Cayuga County Water Quality Management Agency



2020 Year End Report

Approved by the Cayuga County Water Quality Management Agency on February 4, 2021

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.

2020 Cayuga County Water Quality Management Agency Membership

Chair: Seth Jensen

Vice-Chair: Doug Dello Stritto

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 (delegate)

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

Dan Welch

Non-County, Local Officials

Town of OwascoEdward WagnerCity of AuburnSeth JensenCayuga County Association of Town SupervisorsDon OltzCayuga County Association of VillagesJeff Emerson

Representatives from Waterbody Associations in Cayuga County

Cayuga Lake Intermunicipal Organization

Central New York Waterways, Inc.

Duck Lake Association

Vacant

Carl Wiezalis

Dale Powell

Lake Como Association Barb Harvey/Pat Mooney

Little Sodus Bay Betterment Association Gary Clark
Owasco Watershed Lake Association Rick Nelson
Skaneateles Lake Association Inc. 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
NYSDEC Great Lakes Program
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, 315-253-1107, http://cayugacountywater.org

CAYUGA COUNTY WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT AGENCY 2020 YEAR END REPORT

COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH WORKING GROUP

PRIORITY: Celebrate the positive water quality activities occurring in Cayuga County including highlighting the voluntary implementation of best management practices (BMPs)

ACTION: The celebration of positive initiatives will be the focus of communication pieces (see next priority) generated by the committee. - WQMA Communication

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

ACTION: Prepare and send out quarterly newsletters, (March, June, Sept, and Dec) the purpose of which will be to highlight positive water quality initiatives, work of member and partner agencies, and upcoming or current classes (i.e. Erosion and Sediment Control Training) or programs (such as hydroseeding availability, or Hazardous Waste Disposal opportunities). Audience will include County Legislators, municipal elected officials, municipal clerks, and planning boards as well as WQMA partners and members- WQMA Communication

- All newsletters sent to WQMA email list, Cayuga County Legislators, Town and Village clerks, Mayors and Supervisors, City of Auburn Mayor and clerk, and 134 town and village planning board members.
- First newsletter sent out April 23, 2020 included:
 - o "Seeking Cayuga County shoreline volunteers to be HABs Harriers."
 - This article lead to a number of new volunteers assisting with this program.
 - o "The Reemergence of the Central New York Waterways Association, Inc."
 - o Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council update.
 - o Owasco Watershed Lake Association update.
- Second newsletter sent out June 29, 2020 included:
 - Owasco Lake Watershed Inspection and Protection Division update which highlighted the agricultural stewardship of Jim Sierzenga, a local farmer.
 - o "Paddle4Change Trash2Art."
 - o Owasco Watershed Lake Association update.
 - o CNY Regional Planning & Development Board update.
- Third newsletter sent out September 30, 2020 included:
 - Article by the Owasco Lake Watershed Inspection and Protection Division about the work Casowasco has done to protect Owasco Lake.
 - o "Septic System Replacement Program."
 - o "Asian Clam Survey" done by the Invasive Species Working Group.
 - o "82 and counting...Cayuga County's Household Hazardous Waste Program, 1996 to 2020."
 - o Skaneateles Lake Association, Robert G. Werner, Ph.D., March 6, 1936 September 13, 2020."

- Fourth newsletter sent out on December 17, 2020 included:
 - o "Owasco Watershed Lake Association (OWLA) Update."
 - o "What is soil health and how does it affect the watershed?"
 - o "Invasive Ghosts of Seasons' Past / New Practices for Seasons' Futures" which highlighted the work that the Town of Owasco and EartHeritage have done to remediate damage to a wetland next to their town highway facility.
 - o "Protecting water quality in a changing climate."
- Due to Covid-19 pandemic, created a Cayuga County WQMA Report Out for May 5, 2020 and August 14, 2020 to keep WQMA members and partners appraised of work that was being conducted.

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 Communication

- All news blogs advertised on Facebook and Twitter. Notices also sent to WQMA email list.
- Blogs published on WQMA website:
 - o January 23, 2020: "2019 Water Quality Monitoring Report for Owasco Lake Now Available."
 - o February 20, 2020: "Cayuga County WQMA 2019 Year End Report."
 - o March 6, 2020: "Residential Guidelines to Protect Water Quality in Cayuga County."
 - o April 17, 2020: "City of Auburn Earth Day Proclamation."
 - July 27, 2020: "CCE Cayuga County Welcomes 4-H STEM Educator Kim Oswald."
 - o July 31, 2020: "Owasco Watershed Lake Association Update."

ACTION: Assist the Nutrient and Sediment Working group by posting blogs on the topics of pet waste, lawn fertilizer and getting soil tests before adding amendments-WQMA Communication

• March 6, 2020 blog: "Residential Guidelines to Protect Water Quality in Cayuga County."

ACTION: Assist the Nutrient and Sediment Working group by creating an electronic resource of lake friendly informational brochures that can be included as welcome package for new lakeshore residents-WQMA Communication.

• Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council in cooperation with Owasco Watershed Lake Association has developed a homeowner packet for Owasco Lake and began distribution. Work still needs to be done to broaden this to all watersheds in the county and develop an electronic home for this information.

PRIORITY: Update website resources with current and scientific information and promote the WQMA as the source of factual water quality information in Cayuga County

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

- Distributed WQMA promotional items at the "Bob Brower Scientific Symposium in 'Plain English'" that was held on March 7, 2020.
- Most meetings and public events cancelled due to Covid-19 pandemic.

ACTION: Review and update the WQMA website - WQMA Communication group

• The Cayuga County Planning Department routinely reviews and updates the WQMA website.

ACTION: Expand the WQMA Website by adding material on how to recognize appropriate and inappropriate manure handling practices -WQMA Communication group

• No action was taken on this item in 2020 due to difficulties caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

INVASIVE SPECIES WORKING GROUP

The priority species that the Cayuga County WQMA Invasive Species Working Group will concentrate on in 2020 are those invasive 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.

• The WQMA worked with the Finger Lakes Institute/Finger Lakes Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management on surveying for priority species such as hydrilla and other invasive species.

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

• Owasco Watershed Lake Association and Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council worked to survey the Owasco Lake Watershed for hemlock woolly adelgid. Planning provided information on finding hemlock groves.

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 and Skaneateles Lakes may also be surveyed this summer.

 Asian clam survey held on July 30, 2020 off of the Emerson Park Beaches in Owasco Lake. Article on the survey was published in the WQMA September newsletter.

ACTION: The Working Group will solicit reports of partners doing surveillance and monitoring.

• WQMA advertised the "Season-end live reports on Hydrilla in Cayuga Lake" webinar held on November 4, 2020.

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.
- Distributed the Hydrilla Wanted poster created by the Finger Lakes Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management and Finger Lakes Institute.
- The third newsletter sent out September 30, 2020 included an article entitled "Asian Clam Survey."
- The fourth WQMA newsletter sent out on December 17, 2020 included the article "Invasive Ghosts of Seasons' Past / New Practices for Seasons' Futures."

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

• Eco Talk article: "How to help rid Cayuga Lake of hydrilla" written by Michele Wunderlich, Associate Planner, Cayuga County Department of Planning and Economic Development and Hilary Lambert, Steward/Executive Director, Cayuga Lake Watershed Network. The Citizen, June 4, 2020.

ACTION: The Working Group provide and support training programs and/or information on priority species at WQMA meetings, Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council meetings, Bob Brower Scientific Symposium in "Plain English", Conservation Field Days, and other public venues.

- Staffed a table on invasive species at the "Bob Brower Scientific Symposium in 'Plain English'" that was held on March 7, 2020 utilizing Finger Lakes-Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance funds.
- Most meetings and public events cancelled due to Covid-19 pandemic.

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

• Michele Wunderlich presented a webinar on Invasive Species Identification on June 12, 2020 as part of New York State Invasive Species Awareness week.

ACTION: The Working Group will promote activities sponsored by the WQMA and its members and partners, including the Bob Brower Scientific Symposium in "Plain English", invasive species workshops and watershed steward events on the WQMA website and social media accounts.

- The WQMA co-sponsored the "Bob Brower Scientific Symposium in 'Plain English."
- Promoted the Finger Lakes Institute/Finger Lakes Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management "Invasive Species How to Know, Observe and Report" webinars by emails and on Facebook.
- The WOMA promoted activities on Facebook and Twitter.

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 Lake's Institute's Starry Stonewort Collaborative, Finger Lake's Institute's Invasive Plant Protectors program, Hydrilla in Cayuga Lake program, Eurasian Watermilfoil program in Skaneateles Lake, boat steward programs and will assist as able in other control programs.

- The WQMA updated the Cayuga County Hydrilla webpage with new information and the sampling results from the public drinking water and herbicide treatment areas in Cayuga Lake in Aurora.
- County utilized Finger Lakes Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance (FLLOWPA) funds to purchase a CD3 boat cleaning station for Emerson Park.

- Members attended the Finger Lakes Institute/Finger Lakes Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management webinar "Enhancing the Understanding of Starry Stonewort in the Great Lakes Basin."
- Linked to the Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation's video "Owasco Weed Harvesting 2020" from the WQMA Facebook page.
- Linked to the Finger Lakes Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance's (FLLOWPA) Summer 2020 edition of the FLLOWPA Fundamentals Newsletter which had an article about the twelve invasive species disposal stations that were built and installed by the Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District using FLLOWPA funds.

ACTION: The Working Group will work on increasing invasive species education to boaters.

- Members assisted with the development and Cayuga County provided FLLOWPA funding for the "Clean Boating on Cayuga Lake" brochure. Lynn Leopold, the Chair of the Tompkins County Water Resources Council Education Committee distributed copies to Don's Marina, Long Point State Park, Aurora Inn, Frontenac Harbor, Union Springs Village Office, Hibiscus Harbor, Hideaway Harbor Marina/ Campground office, Beacon Bay, Village of Cayuga office, Cayuga Marina and Lock #1 info kiosk.
- The Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council received a grant award through the Finger Lakes Institute/ Finger Lakes Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management for invasive species awareness (Clean/Drain/Dry), and the associated purchase of billboards to be positioned at boat access locations along Owasco Lake.

NUTRIENT AND SEDIMENT WORKING GROUP

PRIORITY: Septic Systems

ACTION: Find homeowners interested in participating in a pilot evaluation of phosphorus removal technologies that are not yet on the market. – Nutrient and Sediment Working Group

• More research into this needs to be done; may not be feasible at individual septic system level at this time.

ACTION: Hold a workshop on septic systems to educate homeowners on function and maintenance – Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County, Owasco Watershed Lake Association, Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council, Cayuga County Health Department, The Nature Conservancy

• Due to the Covid-19 pandemic this action was not completed in 2020; will revisit for 2021.

PRIORITY: Stormwater

ACTION: Research funding sources for storm drain disks – The Nature Conservancy

• The Nature Conservancy sent around a request for proposals (RFP) from the Pollution Prevention Institute as a possible funding source for the disks. The group decided to pass on that opportunity due to capacity issues caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

ACTION: Work with interested municipalities to install storm drain disks at storm catch basins – Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council, Lake Associations

- Storm drain disks were installed in the Villages of Moravia and Locke with support from the Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council and volunteers from local Boy Scout and Cub Scout Units.
- Owasco Watershed Lake Association and the Owasco Lake Watershed Inspection and Protection Division installed 140 circular storm drain medallions near various street drain grates throughout the Villages of Moravia, Locke, and Groton.

ACTION: Distribute the residential guidelines to the public – Lake Associations, WQMA Communications Working Group, Associations of Towns and Villages, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County, Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council

- Eileen O'Connor distributed the "Residential Guidelines to Protect Water Quality in Cayuga County" at the January WQMA meeting.
- A resolution to adopt the "Residential Guidelines to Protect Water Quality in Cayuga County" was passed by the WQMA in February 2020. The guidelines were adopted by the Cayuga County Legislature at their February meeting. The WQMA and Legislature encouraged the adoption and implementation of these practices among all people.

- Blog on WQMA website on March 6, 2020: "Residential Guidelines to Protect Water Quality in Cayuga County." Guidelines are also available on the WQMA website.
- Tweeted link to Residential Guidelines.
- The Residential Guidelines were shared with members of WQMA, County Legislators, Towns and Villages, Lake Associations, and directly with the public. More targeted mailings or distribution strategies will be considered for 2021.
- The Village of Cayuga linked to the Residential Guidelines from their website.
- The Residential Guidelines were also shared by the Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council.

ACTION: Promote the use of green infrastructure such as permeable pavement – Cayuga County Planning Department, Lake Associations, Association of Towns and Association of Villages, Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County, Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council

• The Nutrient and Sediment work group researched some potential green infrastructure that could be incorporated into public works projects. One barrier identified was the high cost of permeable pavement when compared to typical asphalt.

ACTION: Speak at a monthly meeting of the Association of Towns and Association of Villages regarding the WQMA Municipal Ditch Maintenance guidelines— Lake Associations, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County

• No action was taken on this item in 2020 due to difficulties caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

ACTION: Inventory condition of culverts discharging into municipal ditches or streams – Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council

• The Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council, Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District and others are working to survey the condition of culverts, but a more comprehensive effort may be needed.

ACTION: Prepare and distribute communication pieces on sedimentation and erosion control issues and resources available to assist property owners in addressing them – WQMA Nutrient and Sediment Working Group & Communications Working Group

• No action was taken on this item in 2020 due to difficulties caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

ACTION: Educate municipal planning board members regarding the importance of including sedimentation and erosion control considerations in site plan review – Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County

• No action was taken on this item in 2020 due to difficulties caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

ACTION: Speak at a monthly meeting of the Association of Towns and Association of Villages regarding the importance of implementing erosion and sediment control practices during municipal projects such as waterline installations- Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County

• No action was taken on this item in 2020 due to difficulties caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

PRIORITY: Pet Waste

ACTION: Provide and distribute communication pieces regarding the importance of properly disposing pet waste. – WQMA Communication Group, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County, Lake Associations

• No action was taken on this item in 2020 due to difficulties caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

ACTION: Obtain information regarding what trails and parks in the county have pet waste receptacles available – Parks, Association of Towns and Association of Villages

• No action was taken on this item in 2020 due to difficulties caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

PRIORITY: Golf Courses

ACTION: Work with managers and owners of golf courses to obtain certification from Audubon International by implementing Standard Environmental Management Practices – Lake Associations, Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council

• No action was taken on this item in 2020 due to difficulties caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

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, Owasco Watershed Lake Association, Lake Associations, WQMA Communications Group

• Tweeted on the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's annual 'Look for Zero' campaign to help protect our water quality.

ACTION: Provide information on where property owners can get their soil tested before they apply phosphorus – Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County

• No action was taken on this item in 2020 due to the early phase of the Covid-19 pandemic overlapping the beginning of the lawn care season.

PRIORITY: Burning

ACTION: Provide education on proper disposal of ash and the impact of lakeshore fireworks— Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County, Lake Associations, WQMA Communications Group.

• No action was taken on this item in 2020 due to difficulties caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

PRIORITY: Agriculture

ACTION: Develop an inventory of County farms that have completed AEM Tier 1 and Tier 2 – Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District

• Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District has made considerable progress in tracking farms that have completed AEM Tier and Tier 2.

ACTION: Develop an inventory of best management practices (BMPs) that have already been implemented in the County – Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District

• Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District is working on improving their database to track and inventory BMPs installed/implemented in the county.

ACTION: Recognize agricultural operations that have implemented best management practices (BMPs) – Partners for Healthy Watersheds, WQMA Communications Group, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County

- Second WQMA newsletter sent out June 29, 2020 included an article by the Owasco Lake Watershed Inspection and Protection Division which highlighted the agricultural stewardship of Jim Sierzenga, a local farmer.
- Partners for Healthy Watersheds and Owasco Watershed Lake Association have both recognized farms that have successfully implemented BMPs through social media and the Auburn Citizen.

ACTION: Promote Manure Management Guidelines—Partners for Healthy Watersheds, WQMA Communications Group, Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County

• Partners for Healthy Watersheds, Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District, and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County encourage farmers to manage manure in a sustainable way following recommendations from New York State Ag and Markets, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Cornell University, and United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service.

ACTION: Take advantage of funding available for buffers and encourage their implementation adjacent to streams – Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District, Partners for Healthy Watersheds, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County, Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council

• Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council, Owasco Watershed Lake Association, and Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District are involved in efforts to find funding or to deploy funding to encourage buffer implementation.

ACTION: Request that the Finger Lakes Hub investigate the nutrient impact of drain tile discharges—WQMA

• No action was taken on this item in 2020 due to difficulties caused by the Covid 19 pandemic.

ACTION: Assist farms that currently do not have Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans to develop nutrient management plans that will specify appropriate rates, volumes, and timing of application of manure and/or commercial fertilizer on available fields—Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County

• Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District, and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County encourage farmers to manage nutrients through participation in the state Agriculture Environmental Management program.

PRIORITY: All Areas

ACTION: Gather informational documents in one electronic location for use as Welcome Packages for new homeowners regarding how to minimize their nutrient impact— WQMA Communication Group, Lake Associations, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County, Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council

• No action was taken on this item in 2020 due to difficulties caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

ACTION: Download electronic Welcome Packages and deliver to new homeowners – Lake Associations, Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council

• Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council in cooperation with the Owasco Watershed Lake Association has developed a homeowner packet for Owasco Lake and began distribution. Works still needs to be done to broaden this to all watersheds in the county and develop an electronic home for this information.

ACTION: Promote land acquisition and conservation easements for preservation purposes – Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council, The Nature Conservancy

- The Nature Conservancy acquired one property in the Owasco Flats along the Inlet and one property in the Inlet headwaters near Filmore Glen State Park. Both properties will be managed to protect and preserve water quality in Owasco Lake.
- Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council is now authorized to purchase real property and hold easements, and is assessing what additional organizational capacity they need to do that.

ADDITIONAL WORK:

• Cayuga County Department of Planning and Economic Development, Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council and the City of Auburn worked with Hyfi, a company that has a grant to install their water levels sensors in the Great Lakes Basin. They are working on installing water level sensors on tributaries in the Owasco Lake Watershed and in the Owasco Flats Wetland project basins.

RESOLUTIONS PASSED BY THE CAYUGA COUNTY WQMA IN 2020:

- Resolution of Appreciation to Bruce R. Natale, P.E. for his distinguished service to Cayuga County Water Quality Management Agency passed on October 1, 2020.
- Resolution Endorsing the Lake Friendly Living Pledges Created by the Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council and the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network and the Lake Friendly Land Care Pledge Created by the Skaneateles Lake Association passed on November 5, 2020.
- Resolution Amending the Cayuga County Bylaws passed on December 3, 2020.

MOTIONS PASSED BY THE CAYUGA COUNTY WOMA IN 2020:

• Motion to send a letter of support to the Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council for their petition to the State of New York to change the classification of all streams in the Owasco Lake Watershed to AA passed on February 6, 2020.