

# Cayuga County Water Quality Management Agency



## **2019 Year End Report**

**Approved by the Cayuga County Water Quality Management Agency  
on February 6, 2020**

**The Cayuga County Water Quality Management Agency's Mission**

The Cayuga County Water Quality Management Agency (WQMA) was created by County Legislative Resolution #445-90 to serve the Cayuga County Legislature in meeting its responsibilities in the management and protection of the County's water resources.

The WQMA advises the Cayuga County Legislature on matters related to water resource management and planning. The WQMA is charged with identifying problems, proposing priorities, and promoting the coordination of activities in the management and protection of the County's water resources. More specifically, the Agency is charged with:

1. Creating and maintaining a comprehensive planning and implementation program for water quality management in Cayuga County.
2. Coordinating the responsibilities of agencies and watershed associations with interest in water quality management in Cayuga County.
3. Providing greater public input into the process of water quality management and related programs.
4. Providing an effective public education program to develop public understanding and support for water quality management in Cayuga County.

## **2019 Cayuga County Water Quality Management Agency Membership**

**Chair: Stephen Lynch**

**Vice-Chair: Eileen O'Connor**

### **Cayuga County Legislature's Environmental Advisors:**

Director of Cayuga County Planning and Economic Development  
Director of Cayuga County Environmental Health  
Director of Cayuga County Parks and Trails  
Director of Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District  
Cayuga County Solid Waste Management Program Administrator  
Cayuga County Cooperative Extension Executive Director

Stephen Lynch  
Eileen O'Connor  
Doug Dello Stritto  
Doug Kierst  
Bruce Natale  
Daniel Welch

### **Non-County, Local Officials**

Town of Owasco  
City of Auburn  
Cayuga County Association of Town Supervisors  
Cayuga County Association of Villages

Edward Wagner  
Seth Jensen  
Don Oltz  
Harry Hinman

### **Representatives from Waterbody Associations in Cayuga County**

Cayuga Lake Watershed Network  
Central New York Waterways, Inc.  
Duck Lake Association  
Lake Como Association  
Little Sodus Bay Betterment Association  
Owasco Watershed Lake Association  
Skaneateles Lake Association Inc.

Jim Young  
Carl Wiezalis  
Dale Powell  
Barb Harvey  
Gary Clark  
Rick Nelson  
Lauren Ryan

### **Partners**

Atlantic States Legal Foundation  
Cayuga County Water and Sewer Authority  
Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board  
Finger Lakes Institute at Hobart and William Smith Colleges  
Finger Lakes Partnership for Invasive Species Management  
Finger Lakes Water Hub  
Great Lakes Action Agenda Southeast Lake Ontario Work Group  
Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council  
Partners for Healthy Watersheds  
The Nature Conservancy

### **Staff Support**

Michele Wunderlich, Cayuga County Planning and Economic Development, Associate Planner,  
[mwunderlich@cayugacounty.us](mailto:mwunderlich@cayugacounty.us), 315-253-1107

### **Monthly Meetings:**

The Cayuga County WQMA meets on a regular basis, on the 1st Thursday of the month throughout the year at 10 am. All meetings are scheduled for the Natural Resource Center at 7413 County House Road, Auburn unless otherwise noted.

**CAYUGA COUNTY WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (WQMA)**  
**2019 YEAR END REPORT**

**Communication and Outreach Working Group**

**PRIORITY:** Promote WQMA as the source of water quality information.

**ACTION:** Distribute WQMA promotional items at meetings and public events-WQMA.

- *Distributed promotional items at the Owasco Watershed Lake Association's (OWLA's) Bob Brower Scientific Symposium: "HABs in Owasco Lake. A Scientific Symposium in "Plain English."*
- *Distributed promotional items at the Owasco Lake Watershed Rules and Regulations Update two public meetings.*

**PRIORITY:** Provide timely information regarding water news, agency activities, and pollution prevention.

**ACTION:** Prepare and send out quarterly newsletter, the purpose of which will be to highlight work of member and partner agencies and to highlight upcoming or current classes (i.e. Erosion and Sediment Control Training) or programs (such as hydroseeding availability) that are available. Audience will include elected officials, municipal clerks, and planning boards- WQMA.

- *Newsletter from April 2019 included an announcement of the Owasco Lake Watershed Rules and Regulations update public meetings as well as WQMA member and partner updates from the Atlantic States Legal Foundation, Cayuga County Health Department, Cayuga County Parks Trails Department, Cayuga County Department of Planning and Economic Development, Cayuga Lake Watershed Network, Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council, OWLA, Skaneateles Lake Association, and the WQMA.*
- *Water News from August 6, 2019 announced the WQMA organized and ran the Asian Clam survey of Owasco Lake.*
- *Newsletter from August 13, 2019 included a review of New York State Invasive Species Awareness week activities held by the WQMA, information on Harmful Algal Blooms from the Cayuga County Health Department, and partner updates from the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network, OWLA, Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council, and Cayuga County Health Department.*
- *Newsletter from December 6, 2019 included information on nutrients and septic systems from the Cayuga County Health Department, Boating in Cayuga County – High-priority Locations for Invasive Species Management by Sam Beck-Andersen, AIS Project Manager, Finger Lakes Institute at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, and partner updates from the Owasco Lake Watershed Inspection and Protection Division and Congressman Katko.*

**ACTION:** Prepare blogs focusing on educating the public regarding a wide variety of water quality news and topics. These blogs will be posted on the website and published on Facebook and Twitter- WQMA.

- Website news blog used to promote:
  - *U. S. Environmental Protection Agency to Hold Public Meeting for Cleanup of Groundwater at the Cayuga County Groundwater Contamination Superfund Site, Cayuga County, New York*
  - *The Water Bulletin: The Newsletter of the Community Science Institute.*
- Website news blog:
  - *All news blogs advertised on Facebook and Twitter. Notices also sent to WQMA email list.*
  - *Owasco Lake Fish Advisory, written by Eileen O'Connor and posted April 5, 2019.*
  - *Update on Former Powerex Site, written by Eileen O'Connor and posted May 21, 2019.*
  - *Update on Former TRW Site, written by Eileen O'Connor and posted May 28, 2019.*
  - *Invasive Species Awareness Week Activities, written by Michele Wunderlich and posted July 22, 2019.*
  - *Hydrilla Hunt 2019, written by the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network and posted October 23, 2019.*
  - *Owasco Watershed Lake Association (OWLA) Fall Update, written by Rick Nelson and posted October 30, 2019.*

**The following three action items are from the Cayuga County Manure Management Working Group – 14-Point Action Agenda Items to Address:**

**ACTION:** Analyze New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) records of complaints and investigations of manure activities over time to determine if enforcement activities are: 1) focused strongly enough on repeat, uncooperative offenders, 2) adequately preventing direct, unrestricted access to streams by livestock, and 3) conducted in a manner that is uniform and consistent across all watersheds- Planning.

- *Documents have been received and are being organized in a spreadsheet by the Cayuga County Department of Planning and Economic Development for review.*

**ACTION:** Publish quarterly or annual reports and press releases summarizing the NYSDEC records relating to complaints regarding manure activities, sharing the results of analysis of NYSDEC complaints conducted by the Cayuga County Department of Planning and Economic Development- WQMA Communications and Outreach Working Group.

- *Annual report will be published once complaints are organized.*

**ACTION:** Expand the WQMA Website by adding material on how to recognize good and bad manure handling practices and effectively communicate the Cayuga County Water Quality Management Agency Manure Management Guidelines prepared in 2017

and the analysis of NYSDEC complaints and investigations in a manner that makes this information understandable to the widest possible audience-Communications and Outreach Working Group.

- *Not completed.*

### **INVASIVE SPECIES WORKING GROUP**

The priority species that the Cayuga County WQMA Invasive Species Working Group will concentrate on in 2019 are those non-native species that have the potential to negatively impact the watersheds of Cayuga County.

#### **PRIORITY: Survey invasive species in Cayuga County**

**ACTION:** The Working Group will work with partners to survey for priority species within Cayuga County.

- *Assisted OWLA member by providing procedure on how to do boat surveys for hemlock woolly adelgid.*

**ACTION:** The Working Group will work with partners to survey areas suspected of having a new invasive species population.

- *Michele Wunderlich provided information to the CNY Waterways, Inc. about how to use iMapInvasives to provide locations of new infestations of water chestnut in Cross Lake and the Seneca River.*

**ACTION:** The Working Group will conduct Asian clam diving inventory surveys in Owasco Lake to try to determine where the adult population is surviving and then discuss the possible effectiveness of control methods. Cayuga Lake may also be surveyed this summer.

- *Asian clam survey held on August 6, 2019 off of the Emerson Park Beaches in Owasco Lake.*
- *Presentation regarding the survey held at December 5, 2019 WQMA meeting.*
- *The WQMA passed a motion for the Cayuga County Water Quality Management Agency to support the City of Auburn in managing the rule curve to drawdown Owasco Lake to the extent practicable this winter to mitigate invasive species, especially the Asian Clam.*

#### **PRIORITY: Education, training and public participation**

**ACTION:** The Working Group will share educational information on priority species of concern to the public on the WQMA website, newsletter and social media accounts.

- *Provided educational information on invasive species to the WQMA Facebook and Twitter accounts.*
- *Participated in PlayCleanGo Awareness Week on social media.*
- *Provided information at a WQMA meeting regarding information on oak wilt and the report that slender false brome has been found in the Finger Lakes Land Trust's Owasco Land Preserve.*

- *Advertised the presentation by Dr. Kim Schultz on “Quagga Mussels: What you need to know.”*

**ACTION:** The Working Group will prepare and publish four or more Eco Talk articles per year on invasive species.

- *Eco Talk article: “Look out for hemlock woolly adelgid.” by Caroline Marschner, Charlotte Malmborg and Michele Wunderlich. The Citizen, Feb 15, 2019.*
- *Eco Talk article: “What you can do as Invasive Species Awareness Week approaches” by Michele Wunderlich. The Citizen, June 28, 2019.*
- *Eco Talk article: “Why water chestnut must be pulled from Cayuga Lake” by Judy Wright, The Citizen, July 18, 2019.*
- *Eco Talk article: “How to help stop hydrilla in Cayuga Lake” by Hilary Lambert, Eileen O’Connor and Michele Wunderlich. The Citizen, August 2, 2019.*

**ACTION:** The Working Group will work to provide training programs and/or information on priority species at WQMA meetings, Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council meetings, Conservation Field Days, and other public venues.

- *At the Bob Brower Scientific Symposium in March 2019, OWLA distributed pamphlets and literature covering invasive species, manure management, ditch guidelines, and other Health Department water quality brochures.*
- *Michele Wunderlich provided invasive species identification training at the July 11, 2019 WQMA meeting. Information was provided on the Invasive Species Mapping Challenge.*
- *Michele Wunderlich participated in one day of Conservation Field Days and provided training on invasive species.*

**ACTION:** The Working Group will provide a training or control event as part of Invasive Species Week.

- *Michele Wunderlich provided two iMapInvasives trainings on July 11, 2019 during Invasive Species week. She provided information on the trainings to the Finger Lakes Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (FLPRISM).*

**ACTION:** The Working Group will invite other stakeholders and partners to activities sponsored by the WQMA and its members and partners including March to Lake Day, Owasco Lake Day, invasive species workshops and watershed steward events.

- *Invitations were sent for OWLA’s March Symposium: “HABs in Owasco Lake. A Scientific Symposium in “Plain English””, which included a talk by SUNY ESF Associate Professor Kim Schulz on her quagga mussel survey.*

**PRIORITY: Invasive species prevention, control and management**

**ACTION:** The Working Group will support existing invasive species prevention, control and management programs including the County’s aquatic harvesting program,

the Finger Lakes Institute’s Water Chestnut Control Program, the Finger Lake’s Institute’s Starry Stonewort Collaborative, Hydrilla in Cayuga Lake program, and will assist as able in other control programs.

- *Members participate in the monthly Statewide Hydrilla Task Force Conference calls.*
- *Members participate in the Aurora and King Ferry Hydrilla Conference calls.*
- *Members participate in the Starry Stonewort Collaborative Project.*
- *Members work with the Finger Lakes Institute to schedule water chestnut hand pulling events in Cayuga County.*
- *Provided information to members about the Finger Lakes Institute’s program “Finger Lakes Macrophyte Survey”.*
- *Asked for volunteers for a water chestnut handpull in Sterling Creek on July 12, 2019 and July 13, 2019.*
- *Resolution passed October 3, 2019 regarding issues with the general permit for water chestnut handpulling which was forwarded to NYSDEC.*

## **NUTRIENT AND SEDIMENT WORKING GROUP**

### **PRIORITY: Septic Systems**

**ACTION:** Evaluate technologies that remove phosphorus from septic tank effluent before it is discharged into a leach field– Cayuga County Health Department.

- *The Cayuga County Health Department evaluated technologies and has concluded that there are no commercially available systems that are feasible for residential use to remove phosphorus before it is discharged into a leach field. The Cayuga County Health Department did find some technologies that look very promising, but are not yet commercially available. The Cayuga County Health Department searched unsuccessfully for homeowners to volunteer to install two different innovative technologies as a pilot test to test the products’ effectiveness.*

**ACTION:** Promote public sewers where appropriate– Cayuga County Planning Department, Cayuga County Health Department.

- *The Cayuga County Health Department assisted the Cayuga County Water and Sewer Authority as they developed their Regional Master Plan for the Efficient Delivery of Water and Sewer Services in Cayuga County regarding the significant need of public sewer in the Village of Cato and the lakefront properties south of the Village of Aurora.*

### **PRIORITY: Stormwater**

**ACTION:** Encourage installation of storm drain disks – Lake Associations, The Nature Conservancy, Association of Towns and Association of Villages.



- *Not completed.*

**ACTION:** Finalize guidelines for lake and stream front property management including landscaping to minimize nutrient loading – Nutrient and Sediment Working Group.

- *Guidelines were finalized and placed on the WQMA website. The link was provided to the WQMA email list for review. The guidelines are scheduled to be adopted by the WQMA and Cayuga County Legislature in February 2020.*

**ACTION:** Encourage lakefront and stream corridor protection by property owners through education and distribution of lakefront property owner’s guidelines– Lake Associations, CCE.

- *Guidelines were finalized and placed on the WQMA website. The link was provided to the WQMA email list for review. The guidelines are scheduled to be adopted by the WQMA and Cayuga County Legislature in February 2020. Once they are adopted, they will be advertised to Lake Associations and lakefront owners.*

**ACTION:** Promote and encourage the installation of permeable pavement where possible– Planning, Parks, Lake Associations, Association of Towns and Association of Villages, SWCD, CCE.

- *Cayuga County Departments of Planning and Economic Development and Parks and Trails applied for funds through the New York State Green Infrastructure Grant Program. The proposal, which was not selected for funding, included funds for installation of permeable pavement in the boat launch and Little League areas.*
- *Cayuga County received State’s Resiliency and Economic Development Initiative (REDI) funds for work at Sterling Nature Center which includes permeable pavement in the parking lot.*
- *The Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) submitted a grant proposal to install porous pavement at the Natural Resources Center. Unfortunately, the proposal was not selected for funding.*

**ACTION:** Promote Municipal Ditch Maintenance guidelines– Lake Associations, SWCD, CCE.

- *The Cayuga County SWCD attended the Cayuga County Town Highway Superintendents Association Meetings and discussed the implementation and maintenance of road ditch stabilization measures.*
- *OWLA distributed the Municipal Ditch Maintenance guidelines at several OWLA monthly meetings and encouraged members to contact their Town Boards.*

- ***OWLA established their own roadside Ditch Remediation Program ([www.owla.org](http://www.owla.org)) soliciting donations for cost sharing with the Cayuga County SWCD to implement sediment and erosion control in these waterways.***

**ACTION:** Develop a presentation on sedimentation and erosion control considerations in site plan review for municipal planning board members; Schedule making the presentation at one of the County's planning board training sessions- Nutrient and Sediment Working Group.

- ***Not completed***

**ACTION:** Prepare and distribute one or more communications pieces on sedimentation and erosion control issues and resources available to assist property owners in addressing them- Nutrient and Sediment Working Group.

- ***Not completed***

**ACTION:** Educate municipalities regarding the need to implement erosion and sediment control practices during municipal projects such as waterline installations-Nutrient and Sediment Working Group

- ***Not completed***

#### **PRIORITY: Pet Waste**

**ACTION:** Encourage pet owners to properly dispose of pet waste through education- Communication Group, CCE, Lake Associations.

- ***Not completed***

**ACTION:** Encourage municipalities to install pet waste receptacles in public parks and trails and ensure proper disposal- Planning, Parks and Trails.

- ***Not completed***

#### **PRIORITY: Golf Courses**

**ACTION:** Educate managers and owners of golf courses about the importance of implementing nutrient management plans- SWCD.

- ***Due to higher priority needs throughout the County, the Cayuga County SWCD did not have any resources available to complete this task.***

#### **PRIORITY: Lawn Care**

**ACTION:** Publish and distribute information regarding the ban on phosphorus in lawn fertilizer and appropriate ways to manage lawn waste – Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County (CCE), OWLA, Lakefront Property Homeowners Associations, WQMA Communications Group.

- *The OWLA website (www.owla.org) has info about proper lawn waste disposal to minimize nutrients flowing into Owasco Lake.*
- *At the Bob Brower Scientific Symposium in March 2019, OWLA distributed pamphlets and literature covering invasive species, manure management, and ditch guidelines, as well as other Health Department water quality brochures.*

**ACTION:** Request that the Finger Lakes Hub investigate the compliance of commercial lawn care companies with phosphorus free fertilizer law.

- *Not completed*

#### **PRIORITY: Burning**

**ACTION:** Provide education on proper disposal of ash and the impact of lakeshore fireworks– CCE, Lake Associations, WQMA Communications Group.

- *Not completed*

#### **PRIORITY: Agriculture**

**ACTION:** Promote participation in Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) – SWCD.

- *The Cayuga County SWCD continues to work with the Agriculture Community to promote the AEM program.*

**ACTION:** Promote Manure Management Guidelines– OWLA, CCE, SWCD.

- *As the Cayuga County SWCD meets with agricultural operations, we encourage farms to follow approved nutrient management guidelines. If the operation has a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan, we encourage the farm to follow the guidelines as set forth in the farm specific plan. The Cayuga County SWCD makes itself available to farm operations that are interested in the development of new, and review of existing, nutrient management plans.*
- *At the Bob Brower Scientific Symposium in March 2019, OWLA distributed pamphlets and literature covering invasive species, manure management, and ditch guidelines, as well as other Health Department water quality brochures.*

**ACTION:** Encourage the installation and maintenances of Best Management Practices (BMPs), including cover crops, buffers, and hedgerows, to improve soil health, increase organic content in soils, and minimize soil loss– CCE, SWCD.

- *The Cayuga County SWCD works with farms in Cayuga County on soil health related BMP's to increase soil stability during weather events, along with implementing soil health related meetings and seminars to educate the farming community on the benefits of soil health adopted BMP's.*
- *This year, the Cayuga County SWCD worked with 45 farms in the Cayuga Lake and Owasco Lake Watersheds to implement cover crops and reduced tillage management practices. They assisted with 8,850 acres of cover crops and 6,200*

*acres of reduced tillage management in the Cayuga Lake and Owasco Lake Watersheds.*

- *The Cayuga County SWCD sponsored two soil health meetings, with over 60 participants.*

**ACTION:** Request that the Finger Lakes Hub investigate the nutrient impact of drain tile discharges.

- *Not completed*

**PRIORITY: All Areas**

**ACTION:** Deliver “Welcome packages” to new homeowners about how to minimize their nutrient impact– Lake Associations, Association of Towns and Association of Villages.

- *Not completed*

**ACTION:** Promote the use of conservation easements- Finger Lakes Land Trust, Nature Conservancy, Planning, CCE, SWCD.

- *Due to higher priority needs throughout the County, the Cayuga County SWCD did not have any resources available to complete this task.*