December 2022

Christmas Tree Recycling – Cayuga County Trade-A-Tree Program
By Valerie Horning of Cayuga County SWCD

Cayuga Recycles, a program of the Cayuga County Department of Planning and Economic Development, in conjunction with the Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County, is sponsoring the annual "Trade-A-Tree" program in Cayuga County. Bring in your "used" (real) Christmas tree after the holidays, and we will give you a certificate for a tree seedling to be picked up in the spring! Old trees will be chipped into mulch to be used on county projects, rather than taking up space in landfills. A Colorado Blue Spruce seedling will be given out to anyone who redeems their certificate on May 12, 2023 at the Annual Conservation District Spring Tree & Shrub Sale.

Trees must be free of decorations, tinsel, wraps or any other foreign objects. Trees will be accepted at the Natural Resource Center, 7413 County House Road, Auburn, NY during the following hours:

December 27-30, 2022 from 8 AM – 3:30 PM
January 3-6, 2023 from 8 AM – 3:30 PM
January 9-13, 2023 from 8 AM – 3:30 PM
January 17-20, 2023 from 8 AM – 3:30 PM

For more information, please visit our website at www.cayugaswcd.org or call the Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District at (315)252-4171, ext. 4, or stop by our office located on County House Road in Sennett. We are available Monday - Friday from 7:30 AM - 4:00 PM.

Tree Planting in Owasco
By Walt Aikman, EartHeritage

Photos – Tree planting in Owasco River Watershed - Walt Aikman with EartHeritage worked with a local Boy Scout Troop to plant three bare root street trees in the Town of Owasco on November 12th.

Skaneateles Lake Eurasian Watermilfoil Control Program 2022 Annual Report
By Frank Moses, Skaneateles Lake Association

Photo – patch of Eurasian Watermilfoil on Skaneateles Lake

Skaneateles Lake Milfoil Control Program Overview

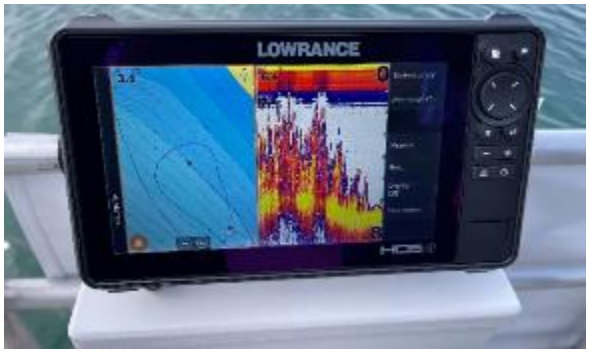
The Skaneateles Lake Association (SLA) implements a Eurasian watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*) control program on Skaneateles Lake that has reduced that species coverage to a level requiring "maintenance" control. While most associated program costs, totaling close to $200K, are paid for by SLA memberships and other funding sources, the $40K in FLLOWPA* funds administered by Onondaga County have also provided valuable needed assistance. *(*FLLOWPA – Finger Lakes-Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance is funded though the NYS Environmental Protection Fund)*

SLA's overall commitment to preventing and addressing invasive species through the Boat Launch Steward Program, Hemlock Tree Protection, and Milfoil Control represents over a $300,000.00 annual investment in Skaneateles Lake and its watershed. All could not be possible without dedicated members, SLA Legacy Fund and other donors, and public funding support.

Photo courtesy of Ty Denslow – Milfoil Control work boat with matting on board

Milfoil Control Operations in 2022

Through services provided by Aquatic Invasives, Inc., divers underwent a training program that started on May 24, 2022, and began diving related to deploying benthic mats on May 31st. The mats are constructed from geotextile material; 12 ft. wide and each mat is approximately 60 ft. long. They are rolled up on a 14 ft. 2 X 4. Multiple mats are loaded onto the pontoon boat and carried to the priority sites identified the previous summer. The last set of mats were deployed on July 26th. In total, 325 mats were deployed covering approximately 6.25 acres of milfoil this year. Each mat is left on the milfoil patch for a minimum of 8 weeks to insure complete elimination of any milfoil under the matting. After that time has elapsed, divers return and roll up the mats. The mats are then tied to the 2 X 4 and stacked on the bottom for pick up later. That last set of mats were retrieved on October 23rd.



Left Photo (L to R) – Aboard "The Bob" - (Dr. Robert Werner Research & Education Boat) - SLA Board Members, Dr. Bill Dean, Co-Chair of Lake Ecology Team; Dr. Paul Torrisi, President; Dr. Buzz Roberts, VP and Lake Ecology Team Co-Chair conducting a Milfoil Survey. Right Photo – Side-scan Sonar imaging with Milfoil signature.

Skaneateles Lake Milfoil Survey – Data-Driven Decision Making

Each summer after the mats are deployed, the shallows of the lake are surveyed using visual verification through rake tosses and sonar with GPS to locate existing milfoil patches to be addressed the next year. Using software from BioBase, patches are mapped, and a polygon is drawn around each patch to determine its area. Priority sites are based upon area size with highest priority going to the largest patches that exhibit Eurasian watermilfoil density of 70% plus within the patch based on visual observation. Other factors such as lake depth, slope of lake bottom and boat launch activity are decision factors in matting locations.

The 2022 priority sites with number of mats deployed at the approximate GPS location are listed here:

Location No.	Mat Qty	Latitude	Longitude
1	29	42.92352	-76.407811
2	53	42.911604	-76.398669
3	18	42.79908	-76.297203
4	24	42.91588	-76.425223
5	14	42.92323	-76.407623
6	13	42.899301	-76.392469
7	5	42.90159	-76.415784
8	3	42.939992	-76.419203
9	13	42.876843	-76.380247
10	34	42.898482	-76.415213
11	54	42.907771	-76.41945
12	18	42.859586	-76.392364
13	6	42.81961	-76.304220
14	32	42.844951	-76.364667
15	3	42.829738	-76.340273
16	3	42.796048	-76.280675
17	3	42.801445	-76.285374
Total Mats	**325**		

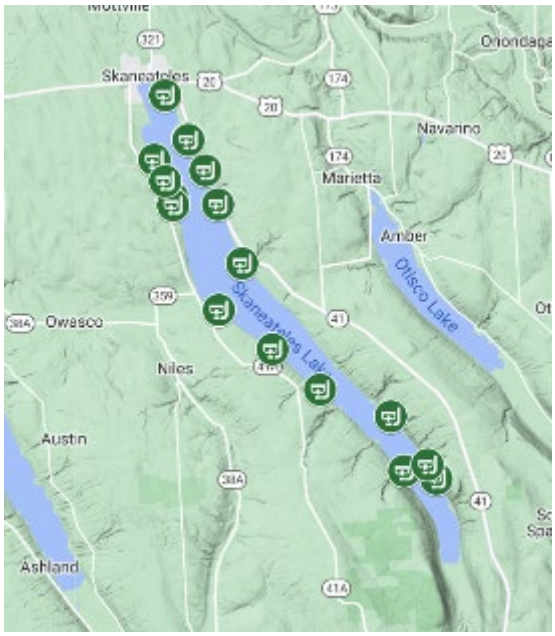


Table 1 – 2022 listed matting locations with quantity of mats at each location.
Map photo – geographic distribution of 2022 matting areas.

Learn more at https://skaneateleslake.org/

Town of Owasco Wetland Remediation Project
By Walt Aikman, EartHeritage

In 2020, the Town of Owasco began a wetland remediation project next to their highway department. This project required the removal of fill and invasive plants; the site graded to native soil depth; guard rail and signage installed; and the planting of 45 species of native grasses, herbaceous plants, shrubs and trees.

Photos - Town of Owasco Wetland Remediation Project Site – Summer 2022

Protecting Owasco Lake Year-Round Requires Collaboration
By: Ally Berry, Owasco Lake Watershed Inspection and Protection Division

As watershed residents, our collective actions shape the future of Owasco Lake. Beyond anthropogenic influences, the landscape is also subject to the whims of weather. Ideally, the community's relationship with the watershed ought to be synergistic, but working to achieve this goal across a scale of 208 square miles can be complex. The Owasco Lake Watershed Inspection and Protection Division (OLWIPD) recognizes that in order to protect Owasco Lake, it is imperative for the local community to remain informed on how to be lake-friendly year-round. To achieve our unified goal of improving water quality, it must be realized that the actions of watershed residents will be exaggerated by weather.

Generally, winter conditions freeze construction projects, just as low temperatures freeze the ground. When the soil thaws, construction activities flow back into operation, just as snow melt flows across newly disturbed soils. While it is true that spring brings life, the associated increase in temperature also brings an influx of runoff from snow melt that can carve out the landscape and carry sediment and nutrients to Owasco Lake. If this flow travels unmitigated across a construction site, various pollutants may flow into surface waters, threatening to impact the drinking water of over 45,000 people. In order to move towards our collective goal of maintaining the health of Owasco Lake, Watershed Inspectors collaborate with watershed residents and contractors to address these concerns on-site before they can even occur.

To reduce potential impacts from snow melt in the spring, watershed residents with ongoing construction activities between November 15th and April 1st are routinely encouraged to winterize their construction site, which can be otherwise described as the implementation of winter-specific erosion and sediment control practices. Recommendations for erosion and sediment control, such as straw mulching, silt fences, sediment logs, and rolled erosion control products, are "stepped-up" prior to winter, providing greater protections to ditches and nearby surface waters. It is especially important to have these in place prior to spring, since the volume of stormwater runoff from the spring thaw can be significant. By taking these proactive measures, the watershed community can become as flexible as the seasonal changes in our landscape.

Some examples of winter stabilization recommendations include:

1. Installing sediment logs and/or silt fences prior to the ground freezing.

2. If using straw mulch alone for temporary stabilization, applying at double the standard rate of 2 tons per acre (making the winter application rate 4 tons per acre).

3. Installing double rows of silt fences, or sediment logs (staked through the center of the log), for disturbed areas that drain to a waterbody within 100 feet.

4. Installing sediment logs rather than silt fences for shoreline construction sites. Shoreline winds can shred silt fences, leading to increased maintenance needs which can prove difficult in the winter months.

Preventing the water quality impacts of stormwater runoff can be challenging. However, Watershed Inspectors recognize the efforts that landowners and contractors have made to achieve the shared objective of protecting Owasco Lake and will continue to work with the community to document these improvements. The OLWIPD recently mailed winterization recommendations to landowners that are likely to be carrying their construction projects into the new year and have observed numerous improvements to construction sites across the watershed. These individuals serve as an example to all who seek to maintain the health of the watershed. Erosion and sediment control planning are critical steps to protecting Owasco Lake for future generations. Landowners that are in need of winter recommendations or detailed assistance are encouraged to reach out to the OLWIPD, or to their county's Soil and Water Conservation District.

Photo courtesy of Linda Geatrakas - Cross Lake

Cayuga County WQMA

For more information about the Cayuga County Water Quality Management Agency, check out our website at www.cayugacountywater.org.

The Cayuga County WQMA is also on social media.

For up-to-date information on water quality issues and events, please either friend us on Facebook at: https://facebook.com/CayugaCoWQMA or follow us on Twitter at https://twitter.com/CayugaCoWQMA.

The Cayuga County WQMA is looking for story ideas for its webpage and its newsletter. If you have something you would like to share, please email us at wqma@cayugacounty.us.

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