



CWIO News **January 2024**

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FROM THE CHAIR – Roxy Johnston

Welcome to 2024. My name is Roxy Johnston and I'm the new Chair of CWIO and looking forward to working with you, and on your behalf, in 2024. We are pleased to have our Watershed Manager, Isaac Walker, moving at full speed to introduce himself to people throughout the watershed and seek projects as he goes.

I have been with the City of Ithaca for 25 years working as their Watershed Coordinator and also the Lab Director for the city's drinking water plant. As with a number of municipalities, the city has begun to implement

its recently completed [Drinking Water Source Protection Plan](#) (DWSP2). We encourage others to develop plans like this that outline water protective actions.

In addition to being part of CWIO since its inception, I currently also serve on the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network's Issues Committee, and the Tompkins County Water Resource Council (aka Water Quality Coordinating Committee for the county) where I chair the Monitoring Partnership and the Watershed Rules and Regulations committees. In my spare time, I enjoy hiking, gardening, botany, and generally being outdoors.

I look forward to working with municipalities to protect our water resources together. Feel free to reach out to me at CWIOchair@gmail.com.

FROM THE WATERSHED MANAGER – Isaac Walker

It's been a busy month for CWIO! I've been travelling around the watershed meeting lots of new people and getting acquainted with the goings on of various SWCD's and municipalities. It's been great to meet to meet everyone who I have met so far. If I haven't gotten to meet you yet, don't worry, I'll get to in the coming months! Thank you for all being so welcoming of someone new.

Now that I feel fairly well adjusted to my new role, I am starting to switch to project mode (even though the weather keeps telling me it's winter!). We have a few projects coming up this year, one potential new one, and two that are continuing from last year. I'm looking forward to getting started on those and making some much needed water quality improvements. If you have an idea for a project please go to our website and submit the idea! The link can be found [here](#), or you can email me at iwalker@hws.edu. I look forward to meeting more members of CWIO in the near future. Until then, think spring!

CWIO NEWS

DUES for 2024: The dues vouchers for CWIO for 2024 are being mailed out with a due date of 6/30. These funds go directly to paying for a Watershed Manager. We hope your municipality will support this mission as have so many across the Finger Lakes in their own watersheds.

ORGANIZATIONAL: CWIO took action on a number of organizational resolutions and will complete that work at their January meeting on 1/24 including the appointment of committee members and adopting the 2024 budget.

SPEAKERS for 2024: Please watch for a poll to gather input on what speakers you would be interested in hearing from at the 2024 CWIO meetings.

PROJECTS: With a Watershed Manager back on board, CWIO is working to update its projects list to help prioritize Isaac's work. See [examples of projects](#) and [submit ideas](#).

NEWS WITHIN THE CAYUGA LAKE WATERSHED

Cargill seeks new underground storage area for water seeping into Cayuga Lake Mine

Cargill Inc. is seeking the state's permission to add a new 150-acre underground storage area for water that has been steadily leaking into its Cayuga Lake salt mine, according to a recently disclosed application to modify its mining permit. [Read more on this new development.](#)¹

¹ <https://waterfrontonline.blog/2024/01/09/>

Community Science Institute – December Newsletter

[In this news](#)²:

- The [2023 Water Bulletin](#)³ with in-depth articles on:
 - What does it mean to be a certified lab?
 - HAB or HAB Not? Oscillatoria clumps in the Cayuga Lake watershed.
 - Chloride in Cayuga Lake.
- Precipitation Monitoring Opportunity.
- Monitoring Updates - HABs, Synoptic Monitoring Events, Biomonitoring, and the Red Flag Program
- Open lab nights.

Seneca County Soil and Water Conservation District Newsletter

[See actions in Seneca County](#) (for both Cayuga and Seneca Lakes):

- Demonstration water and sediment control basin (WASCoB) in the towns of Ovid and Fayette collect stormwater and slowly release it to reduce erosion and nutrient runoff.
- Grassed waterway, diversion and wildlife pond in the Town of Fayette
- Dairy manure heavy use area protections in the town of Fayette.
- Prescribed rotational grazing in the town of Lodi.
- Benefits of cover crops on water quality.
- Road bank stabilization in the town of Romulus.
- Hydroseeding ditches to reduce erosion.
- Right sized culverts in the town of Ovid
- Aquatic vegetation control in the northern part of Cayuga Lake.
- And numerous education, outreach, and training events.
- Successful grant applications funding projects that will protect waters.

Cayuga County Water Quality Management Agency (WQMA) – December News

See some of their work and [read the whole newsletter](#).

- Preparing for a Watershed-Friendly Winter
- Introduction to Three Land Conservation Tools: Conservation Easements, Purchase of Development Rights, and Transfer of Development Rights.
- Christmas Tree Recycling – Cayuga County Trade-A-Tree Program
- Cayuga County Solid Waste Management Report
- CNY Waterways Association Community Meeting Overview

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES, FUNDED WORK, and ASSISTANCE.

DEC Announces \$350,000 in Grant Funding Awards to Finger Lakes Watershed Projects

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Basil Seggos [announced \\$350,000 in grant awards](#)⁴ to help partners in the Finger Lakes watershed restore and protect water quality. The eight projects funded through DEC's Finger Lakes Watershed Grants Program complement federal, private, and DEC grant programs, as well as achieve the goals outlined in the Great Lakes Action Agenda and aid the implementation of clean water plans in the Finger Lakes. This is the first round of grants awarded through the program:

Hobart and William Smith Colleges: Research and monitoring supporting the Seneca-Keuka Watershed Nine Element Plan assessment and implementation, **\$50,000:** A project in the Seneca-

² <https://mailchi.mp/fed13a75e754/csi-monthly-update-may-5432322?e=7240942499>

³ <http://www.communityscience.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/2023-Water-Bulletin-Newsletter.pdf>

⁴ <https://dec.ny.gov/news/press-releases/2023/12/dec-announces-350000-in-grants-awarded-to-finger-lakes-watershed-projects#:~:text=%E2%80%9CThe%20%24350%2C000%20grants%20awarded%20today,region's%20communities%20and%20economy%20vitality.%E2%80%9D>

Keuka watershed will enhance the understanding of nutrient concentrations and sources leading to better practices to reduce phosphorus and nitrogen loadings to Seneca and Keuka lakes.

Schuyler County Soil and Water Conservation District: Seneca Lake sediment/nutrient reduction, **\$50,000:** A project in the Seneca Lake watershed to stabilize an eroded and destabilized stream through best practices to reduce sediment, nitrogen, and phosphorus loadings into Seneca Lake.

Town of Canandaigua: Hydroseeder purchase for Canandaigua Lake watershed road ditch stabilization and watershed resiliency projects, **\$50,000**

Ontario County Soil and Water Conservation District: Castle Creek Water Management Project, **\$50,000:** A project in the Seneca Lake watershed to design and construct water and sediment control basins for stormwater management and flood reduction as well as engage the community in resiliency practices.

Seneca County Soil and Water Conservation District: Burroughs Creek Stabilization Project, **\$50,000:** A project in the Cayuga Lake watershed to stabilize and restore an eroded stream bed and flood bench to minimize further bank erosion and degradation of the surrounding land.

Cortland County Soil and Water Conservation District: Finger Lakes Watershed Special Projects 2023, **\$30,000:** A project in the Cayuga and Skaneateles lakes watershed to establish forest riparian buffers and vernal pools to slow runoff, mitigate flooding, and filter sediment and nutrients.

Ontario County: Honeoye Lake boat wash station and aquatic invasive species (AIS) prevention project, **\$39,985:**

Canandaigua Lake Watershed Association: Canandaigua Lake Watershed Education Program: **\$27,622:** A project that expands science-driven educational programs for both elementary and secondary students within the three school districts in the Canandaigua Lake watershed.

For [more information on the Finger Lakes Watershed Hub and the Finger Lakes Watershed Grants Program](#), and more, visit DEC's website. [See the press release](#)⁵.

Grant Awards Announced - WIIA, IMG, and Septic System Replacement Programs

Governor Kathy Hochul has [announced \\$479 million in grants](#) for critical water infrastructure projects, including the first funding awarded through the Clean Water, Clean Air, and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act of 2022 (Bond Act). The New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC) awarded the grants in coordination with DEC and the Department of Health.

The grants include nearly \$450 million awarded through the State's Water Infrastructure Improvement Act (WIIA) and Intermunicipal Grant (IMG) programs, with \$200 million made possible from the Bond Act. The complete list of WIIA and IMG awardees is available on [EFC's website](#).

CONGRATULATIONS to the Cayuga Lake Watershed communities in Seneca County who succeeded in funding:

Town of Romulus \$178,483 Infiltration and Inflow improvements – WIIA Grant

Town of Romulus \$714,817 Willard Water District Improvement – WIIA Grant

Town of Seneca Falls- \$5,000,000 – Water System Improvements – Bond Act funds

An additional \$30 million is being made available through DEC and EFC to targeted counties through the State's Septic System Replacement Program. These grants support home and small business owners with funding for more environmentally effective systems. Eligibility will be finalized and shared once available on [EFC's Septic System Replacement Fund webpage](#).

⁵ <https://dec.ny.gov/news/press-releases/2023/12/dec-announces-350000-in-grants-awarded-to-finger-lakes-watershed-projects>

1/17 2:00 and 2/16 - Sustain Our Great Lakes 2024 Funding Opportunities Webinar

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) will be hosting a webinar on **January 17, 2024 at 2:00 PM** to share information and guidance about the 2024 Sustain Our Great Lakes grant funding opportunity. In early January 2024 *Sustain Our Great Lakes* will solicit applications for funding to restore and enhance habitat in the Great Lakes basin. Eligible applicants include non-profit organizations, educational institutions, and state, tribal and local governments. **Pre-proposals will be due February 16, 2024.** [See more about the program an applying.](#)

[Register to attend.](#)

1/26-Natural Resources Conservation Service New York announces application period.

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) New York announced **Friday, January 26**, as the first application period for applications submitted for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 funding through the

- [Conservation Stewardship Program](#) (CSP),
- the [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#) (EQIP), including the
- [Great Lakes Restoration Initiative](#) (GLRI),
- [National Water Quality Initiative](#), and
- [Agricultural Management Assistance](#) (AMA).

Submit applications at your local NRCS [Service Center](#). Applications accepted after January 26 will be considered in the next application period.

2/9 Agricultural Land Easements (ALE)

Through ALE, NRCS provides funds to eligible conservation partners for the purchase of conservation easements on privately owned farmland. Eligible partners include state or local agencies, non-profits and Indian Nations that have farmland or grassland protection programs. Private landowners interested in applying for ALE must work with an eligible partner who will apply to NRCS.

ALE easements protect critical natural resources and encourage private landowners to protect farmland through the voluntary sale of a conservation easement, which limits future development. Eligible lands include privately owned cropland, rangeland, grassland, pastureland and forestlands.

For more information, please visit the NRCS New York [ACEP Website](#)⁶, or contact Peter Gibbs at peter.gibbs@usda.gov or Erica Stach at erica.stach@usda.gov.

2/9 Guidance for the Review of Bridge and Culvert Projects

DEC has released for public comment, "[Guidance for the Review of Bridge and Culvert Projects in Nontidal Waters Requiring a Protection of Waters Permit and a Water Quality Certificate](#)." This guidance describes minimum design requirements and other considerations of DEC's Division of Fish and Wildlife during review of bridge and culvert projects requiring Protection of Waters permits. This new guidance includes clarifying detail on established guidelines for maintaining stream continuity, fish and wildlife passage, and also incorporates flood resiliency and climate change considerations into permit issuance decisions as required by recent state legislation and policy.

The public comment period ends **February 9, 2024**. Find more information on DEC's Stream Crossings webpage and in the [January 10th Environmental Notice Bulletin](#).

⁶ <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/acep-agricultural-conservation-easement-program/new-york/agricultural>

Great Lakes Basin Small Grants Awarded

DEC and New York Sea Grant (NYSG) have announced \$388,289 in grant awards for eight projects that address the diverse environmental needs of waterfront communities in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River region. Funding for these projects is provided through the New York Great Lakes Basin Small Grants Program.

Project award recipients advance the [New York Great Lakes Action Agenda's goals](#) to apply an ecosystem-based approach to enhance community resiliency and environmental integrity, and are identified in locally-supported community plans pertaining to water quality, natural resources, or sustainable land use. [Find the list of awarded projects in the January 8th press release.](#)

Congratulations to the City of Ithaca who are granted \$45,000 for "Build-out Analysis Modeling for Scenario Planning.

More Than \$1 Million Awarded in Second Round of Community Forest Conservation Grants

The Community Forest Conservation Grant Program helps New York State municipalities acquire land to establish community forests. These community forests will provide countless benefits to the residents of the towns awarded, including cleaner air and water, recreational opportunities, economic stimulation, and physical and mental health benefits.

To learn more about this grant program, [visit the Community Forest Conservation Grant Program webpage](#) or [read the press November 29 release.](#)

Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE)

Through WRE, NRCS helps private landowners and Indian Nations restore and protect wetland ecosystems. Wetlands provide many benefits, including critical habitat for a wide array of wildlife species. Wetlands also store floodwaters, clean and recharge groundwater, sequester carbon, trap sediment, and filter pollutants, improving water quality.

Wetland conservation easements are either permanent or 30 years in duration. Indian Nations also have an option for a 30-year contract. Eligible lands include farmed, converted or degraded wetlands that can successfully be restored, croplands or grasslands subject to flooding, and riparian areas that link protected wetland areas. NRCS and the participant work together to develop a plan for the restoration and maintenance of the wetland.

Interested participants should contact their [local NRCS field office](#) or visit the NRCS New York [ACEP Website](#)⁶ for more information. Applicants may apply at any time, however applications received after the posted deadline will be considered for funding during future application periods.

7/21 - Land Conservation Funding: Signups for Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will begin accepting applications for the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (Continuous CRP) signup on Jan. 12, 2024. Producers and landowners interested in conservation opportunities for their land in exchange for yearly rental payments should consider enrolling. [Read on](#) ⁷

New York State Grants Management Transition

New York State (NYS) is transitioning grants management activities that are currently performed in the Grants Gateway to the Statewide Financial System (SFS). SFS is NYS government's accounting and financial management system used to manage contracts and payments. **Beginning January 16**, entities with grant agreements or pending grant agreements with DEC must use the SFS Vendor Portal to perform business

⁷ https://www.fsa.usda.gov/news-room/news-releases/2024/usda-to-reopen-signup-for-continuous-conservation-reserve-program?utm_campaign=0111_conser_reserve&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery

functions for grant programs. Grantees doing business with NYS will access SFS through the SFS Vendor Portal, which is available from the [SFS Public Website](#).

Training materials, including videos and step-by-step instructions for various topics on grants management-related tasks in SFS, are available within the SFS Vendor Portal. For questions or assistance using SFS, contact the SFS Help Desk at helpdesk@sfs.ny.gov.

TRAINING, RESOURCES, and WATERSHED PLANNING

Library of Ordinances Offered by NYSACC

Municipalities are encouraged to view the library of ordinances compiled by the NYS Association of Conservation Commissions. [Check it out](#)⁸.

NYS DEC Offers Trainings in Collaboration with the Hudson River Estuary Program

The Hudson River Estuary Conservation and Land Use Team created a webinar training series to provide a foundation in conservation and land use planning. Participants will learn about biodiversity, conservation principles, best practices, and tools to identify and conserve important habitat and water resources within New York's home rule system. [See more](#)⁹.

Best Practices for Adopting Conservation Inventories and Plans

A new publication provides 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. [Learn more](#)¹⁰ about the new guidebook in a recorded [webinar with the lead author](#)¹¹.

Putting Natural Areas and Habitat on the Map

In 2023, the number of municipalities creating and using [natural resources inventories](#) (NRIs) continued to grow. By 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. [Read more](#).

MONITORING and RESEARCH

1/17 3:00 - PFAS: What do we know and where are we headed next?

Hear the latest research on PFAS and the social or economic issues related to PFAS risk, exposure, and remediation. Current knowledge and research gaps will be discussed as well as the future direction of PFAS work and policy. [Register](#)¹².

⁸ <https://nysacc.org/index.php/ordinance-library/>

⁹ <https://dec.ny.gov/nature/waterbodies/oceans-estuaries/hudson-river-estuary-program/conservation-and-land-use-program/webinars>

¹⁰ https://extapps.dec.ny.gov/docs/remediation_hudson_pdf/nriospadoption.pdf

¹¹ <https://meetny.webex.com/webappng/sites/meetny/recording/5c353462d7cb103bbfc8005056813c11/playback>

¹² https://uwmadison.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_veslaEqnRFm45WCXHQkoRg#/registration

3/9 9:00-noon - SAVE THE DATE! Bob Brower Scientific Symposium: March 9th, 2024

Save the date! The annual Bob Brower Scientific Symposium is back with the topic OUR LAKE, OUR LEGACY. Registration details to come. Check [OWLA.org](https://owla.org) for details.

Why Hydrilla is a problem and needs to be monitored, treated, and removed from Cayuga Lake

Hydrilla (*Hydrilla verticillata*) is a highly invasive aquatic plant, first discovered at the south end of Cayuga Lake in 2011. Hydrilla grows quickly to fill and clog water up to 30 feet deep. Fish, turtles, boats, and people are crowded out by hydrilla.

A team of educational, research, and public agencies work together to monitor Hydrilla in Cayuga Lake. Known infestations are managed according to the Cayuga Lake Hydrilla Management Plan 2021-26, which includes targeted treatments with two herbicides (fluridone and chelated copper) by the US Army Corps of Engineers, the NYS DEC, and the FL-PRISM. Local activities are coordinated by the City of Ithaca, Departments of Health and Soil & Water Conservation Districts for Cayuga, Tompkins, and Seneca Counties. The Cayuga Lake Watershed Network coordinates public outreach around the lake.

[Read more about outcomes of 2023 hydrilla management](#)¹³ at the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network site and watch their [year end information session](#)¹⁴.

Science showing algal blooms more than summer menace

A Wisconsin researcher points out that the public view on algal bloom seasonality needs to change as scum formations continue to form earlier, hang around longer, and become more prominent throughout the Great Lakes region and the rest of the world. [Read the full story by The Toledo Blade](#)¹⁵.

Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) 2023 Notification Season Summary

During 2023, over 200 waterbodies statewide were listed as "Confirmed HABs" on the New York HAB System (NYHABS). Over 1,100 HAB reports were submitted to DEC and confirmed by staff (See the [HABs Program Guide](#) for more information). The reports ranged from a single observation to widespread blooms that were persistent throughout the season.

Members of the public, the Citizen Statewide Lake Assessment Program, and the DEC Lake Classification and Inventory Program contributed extensively to HABs reporting. Refer to the Division of Water's [Water Quality Monitoring webpage](#) for more information on these programs.

A summary of HABs reported during 2023 is available in the archive section of the Harmful Algal Blooms webpage. Historical HABs data through 2022 is provided on Open NY, which gives public access to digital data (Search the "Data NY" portal for "Harmful Algal Blooms"). View historical water quality monitoring data, including HABs information, at the [DOW Monitoring Portal](#).

Unique pathways of invasive mussel spread

The Invasive Mussel Collaborative recently hosted a webinar on unique pathways of invasive mussel spread. See [the webinar](#)¹⁶ and more information at <https://invasivemusselcollaborative.net/>.

¹³ <https://www.cayugalake.org/resources/hydrilla-information-action/>

¹⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MymKRk5gKNU&t=1s>

¹⁵ <https://www.toledoblade.com/local/environment/2023/12/10/science-showing-algal-blooms-more-than-summer-menace/stories/20231206096>

¹⁶ <https://invasivemusselcollaborative.net/event/webinar-unique-pathways-of-invasive-mussel-spread/>

REGULATORY NEWS

1/3 - The DEC Issues Final State Stormwater General Permit

[DEC has announced](#) the issuance of the final State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) General Permit for Stormwater Discharges from Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s), GP-0-24-001. The permit incorporates changes made in response to extensive stakeholder input and will become effective **January 3, 2024**.

Find the general permit, the Fact Sheet, and Responsiveness Summary on [DEC's Stormwater MS4 Permit and Forms webpage](#). More information about the renewal is in the [December 13, 2023, Environmental Notice Bulletin](#).

Urban stormwater runoff is a significant source of pollution across the state. Since 2003, the MS4 general permit has required MS4 Operators to develop and implement stormwater management programs that help reduce polluted runoff entering New York's waters.

2/9 - DEC Releases Draft Water Quality Guidance to Address Emerging Contaminants from Publicly Owned Treatment Works

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) released new water quality guidance that will advance the State's regulation of the emerging contaminants Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), Perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS), and 1,4-Dioxane. The draft guidance for Publicly Owned Treatment Plants (POTWs) builds upon [guidance released last year for industrial discharges](#) and supports the State's ongoing efforts to protect public health and the environment and prevent exposure to emerging contaminants through the protection of drinking water sources.

The [draft guidance](#) is available on DEC's website. **DEC is holding a 30-day public comment period, which ends on Feb. 9, 2024**. Comments can be emailed to EmergingContaminantsDOW@dec.ny.gov, or sent to New York State DEC, 625 Broadway, Albany NY 12233-3500, ATTN: Sara Latessa. [Read the whole press release](#).¹⁷

2/19-DEC Seeks Input on Proposal to Further Protect Freshwater Wetlands

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Basil Seggos encouraged New Yorkers to review and comment on the development of proposed regulations that would further protect freshwater wetlands statewide. DEC released the Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPR) to begin developing regulations to implement the new law that expands the number of wetlands regulated by DEC to further protect water quality and wildlife habitat. [See the press release](#).¹⁸

The ANPR can be viewed in the [New York State Register](#) or [on the DEC website](#). Comments can be submitted by Feb. 19, 2024 via email to WetlandRegulatoryComments@dec.ny.gov

Biden-Harris Administration Proposes to Strengthen the Lead and Copper Rule to Protect All Communities from Lead in Drinking Water

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced a proposal to strengthen its Lead and Copper Rule that would require water systems across the country to replace lead service lines within 10 years. EPA is also proposing additional improvements to protect public health, such as lowering the lead action level and improving sampling protocols utilized by water systems. Today's proposed action significantly advances President Biden's commitment to remove every lead service line in America to protect children and vulnerable

¹⁷ <https://dec.ny.gov/news/press-releases/2024/1/dec-releases-draft-water-quality-guidance-to-address-emerging-contaminants-from-publicly-owned-treatment-works>

¹⁸ <https://dec.ny.gov/news/press-releases/2024/1/dec-seeks-input-on-proposal-to-further-protect-freshwater-wetlands>

populations from the negative impacts of lead in drinking water, particularly those living in disadvantaged communities. [Read the full press release.](#)¹⁹

NEWS from the FINGER LAKES REGION

Finger Lakes

1/31 8:30-4:00 - Finger Lakes Research Conference

The Finger Lakes Institute at Hobart and William Smith Colleges is hosting the 2024 Finger Lakes Research Conference on Wednesday, January 31, 2024 at the HWS campus. This year's program, *Science to Action*, will focus on informed solutions within the Finger Lakes and surrounding watershed & community that address the most pressing environmental and human health issues in the region. The event runs from 8:30 am – 4:00 pm and will include morning and afternoon guest speaker sessions, panel discussions and poster presentations. [Register here](#)²⁰ for this excellent event. [See the schedule for the conference.](#)

Seneca (some work affecting Cayuga watershed)

Lakewatch – from Seneca Pure Waters Association

Read their 2023/2024 [winter newsletter](#)²¹ with many stories about the good work they have done.

Owasco (also see crossover reports under the Cayuga watershed)

Auburn, Owasco, and OWLA Suing State Over Owasco Lake

Auburn, Owasco, and the Owasco Watershed Lake Association (OWLA) are suing New York State over rules and regulations for Owasco Lake's watershed.

The Citizen reports the suit was filed Friday in Cayuga County Court and claims the state's Department of Health (DOH) violated residents' constitutional rights under the Environmental Rights Amendment to the state constitution and was wrong to deny the city and town's request for nutrient management regulations.

This action comes after years of efforts by elected officials and environmental groups pushing for a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) and an update to the lake's current rules and regulations, something that hasn't been updated since 1984. The TMDL would create a maximum amount of pollutants allowed to enter the lake so it will meet water quality standards. This is hoped to help reduce the occurrence of Harmful Algal Blooms in the lake.

In 2017, local stakeholders began drafting updates to the Owasco Lake Watershed Rules and Regulations. In 2020, both Auburn and Owasco voted in favor of the draft resolution; however, the DOH has yet to adopt it.

[Read more about this action.](#)²²

Voice of the Lake – Owasco Watershed Lake Association (OWLA)

[See articles on](#)

- OWLA Board of Directors on Article 78 Proceedings
- Hemlock Protection with the Help of Predators
- Lake Friendly Living tips
- 2/7 - [Public Forum](#)

¹⁹ <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/biden-harris-administration-proposes-strengthen-lead-and-copper-rule-protect-all>

²⁰ <https://app.registrationsguru.net/#!/registration?eventId=451da2ba-1825-491a-8dec-110e8fdc917f>

²¹ <https://senecalake.org/resources/Documents/WINTER%202023%20Lakewatch.pdf>

²² <https://www.fingerlakesdailynews.com/local/cayuga/auburn-owasco-owla-suing-state-over-owasco-lake>

Skaneateles

1/30 6:00 - Skaneateles Lake Watershed Nine Element Plan

A [second public meeting](#)²³ will be held on the [Skaneateles Lake Watershed Nine Element Plan](#)²⁴.

Skaneateles Lake Association News: Clear Lake. Pure Water.

[The issue](#)²⁵ includes the following topics:

- SLA Annual Meeting and Special Report
- Community Forums
- Environmental Protection Fund - Onondaga County Support
- Mayor Walsh and City of Syracuse Support
- ESF Lawn to Meadow Program
- Emerging Watershed Scientists
- Remembering Robert (Bob) Liegel

New York State

Governor Hochul's Proposals to Safeguard Clean Water, Protect Lakes, and Provide Storm Resiliency

During her State of the State address, Governor Hochul identified [plans and goals to protect New York's waters](#)²⁶ and adapt to the impacts of climate change and [plans to plant 25 million trees](#)²⁷ to safeguard clean water and protect our lakes.

Road Salt Reduction Measures in Adirondack Park

New York State Department of Transportation (DOT) Commissioner Marie Therese Dominguez has announced a number of measures being launched during the current snow and ice season as part of [DOT's continuing efforts to reduce salt in the Adirondack Park](#). These measures fulfill a number of recommendations brought forward by the Adirondack Road Salt Reduction Task Force, including a new liquid-only snow plow route on Routes 9/9N/373 in Keeseville, Clinton County, the implementation of new technologies, management of 'cold or nuisance spots' on the state highway system, and the continued sharing of road salt management best practices with local governments and private entities.

In September 2023, the [Adirondack Road Salt Reduction Task Force](#), co-chaired by DOT and DEC, with representation from the New York State Department of Health, Adirondack Park Agency, and ten additional appointed members, released its Road Salt Reduction Assessment and Recommendations with respect to winter road management practices within the Adirondack Park.

[See an additional article in the Adirondack Explorer](#)²⁸.

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

2/13 12:00-1:00-Great Lakes Data-Sharing Webinar

Great Lakes researchers generate a wealth of data to help understand and solve thorny regional challenges. Several tools exist to help researchers share their data to improve regional collaboration and knowledge. Learn about the [Great Lakes Observing System](#) and other powerful databases and tools in an upcoming webinar, on **February 13, 2024, at 12:00-1:00 P.M.** The webinar is hosted by Michigan Sea Grant and partners. [Register](#).

²³ <https://skaneateles9e.cnyrpd.org/get-involved/>

²⁴ <https://skaneateles9e.cnyrpd.org/>

²⁵ <https://mailchi.mp/3b92edb6bc41/december-23-news?e=59a52d2bfc>

²⁶ <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-hochul-announces-comprehensive-resiliency-plan-protect-new-yorkers-extreme-weather>

²⁷ <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-hochul-announces-actions-plant-25-million-trees-safeguard-clean-water-and-protect-our>

²⁸ <https://www.adirondackexplorer.org/stories/salting-roads-polluting-drinking-water>

Michigan farm czar: Our fight against Lake Erie pollution isn't working

The director of Michigan's Department of Agriculture and Rural Development says Michigan's efforts to curb the farm pollution that fuels Lake Erie's toxic green algae are not working. [Read the full story by Bridge Michigan.](#)

DNR to invest \$4M for Michigan wetlands to help reduce harmful algal blooms

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources is investing \$4 million to advance wetland restoration and reduce harmful algal blooms in both Lake Erie and Saginaw Bay watersheds to improve drinking water and wildlife habitat. [Read the full story by WXYZ-TV – Detroit, MI.](#)

PFAS Experts Gather to Address Growing Chemical Crisis.

At the Michigan Department of Environmental, Great Lakes, and Energy's fourth annual Great Lakes PFAS Summit, attendees shared information regarding all aspects of PFAS pollution. This year's event broke attendance records with over 2000 participants representing all 50 states and nine countries. [Read the full story by Great Lakes Now.](#)

Great Lakes Commission Events Calendar, News, and Funded Projects.

Cayuga Lake is part of the Great Lakes watershed. Read their [latest news](#)²⁹ and see the [Great Lakes Commission calendar of events](#) is full of offerings. A sampling:

- Feb 20-22 Annual Wetland Science Conference. [29th Annual Wetland Science Conference](#)
- March 5-7: [Great Lakes Commission Semiannual Meeting and Great Lakes Day 2024](#)
- May 20-24: [IAGLR's 67th Annual Conference on Great Lakes Research](#)

The Great Lakes Commission awarded more than \$1.5 million in grants to reduce the runoff of sediment, nutrients, and other pollutants into the lakes and their tributaries through the [Great Lakes Sediment and Nutrient Reduction Program](#). For more than 30 years, this grant program has prevented millions of pounds of phosphorus and tons of sediments from entering the lakes.

See the [2023 grantees](#) including A \$300,000 grant in Ontario County in the Finger Lakes for phosphorus and sediment reduction

Can Michigan reduce phosphorus pollution getting into Lake Erie by 40 percent?

Officials from Michigan want to reduce phosphorus pollution going into Lake Erie, but they're not exactly sure how or when they'll reach their goal. At a conference this week, state government leaders, researchers, and not-for-profits outlined a strategy to lower Michigan's share of phosphorus feeding Lake Erie. [Read the full story by Great Lakes Now](#)³⁰.

²⁹ <https://mailchi.mp/glc/newsletter-december-2023?e=cfdod9c6fo>

³⁰ <https://www.greatlakesnow.org/2023/12/can-michigan-reduce-phosphorus-pollution-getting-into-lake-erie-by-40-percent/>