyMonkey.](#)

November 8, 5:30-8:30 pm, DEC Five Rivers Environmental Education Center, Delmar, NY [Register via SurveyMonkey.](#)

This training will introduce the SEQR process, lead agency responsibilities, and local authority to conserve the environment. It will focus especially on questions in Parts 1 and 2 of the Environmental Assessment Forms relating to habitats and biodiversity and include an interactive exercise. Participants will learn about questions to ask during environmental reviews and sources of information to support a thorough consideration of habitats and biodiversity in SEQR.

Note: participants with no prior SEQR training or experience are encouraged to [take the "SEQR Basics" online training](#)¹⁰ offered by the Department of State

⁷ https://pub.cce.cornell.edu/event_registration/main/events_landing.cfm?event=2023Crosswalk_LG_Wrksp_Auburn_112

⁸ https://pub.cce.cornell.edu/event_registration/main/events_landing.cfm?event=2023Crosswalk_LG_Wrksp_Wtrtnw_112

⁹ <https://seagrant.sunysb.edu/articles/t/fall-2023-local-government-training-workshops-coastal-community-development-program-news>

¹⁰ <https://dos.ny.gov/state-environmental-quality-review-act-seqra-basics>

12/21, 1/11, 1/16--National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)--National Stormwater Center Training Classes for Municipalities

National Stormwater Center is pleased to offer CERTIFIED STORMWATER INSPECTOR – MUNICIPAL training classes. [See more information](#)¹¹.

- 1/11-12/2024-Stormwater Permit Compliance Training. [More info and registration](#)¹².
- 12/21/23 – Water Quality Standards, 303(d) Lists, TMDLs (EST)
Title 3 of our nation’s Clean Water Act sets out how states are to establish water quality goals, determine whether their waters meet goals and develop recovery plans for waters impaired by pollutants. Waters found not to meet goals are reported to EPA on a list required by Section 303(d) of the Act, so they’re commonly referred to as “303(d) listed waters.” Regulated dischargers to listed waters, including Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems, are required by their NPDES permits to control discharges so waters can recover. The class will cover water quality standards, monitoring, 202(d) listing and implications, pollutants, models, and how MS4s are involved. [See more and register](#)¹³.
- 1/16/24 Integrated Planning Permits for Municipalities
This training is specifically for municipal permittees. This course delivers training on implementing the goals of the Water Infrastructure and Improvement Act of 2019. [See more information and registration](#)¹⁴.

DEC and State Parks Begin Process of Updating the New York State Open Space Conservation Plan

DEC Commissioner Basil Seggos and NY State Parks Commissioner Erik Kulleseid recently announced the start of the New York State Open Space Conservation Plan (Plan) update process. The Plan is updated periodically, relying heavily on the recommendations of nine Regional Advisory Committees (RACs) that are composed of people knowledgeable in open space conservation. All RAC members are appointed by county governments, or DEC, and State Parks.

The RACs will work with the public and staff from both agencies to develop a list of priority land conservation projects and make policy recommendations such as identifying additional ways our open spaces can help address climate change and increasing recreational access to underserved communities. In addition to working with the RACs, DEC and State Parks will collaborate with State agencies including the Department of Agriculture and Markets, Department of State, and Department of Transportation to address issues such as farmland protection, coastal land conservation, and the connection of transportation to land use.

Since 1992, the Plan has served as the blueprint for the State's Open Space Program, guiding land protection investments from the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF). The Plan also covers a broad range of related topics, including protecting water quality, ensuring environmental justice,

¹¹ <https://www.npdes.com/class-descriptions/csi-for-ms4s>

¹² <https://www.npdes.com/training-and-events/class-registration-calendar/ms4-stormwater-field-personnel/csi-municipal-ny-online-webinar-january-2024-est>

¹³ <https://www.npdes.com/ms4-stormwater-field-personnel/csi-water-quality-tmdl-s-edt-december-2023>

¹⁴ <https://www.npdes.com/training-and-events/class-registration-calendar/ms4-stormwater-field-personnel/integrated-planning-permits-webinar-est-january-2024>

protecting air quality, addressing climate change, and educating the next generation about the importance of these topics.

The entire update process takes approximately two years and includes a public comment period which is anticipated to take place in the summer of 2024. RAC meetings will begin this month. The regional advisory committee contacts (PDF) is available on the DEC website.

A recording of the [Regional Advisory Committee kickoff meeting](#) can be found on the DEC's Open Space website. For further information on the [State's Open Space Conservation Program](#) and the current Plan see DEC's website, also read the September 13 [press release](#).

MONITORING and RESEARCH

Hydrogeology of Sand and Gravel Aquifers in the Owasco Inlet Watershed, Cayuga and Tompkins Counties, New York

Scientific investigations report. Prepared in cooperation with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation by Paul M. Heisig. [Read the report¹⁵](#). (thanks to the Cayuga Co. Water Quality Management Agency for bringing this info to our attention).

NEWS AND SUCCESS STORIES

Cayuga Lake Watershed:

11/3 10:00 The Community Science Institute

11/3--Join their [Data Jam](#) to be held 11/3 from 10:00 to noon at the Tompkins County Library. Attendees will break out into teams, where they will explore Community Science Institute data together to answer questions about water quality. CSI staff will be at hand to guide teams through our database and point them in the direction of the answers they are seeking.

Understand more about [phosphorus in the watershed](#) with the CSI fact sheet.

See the [latest CSI news](#) with reports on monitoring.

The Cayuga Lake Watershed Network – Lake Friendly Lawn Care and Leaf Management.

As seasons change, it's time to revisit how to improve water quality. Taking simple actions at home benefits Cayuga Lake. Best practices for Autumn include [lake-friendly lawn care and leaf management¹⁶](#).

The Cayuga Lake Watershed Hydrilla Taskforce

The Cayuga Lake Watershed Network is part of an effort to locate and treat hydrilla in Cayuga Lake. Working with the DEC, Finger Lakes PRISM, the Army Corps of Engineers, and Soil and Water Conservation Districts, new hydrilla locations just outside treatment areas

¹⁵ <https://pubs.usgs.gov/publication/sir20235031>

¹⁶ <https://mailchi.mp/cayugalake/cayuga-lake-friendly-living-tips-for-autumn>

have been found near Aurora and Lansing. In general, hydrilla densities are responding to treatment.

11/2/23 10:00 to 11:30--Cayuga County Water Quality Management Agency—monthly meeting

Join in person at the Conference Room, Natural Resource Building, 7413 County House Road, Auburn, NY 13021

or [Join the meeting¹⁷](#) remotely, or by phone 209-844-4600, 97535640#

Seneca County Soil and Water Conservation Activities

Erin Peruzzini reported at the last CWIO meeting some of the projects underway and completed in Seneca County:

- Road bank Stabilization on Swick Road in the Town of Romulus,
- Hydroseeding in the Town of Romulus, Varick and Fayette,
- A Heavy Use Area Barnyard in the Town of Fayette,
- A water and sediment control basin (WASCOB) in the Town of Fayette,
- With the assistance of Cayuga County SWCD, finishing up a 3-year cover crop grant with over a thousand acres implemented this fall in Seneca County's portion of the Cayuga Lake Watershed.

Cayuga County Water Quality Management Agency- Meeting report (covers Cayuga and other watersheds)

- Cayuga County Planning has recommended continued support for the Community Science Institute for HAB monitoring and tributary sampling.
- Cayuga County SWCD – finished aquatic weed harvesting in Cross Lake. They received a Non-Point Source Grant for ~\$600,000.
- hydroseeding for the season is winding up.
- Health Department has received many requests for septic system replacement funding for lakefront areas and are underway installing some.
- A solid waste collection day occurred on 10/21.
- Cornell Cooperative Extension is holding a composting workshop on 11/16. Composting helps keep nutrients in place.
- The City of Auburn is testing treatments for mycosystin for its drinking water plant.

The Cayuga Salt Mine

There are numerous actions being taken by a number of different groups regarding the salt mine under Cayuga Lake. Tompkins County Planning, Energy, and Environmental Quality Council (PEEQ) recently adopted a resolution of concern and have sent it to the Tompkins County Legislature for consideration.

Also [see the article¹⁸](#) by Peter Mantius on the salt mine—*Hochul urged to protect Cayuga Lake by requiring \$10 billion bond and safety exam before allowing Cargill to sell salt min.*

¹⁷ <https://8x8.vc/cayuga/michele.wunderlich>

¹⁸ <https://waterfrontonline.blog/2023/10/25/hochul-urged-to-protect-cayuga-lake-by-requiring-10b-bond-and-safety-exam-before-allowing-cargill-to-sell-salt-mine/>

[See the CWIO resolution](#)¹⁹.

Owasco (also see crossover reports under Cayuga)

WaterFront Article on Owasco WRRs -

Peter Mantius' [article](#) covering the Owasco Lake watershed rules and regulations.

Finger Lakes Land Trust Plants Nearly 400 Trees to Protect Owasco Lake

The Finger Lakes Land Trust (FLLT) recently built on a conservation success from earlier this year by planting nearly 400 trees and shrubs on private property protected with a conservation easement in the town of Scipio, Cayuga County. FLLT staff and volunteers helped with the planting along 5,000 feet of a tributary that flows into Owasco Lake.

The FLLT protected the 160-acre property in January 2023 with an easement that limits development and requires the maintenance of vegetated stream buffers. Establishing native trees at this site will enhance wildlife habitat, promote plant diversity, and create an important stream buffer to reduce nutrient runoff to the lake. Owasco Lake provides drinking water to over 40,000 people in Cayuga County, including the city of Auburn.

Mostly a mix of agricultural fields, the property has expansive views the lake and the surrounding area, including the FLLT's [Owasco Bluffs Nature Preserve](#) on the opposite shore. Funds for the project came from a grant from New York's Environmental Protection Fund and the NYS Conservation Partnership Program, as administered by the Land Trust Alliance.

Conservation easements are voluntary legal agreements that permanently limit future land use in order to protect the land's conservation value. Lands subject to conservation easements remain in private ownership, on local tax rolls, and available for traditional uses such as farming and hunting.

By working cooperatively with landowners and local communities, the Finger Lakes Land Trust has protected over 30,000 acres of the region's undeveloped lakeshore, rugged gorges, rolling forest, and scenic farmland. The FLLT owns and manages a network of over 45 nature preserves that are open to the public and holds perpetual conservation easements on 184 properties that remain in private ownership.

The FLLT focuses on protecting critical habitat for fish and wildlife, conserving lands that are important for water quality, connecting existing conservation lands, and keeping prime farmland in agriculture. The organization also provides programs to educate local governments, landowners, and residents about conservation and the region's unique natural resources.

Additional information about the Finger Lakes Land Trust may be found at <http://www.fllt.org>.

¹⁹ <https://cwio.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/CWIO-salt-mine-resolution-9-27-23.pdf>

Skaneateles

Skaneateles Lake Association News

[See articles on:](#)

- 2023 Milfoil Report
- Harmful Algal Bloom Update
- Bob Dewitt - Citizen of the Year
- SLA Community Forum Wrap Up
- Lake Friendly Living Tip for Fall

Land Acquisition in Central New York to Protect Drinking Water

DEC and Central New York Land Trust, Inc., (CNYLT) have [announced the acquisition of 144 acres of land near Skaneateles Lake²⁰](#), a drinking water source for the city of Syracuse. The project was funded through the [State's Water Quality Improvement Project \(WQIP\) Program](#). CNYLT intends to acquire multiple parcels near the lake with the remaining funds by summer 2024. CNYLT acquired the 144-acre O'Neill Parcel for \$900,000, using a portion of its \$4 million WQIP Land Acquisition for Source Water Protection grant awarded by DEC.

Great Lakes:

Lawmakers say new legislation will hold polluters accountable, increase transparency

Michigan legislators joined environmental advocates to break down the details of a newly introduced “polluter pay” package intended to bolster the state of Michigan’s environmental cleanup standards. [See article²¹](#).

Building resiliency to climate change in our sewers

Monroe County, New York, has made important improvements to their sewer system to combat some of the effects of climate change and protect local waterways. [See article²²](#).

AGRICULTURE

USDA’s Conservation Reserve Program Pays More Than \$1.77 Billion to America’s Producers in Support of Conservation and Climate-Smart Agriculture

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has issued more than \$1.77 billion this year to agricultural producers and landowners through its Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), a critical piece of the Department’s efforts to support climate-smart agriculture and forestry on working lands. Right now, CRP’s more than 667,000 participants received payments from USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) for their voluntary conservation efforts on more than 23 million acres of private land. [Read press release](#).

²⁰ <https://www.dec.ny.gov/press/128485.html>

²¹ <https://michiganadvance.com/2023/10/25/lawmakers-say-new-legislation-will-hold-polluters-accountable-increase-transparency/>

²² <https://www.rochesterfirst.com/environment/building-resiliency-to-climate-change-in-our-sewers/>

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The Cayuga Lake Watershed Network – Lake Friendly Lawn Care and Leaf Management.

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