



CWIO News **December 2023**

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FROM THE CHAIR – Liz Thomas

It has been my honor to serve as Chair to CWIO these last 3 years and look forward to continuing to work as needed to move forward actions that will protect or improve water quality within the watershed. Isaac is doing a great job getting oriented to the wide cast of characters who are part of our efforts. Thanks to those within and outside the Cayuga Lake watershed. Our work together makes us stronger.

FROM THE WATERSHED MANAGER – Isaac Walker

When thinking about what to write for a short blurb about my first few days here as the CWIO Watershed Manager, I keep coming back to the questions of “how and why?”—how do we achieve the goals that we have set as an organization and why do we do this work. Truth be known, at this early stage in my journey, I don’t know that I have those answers. I know that our goal is to protect and enhance the watershed (that one is pretty easy). That is probably our “why”. But the “how”, that’s an open question, at least in my opinion. There are a million “how’s” when it comes to this work, and everyone seems to have a different one. Truthfully most of the answers to the question of “how to do we accomplish this goal?” are all correct on some level. It just depends on what you see as the best for your piece of the puzzle. My goal is to take all of those “how’s” and turn them into something that make environmental, economic, and organizational sense. I aim to do this by understanding where everyone comes from, based on what sector they serve, and their specific area

needs. I hope to make connections with you in the near future, but until I do, keep asking yourself “how and why?”. I think that will make our conversations interesting and productive.

Please feel free to reach out to me at iwalker@hws.edu. Telephone number at Hobart coming soon!

Best,
Isaac Walker

CWIO MEETING SUMMARY

ORGANIZATION FOR 2024

The representatives present at the 11/15/23 voted to move some of the organizational resolutions for 2024 along. A summary of the resolutions passed is [here](#) and we are pleased that Roxy Johnston, representative from the Town of Catharine in Schuyler County was appointed as the incoming chair of CWIO. Roxy’s expertise from her position with the City of Ithaca as the Watershed Coordinator and Lab Director for the Drinking Water Treatment Plant make her an excellent person to lead CWIO.

STATE OUTREACH COMMITTEE

The CWIO State Outreach committee is working with our state representatives to organize a Finger Lakes Lobby Day. The plan is to gather a team from across the Finger Lakes to introduce ourselves to state representatives and speak about the challenges we face in implementing recommended water quality protection plans and projects.

At our March 22, 2023 meeting, [CWIO approved a list of requested state actions](#). We plan to actively reach out to other Finger Lakes watersheds to join us in forming a collective voice in presenting the second two requests to our state representatives on how state policies and programs are working at the local level and how they could better support local efforts.

We welcome your comments, questions, and concerns as we move this work forward and will be reporting on our progress at the January 2024 meeting.

SALT MINE

In light of the likely sale of the Cargill salt mine in Lansing NY, the Tompkins County legislature voted on 11/8 asking the state for a more robust environmental review of the salt mine, better financial security to cover damages to the lake, and limits to the time a permit or consent order by the Office of Governmental Services remains in place.

[Senator Lea Webb introduced legislation](#)¹ in the NYS Senate with more protections regarding the salt mine [as did Assemblywoman Anna Kelles](#)² that requires any future mine permit approval, sale or transfer to include a full environmental review as well as a reclamation plan with appropriate financial security. While the bill does not call for the mine's closure, it does call for a prompt, public, state-confirmed review of the health of the mine in order to protect Cayuga Lake as well as the communities and jobs that depend on it.

CWIO Education, Public Participation, and Outreach Committee (EPPOC)

¹ <https://www.nysenate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2023/lea-webb/senator-webb-introduces-legislation-protect-cayuga-lake-and>

² https://nyassembly.gov/leg/?default_fld=&leg_video=&bn=A08250&term=2023&Summary=Y&Memo=Y

This committee recommends the following education and outreach activities:

- Continue the CWIO newsletter,
- Update the resources on the CWIO website,
- Coordinate training and education regionally to increase the impacts of this work and make more efficient use of limited staff and resources,
- Develop a list of speakers for CWIO in 2024.

Please reach out if you have outreach or education ideas.

Grant Funding

Unfortunately, the grant to visualize data for the watershed that was submitted by the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network in collaboration with the Community Science Institute and CWIO was not funded through the new Finger Lakes pool of funding. I don't think the funded projects list has been released.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES, FUNDED WORK, and ASSISTANCE

12/12 at 2:00--Water Technical Assistance: Helping Communities Access Funding Webinar

Every community deserves access to clean, safe and reliable drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater services. Yet too many communities across America—in rural, tribal, suburban, and urban areas—struggle to address water infrastructure needs and obtain funding. U.S. EPA's Water Technical Assistance provides free hands-on support for communities to assess their water needs, identify potential solutions, and apply for federal funding to address their water challenges. Join us for an informational webinar about WaterTA and available resources to help ensure every community has access to funding.

- **Date:** December 12, 2023
- **Time:** 2:00PM ET
- **Where:** Online Zoom webinar
- **Register** [HERE](#)
- **View** the webinar flyer [HERE](#)

12/15--Funding Available through FEMA for Flood Mitigation Assistance and Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has announced two funding opportunities to help address concerns about flooding and building resilient infrastructure and communities. The Flood Mitigation Assistance grant makes federal funds available to reduce or eliminate the risk of repetitive flood damage to buildings and structures insured under the National Flood Insurance Program, and within NFIP-participating communities. The Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities grant is focused on implementing hazard mitigation activities including, capability and capacity building, hazard mitigation projects, and management costs.

These programs recognize the growing hazards associated with climate change and that there is a need to implement natural hazard risk mitigation activities that promote climate adaptation and resilience with respect to those hazards. Eligible applicants in New York, including state agencies, local governments, and Indian Tribal Governments are encouraged to submit applications consistent with recommendations in flood resilience plans, like [Resilient NY Studies](#).

For both funding opportunities, sub-applications must be submitted through [FEMA GO](#) by Friday, December 15, 2023. For more information and scheduled events associated with these funding opportunities please go to the [DHSES website: https://www.dhSES.ny.gov/hazard-mitigation](https://www.dhSES.ny.gov/hazard-mitigation).

2/2/24--Training and Technical Assistance Grant Program for Drinking and Wastewater Systems.

On December 4, U.S. EPA announced the availability of up to \$30.7 million in grant funding for technical assistance and training to support small drinking water and wastewater systems, including those in rural communities. This grant provides funding to organizations that work side-by-side with water systems by giving them the necessary tools and training to ensure communities have safe drinking water and effective wastewater treatment systems.

EPA is seeking applications to fund grant projects that will benefit small and rural communities. Eligible applicants for this competitive agreement are nonprofit organizations, nonprofit private universities and colleges, and public institutions of higher education. The application period for these competitive grants is now open. EPA expects to award these cooperative agreements by summer of 2024 and encourages all eligible organizations who have an interest in these projects to apply.

This grant will be competed through a Request for Application process. The funding opportunity will remain open for 60 days on Grants.gov.

- **Deadline** for application questions: January 18, 2024
- **Application Deadline:** February 2, 2024 @ 11:59PM ET
- **View** the full announcement [HERE](#)
- **Visit** EPA's website on [Training and Technical Assistance for Small Systems Funding](#) [HERE](#)

1/31/24--DEC Announces \$12.9 Million Now Available Through New Federal Grant Opportunity to Support Urban and Community Forestry

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Basil Seggos announced that [applications are now being accepted](#)³ for a total of \$12.9 million for urban and community forestry projects through the Inflation Reduction Act funding opportunity. Earlier this month Governor Hochul announced the funding was made available by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service's Urban and Community Forestry Program to increase equitable access to healthy trees and green spaces in urban and community forests to support building a clean energy economy, advance environmental justice, and create economic opportunity.

Applications Being Accepted Now Through January 31, 2024

Final Intended Use Plans for CWSRF and DWSRF for Federal Fiscal Year 2024

The NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC), DEC, and the NYS Department of Health have announced the [availability of the Final Federal Fiscal Year 2024 Intended Use Plans \(IUP\)](#) for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF). The Final IUPs include lists of projects that could receive funding in Federal Fiscal year 2024 (October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024). Find

³ <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-hochul-announces-135-million-awarded-new-york-state-under-federal-inflation-reduction>

the Final CWSRF 2024 IUP on [EFC's website](#) and the Final DWSRF 2024 IUP at the [Department of Health's website](#).

Climate Resilient Farming – Funding recipients

The following counties that are part of the Cayuga Lake Watershed were granted funding for farming practices that will benefit water quality. [See all recipients](#). Not all these projects are in the watershed, but all are within the 7 counties in our watershed.

\$1,410,562 - Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District to implement 21,390 acres of conservation practices on eight farms. Cover crops, crop residue and tillage management, reduced tillage, and deep tillage will be utilized to increase soil conservation and health, leading to reduced soil erosion, reduced soil compaction, increased organic matter, and increased water holding capacity of the soil. These conservation practices will also reduce the potential for nutrient runoff and improve water quality within the Finger Lakes Watersheds, including Owasco and Cayuga Lakes.

\$769,812 - Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District to implement 8,770 acres of cover crops and 600 acres of deep tillage to alleviate compaction on 12 farms over three years. This project will decrease soil erosion, reduce runoff, enhance soil health, increase organic matter, improve moisture retention, and sequester carbon within the Cayuga and Seneca Lake Watersheds.

\$115,708 - Cortland County Soil and Water Conservation District to implement a riparian buffer on 1.4 acres, 100 acres of cover crops, and the installation of a crossing for manure injection systems to open access to 170 additional acres of cropland. The implementation of a riparian buffer and cover crops will decrease soil erosion, reduce runoff, enhance soil health, increase organic matter, improve moisture retention, and sequester carbon. Manure injection greatly increases the farm's nutrient management capacity, reduces storage time and emissions from manure, reduces truck traffic and compaction which will improve soil health, and reduce fuel usage and greenhouse gas emissions.

\$196,308 - Cortland County Soil and Water Conservation District to work with a dairy farm to implement a system that will improve the farm's ability to manage nutrients and installing a riparian forest buffer along an unnamed tributary to Otter Creek.

\$257,561 - Cortland County Soil and Water Conservation District to work with a dairy farm to implement an irrigation water management system and riparian forest buffer system.

\$83,783 - Cortland County Soil and Water Conservation District to work with a small cash crop operation to implement a stream corridor rehabilitation plan, including planting of trees and shrubs for a riparian forest buffer along the stream corridor.

\$82,842 - Cortland County Soil and Water Conservation District. An irrigation pond will capture overflow from an existing irrigation system. Stormwater practices being proposed include tree and shrub plantings. The project will increase the farm's resiliency to flooding, heavy rainfall events, and periods of drought while increasing carbon sequestration by the planting of tree and shrubs.

\$300,187 - Cortland County Soil and Water Conservation District to implement a silage leachate irrigation water management system

\$147,390 - Ontario County Soil and Water Conservation District to work with a large organic vegetable farm to develop two farm ponds that will reduce concentrated water flow from causing damaging erosion in large storm events.

\$934,115 - Ontario County Soil and Water Conservation District to work with a dairy farm to reduce GHG emissions and benefit water quality.

\$167,115 - Ontario County Soil and Water Conservation District to work with a dairy farm to expand the farm's manure transfer infrastructure to allow the farm to cover an additional 1,000 acres of cropland with direct manure injection to enhance its nutrient management system on its crop fields and partner with several neighboring crop farms to provide manure as a fertilizer source.

\$180,890 - Seneca County Soil and Water Conservation District to implement 2,145 acres of cover crops on seven farms over the course of three years. The implementation of cover crops will decrease soil erosion, reduce runoff, greatly enhance soil health, increase organic matter, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This project will bolster the farms' resiliency to flooding and resulting erosion, reducing nutrient runoff and building soil health.

\$64,186 - Tioga County Soil and Water Conservation District to implement 750 acres of cover crops on one farm. This project also includes education and outreach for all aspects of soil health. Implementing cover crops will increase soil organic matter, nutrient cycling, soil nitrogen availability, and water holding capacity of the soil in addition to reducing compaction, erosion, and promote weed suppression.

\$734,790 - Tompkins County Soil and Water Conservation District to work with a dairy farm to install a manure storage cover and flare system.

\$166,390 - Tompkins County Soil and Water Conservation District to work with crop producers to implement ponds for control and collection of excess surface water during high rain events and wet conditions.

Regional Conservation Partnership Grant Awards

This year, more than \$1 billion is being invested through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to advance partner-driven solutions to conservation on agricultural land through 81 projects. Maybe the Finger Lakes will see some of this funding in the future? See a sampling of [awarded projects](#):

- **Sediment Reduction--Iowa** – Total funding request: **\$8,712,954**
The project's goal is to reduce the sediment and sediment-bound phosphorus loads that cause water quality impairments in Rathbun Lake.
- **Wetlands Restoration--Iowa** - Total Funding Request: **\$8,000,000**
Installation of Climate SMART conservation practices such as in field and edge of field wetland restoration to improve water availability (flood and drought), water quality, soil health, and wildlife habitat.
- **Cover Crop and Water Quality Program—Iowa**--Total Funding Request: **\$4,573,171**
The Cover Crop and Water Quality Program aims to remove cover crop implementation barriers faced by growers. Growmark Inc and other partners will source the seed, plant, manage and terminate the cover crops on behalf of busy producers.
- **Illinois Wetlands Program—Illinois**--Total Funding Request: **\$1,389,798**
The objectives of the Illinois Sand Prairie Wetlands project will create or and rehabilitate a minimum of 30 ephemeral wetlands.
- **Watershed Protection Project—Kentucky**--Total Funding Request: **\$22,865,854**
The Kentucky River Palisades Watershed Protection project will lead to the permanent protection of at least 18 miles of riparian corridor and 6,000 acres of contiguous land associated with the Kentucky River

Palisades and Elkhorn Creek in the Bluegrass region of Kentucky. This will help protect the connectivity of this critical ecosystem.

- **Nutrient Management and Cover Crops—Maryland**—Total Funding Request: **\$21,723,626**
The Nature Conservancy will work with producers to implement advanced nutrient management and multi-species cover crops in a region that already has high adoption of conservation tillage. These combined actions will improve water quality and provide climate change adaptation and mitigation. Cover crops combined with conservation tillage practices are particularly good for conserving and building soil health.

EPA Water Infrastructure and Resiliency Finance Center

The [EPA Water Finance Center](#)⁴ provides financing information to help local decision makers make informed decisions for drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure to protect human health and the environment.

TRAINING, RESOURCES, and WATERSHED PLANNING

New Guidebook: Best Practices for Adopting Conservation Inventories and Plans

To further our support of local conservation planning, this year we completed a new publication to provide legal guidance and best practices for adopting and implementing natural resources inventories, open space inventories and plans, and critical environmental areas. [Best Practices for Adopting Conservation Inventories and Plans \(PDF\)](#) was developed in collaboration with Pace Land Use Law Center and will guide municipalities interested in taking “next steps” to ensure their conservation inventories and actions have meaningful and intended outcomes. Along with procedural guidance, the publication includes many examples of policy language and local laws from Hudson Valley communities. [View the recorded webinar](#) with the lead author of *Best Practices*.

Putting Natural Areas and Habitat on the Map – why is this important for municipalities?

Mapping and describing a community’s resources—such as forests, wildlife habitat, soil types, and aquifers—NRIs provide a comprehensive and useful reference for anyone involved in making decisions about land use and land conservation.

How are NRIs used by municipalities? In addition to helping landowners, developers, and local officials with site planning, NRIs provide an important foundation for identifying priorities and crafting municipal plans and policies to proactively protect what the community cares about.

The **Town of Poughkeepsie** adopted a joint [Natural Resources Inventory and Open Space Plan](#). The project included a map-based conservation analysis tool and identified key opportunity areas for land acquisition and trail connections. The **Town of New Paltz** used its NRI to draft a [conservation overlay zone](#) to increase protection of an area of high biodiversity value.

Since 2015, the Hudson River Estuary Program assisted 47 communities with creating NRIs and 34 percent have used these to implement plans or policies.

The NYS DEC Provides Training Opportunities to Protect Water

Check out the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation [webpage of resources for municipalities](#)⁵ on acting to preserve water quality. Find out more about water resource protection on this page rich in resources.

⁴ <https://www.epa.gov/waterfinancecenter>

⁵ <https://www.dec.ny.gov/nature/waterbodies/oceans-estuaries/hudson-river-estuary-program/conservation-and-land-use-program/webinars>

MONITORING and RESEARCH

USGS Great Lakes River Basin Water-Quality Trends Interactive Web Application

The USGS has released a study where researchers calculated phosphorus, nitrogen, and suspended sediment loads in 24 U.S. tributaries to the Great Lakes using data from the USGS Great Lakes Restoration Initiative monitoring program from October 2010 through September 2020. Three tributaries within New York State were included in this analysis – one that drains to Lake Erie (Cattaraugus Creek) and two that drain to Lake Ontario (Genesee and Oswego Rivers). These tributaries were monitored at USGS gage locations in Gowanda (Cattaraugus Creek), Rochester (Genesee River), and Oswego (Oswego River).

This study calculated loads and load changes for nitrogen, phosphorus, and suspended sediment exported downstream of each monitoring site. The full USGS data release, including annual, daily, and [change results can be found here](https://doi.org/10.5066/P986B6HQ), <https://doi.org/10.5066/P986B6HQ>. The results are also available in an interactive web application, which is accessible here, <https://rconnect.usgs.gov/glritrends>.

Biological Monitoring Results from the Community Science Institute (CSI)

In the [November CSI Monthly Update](#) are results from CSI's biological monitoring:

Fall Creek upstream of Lake Street (Ithaca Falls) on 5/22/23

BAP = 6.9 (**slightly impacted**)

Buttermilk Creek at Lower Buttermilk Falls State Park on 9/2/23

BAP = 6.0 (**slightly impacted**)

Virgil Creek at Lake Rd on 9/14/23

BAP = 8.3 (**non-impacted**)

Salmon Creek near Myers Point on 7/18/23

BAP = 5.7 (**slightly impacted**)

For more information on what these metrics mean, visit the CSI Biological Monitoring Results web page at: www.communityscience.org/bmi-results/

NEWS AND SUCCESS STORIES

Cayuga Lake Watershed:

Community Science Institute News

See the latest issue of the [CSI's October 2023 Update](#)⁶ including reports on their monitoring work in the tributaries and collaborations with those throughout the watershed.

While Cargill Shops Its Cayuga Salt Mine, A Proposed Senate Bill Would Require New Financial Assurance Regulations

The potential sale of Cargill's huge salt mine under Cayuga Lake has prompted new state legislation to require the company — or a mine buyer — to provide financial security to cover any damages due to a roof collapse or mine flood that damages the lake. [Read the article](#).

Seneca (some work affecting Cayuga watershed)

The Seneca Lake Pure Water Annual Report 2022-23

Seneca Lake Pure Waters has released its [annual report](#)⁷ full of successes. Just a few:

- Cover crop implementation – SLPW helped Schuyler County SWCD purchase seed to plant 600 acres of cover crops. Cover crops help reduce erosion of soil into waterways during the non-growing season.
- Seneca County SWCD - Construction of a water and sediment control basin (WASCoB) in a vineyard within the watershed.
- Construction of Retention Pond, Schuyler County SWCD – on an active cattle farm that collects and retains sediments.
- SWIO – purchased land surveying global positioning equipment that municipalities can use to design their own watershed improvement projects instead of needing to hire out the service.
- SLPW has contributed ~\$100,000 to projects around the lake through its Sediment, Nutrient, and Pollution Reduction program.
- 9 Element plan completed and in action. ID projects. Find funding. Most focused on sediment reduction.
- Stream monitoring efforts. Education, Lake Friendly Living, invasive species, fisheries initiatives, lake level monitoring, state efforts,

Owasco (also see crossover reports under Cayuga)

Voice of the Lake

Read Volume #13 of the [Owasco Watershed Lake Association \(OWLA\) news](#)⁸ to get up to date with some activities in the Owasco watershed.

⁶ <https://mailchi.mp/5bd081827a81/csi-monthly-update-may-5425506?e=7240942499>

⁷ <https://senecalake.org/resources/Documents/Annual%20Reports/2022-2023%20Seneca%20Lake%20Pure%20Water-low%20ores%20ofinal.pdf>

⁸ <https://mailchi.mp/1a08bf47cc60/september-2023-voice-of-the-lake-newsletter-12808361?e=b5f594ac5b>

Canandaigua

Canandaigua Lake Water Quality Plan Finalized.

DEC Commissioner Basil Seggos and NYS Department of State (DOS) Secretary of State Robert Rodriguez announced the joint agency approval of the [Canandaigua Lake Watershed Nine Element Plan for Enhanced Phosphorus Management](#), a plan to advance efforts to restore and protect the water quality of Canandaigua Lake and its watershed.

In recent years, Canandaigua Lake has experienced water quality challenges, including harmful algal blooms associated with the availability and transport of phosphorus, a key nutrient for plants and algae. Land use, climate change, and natural processes across the watershed can impact the lake's phosphorus levels.

DEC and DOS experts guided and approved the plan, which is consistent with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's [framework for watershed-based plans consisting of nine key elements](#) for waterbody protection and stakeholder engagement. The final approved plan is posted on [DEC's Clean Water Plan webpage](#).

New York State

Results in on reduced salt use on roads in Lake George area

A state project to test ways to reduce road salt use may be resulting in more of the environmental pollutant flowing into Lake George. [Read the most recent report](#).

DEC Launches Redesigned and Mobile-Friendly Website

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) officially debuted a [redesigned website](#).

Great Lakes (Cayuga Lake is part of the Ontario Lake watershed):

A new roadmap to addressing toxic algal blooms in Lake Erie

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recently approved a plan to reduce phosphorus and nitrogen in the Maumee River Watershed – one of the main drivers of persistent toxic algal blooms in Lake Erie. [Read the full story](#) by The Ohio Newsroom.

Reducing road salt use 'not something that can wait' as Ontario lakes see oxygen depletion, researcher says

Researchers at Ontario's University of Waterloo urge for a reduction in the amount of road salt applied during winter, in order to reduce impacts of salinization on Ontario's groundwater and lakes. [Read the full story](#) by CBC News.

Nationwide

Get the Lead Out Initiative

On November 7, U.S. EPA announced the [Get the Lead Out \(GLO\) Initiative](#) that will help ensure safer drinking water for communities as part of President Biden's Investing in America Agenda.

Through the GLO initiative, which is funded entirely by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and is in partnership with the Department of Labor, EPA will partner with 200 underserved communities nationwide to provide the technical assistance they need to identify and remove lead service lines. As part of the Biden-Harris Administration's whole-of-government effort to tackle lead exposure, EPA will help communities remove the barriers to lead pipe removal. GLO will specifically help participating communities identify lead services lines, develop replacement plans, and apply for funding to get the lead out. Communities seeking to access GLO Initiative resources can request assistance by completing the [WaterTA Request Form](#) on EPA's WaterTA website. **View** the full GLO announcement [HERE](#). **Learn** about GLO [HERE](#)

EPA restarts assessment of health risks from nitrate in water

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, reversing a Trump-era decision, is restarting a human health assessment of nitrate and nitrite, a move that has potentially far-reaching regulatory implications for one of the country's most pervasive drinking water contaminants. [Read the full story](#)⁹.

Stormwater wetlands clean water

A stormwater pond off the coast of Lake Michigan in Racine County, Wisconsin, is being redesigned to integrate a high-performing wetland mitigation bank that cleanses water before entering Lake Michigan. [Read the full story by the Racine County Eye](#).

Climate is increasing risk of high toxin concentrations in Northern US lakes.

[Recent research](#)¹⁰ from the Carnegie Institution for Science.

Summary: As climate change warms the Earth, higher-latitude regions will be at greater risk for toxins produced by algal blooms, according to new research. The findings identify water temperatures of 20 to 25 degrees Celsius (68 to 77 degrees Fahrenheit) as being at the greatest risk for developing dangerous levels of a common algae-produced toxin called microcystin.

Research project aims to safeguard Great Lakes and your drinking water from harmful toxins

Rising global temperatures are causing harmful algal blooms in the Great Lakes which can lead to the emergence of toxins in the water. Researchers at the University of Windsor in Ontario, Canada, are looking at ways to prevent these toxins from entering the drinking water supply. [Read the full story by CTV News](#)¹¹.

Survey finds PFAS in 71% of shallow private wells across Wisconsin

According to a new study, 71% of water samples drawn from 450 private wells across Wisconsin in 2022 were contaminated with PFAS chemicals. About 96% of the contaminated samples contained PFAS levels below limits that the EPA is considering adopting. [Read the full story by Spectrum News 1 – Milwaukee, WI](#)¹².

Wisconsin DNR adds 51 waters to its list of polluted waterways

Wisconsin environmental regulators are proposing to add 51 new water bodies to the state's list of polluted waters for 2024, as well as 81 new listings for pollutants in waterways. Phosphorus and aquatic plants account for the majority of pollution under new listings. [Read the full story](#) by Wisconsin Public Radio.

Beet juice vs salt? Alternatives for Michigan roads in the winter present challenges

It's a tricky balance: get enough salt on the roads to protect drivers, but also be environmentally conscious. Salt alternatives — like beet juice, or sugar and corn by-products — are an option, but not a cheap option. [Read the full story](#) by WXYZ-TV – Detroit, MI.

FOR YOUR RESIDENTS— Public Service Announcements to Share with Your Residents

Best De-Icing Practices

Thanks to the [Skaneateles Lake Association's recent news](#) for this information on water-friendly deicing practices:

Ice, snow, and rain runoff that contains salt laden de-icers can be harmful to the lake by carrying pollutants into our waterways and causing problems for the environment. Salt can impact a plant's ability to absorb nutrients that we want to keep out of the lake.

⁹ <https://www.circleofblue.org/2023/world/epa-restarts-assessment-of-health-risks-from-nitrate-in-water/>

¹⁰ <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2023/10/231023124427.htm>

¹¹ <https://spectrumnews1.com/wi/milwaukee/news/2023/11/03/dnr--pfas--survey--private-wisconsin-wells--uw-stevens-point>

¹² <https://spectrumnews1.com/wi/milwaukee/news/2023/11/03/dnr--pfas--survey--private-wisconsin-wells--uw-stevens-point>

Your walk or driveway may not cause much harm individually, but with an estimated 15 million tons of de-icing salt used per year in the U.S., all that salt has to end up somewhere. The salt can eventually seep into the ground or runoff into streams and lakes.

There are four main types of de-icers:

- **Rock salt (sodium chloride)** is very abundant in CNY, less expensive, and most widely applied. It can be toxic to underwater life and is the most harmful for plants due to its high chloride levels.
- **Calcium chloride** is a more expensive than rock salt, but not as much is needed. It is effective at temperatures down to -25°F, but it can also harm plants because of chloride.
- **Magnesium chloride** doesn't add as much chloride compared to rock salt and calcium chloride, and can be considered less of a concern for the environment.
- **Calcium magnesium acetate (CMA)** is considered the best choice for safely melting ice. It costs more, but it can melt ice at a lower temperature, does not require as much to get the job done and does not impact plant nutrient and water uptake like rock salt.

Tips for snow and ice removal include:

- Look for “pet safe” de-icing products. If a product is pet friendly, it is likely to be eco-friendly.
- Apply de-icing products before a winter storm.
- Clear as much snow and ice before applying de-icing products.
- Don't use salt as a substitute for shoveling.
- Only use the necessary de-icer amount. A mechanical spreader can help achieve proper coverage.

We all can do more to protect our precious water quality. If we act together, we can collectively be the solution to winter pollution.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator

The [New York State Water Resources Institute \(NYSWRI\)](#) at Cornell University has as its mission to improve the management of water resources in New York State and the nation. This position will act as an Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator based within DEC Region 7 to proactively advance the management of AIS within this region. Major efforts include: prevention, early detection, facilitating responses, coordinating control and management projects at large-scales, coordinating and collaborating on research projects, and remaining current on invasive species detection and management techniques.

This is a full-time position located in Cortland, New York.

A link to the official opportunity is [here](#). Applications are currently being accepted until December 17th, 2023.