



September 2023

Cayuga County WQMA Visits Fair Haven and Sterling

The Cayuga County WQMA held their September meeting at Colloca Estate Winery. After the meeting, attendees were able to tour the West Barrier Bar and Sterling Nature Center.



Chris Colloca, owner of Colloca Estate Winery, welcomed the members and gave a brief history of the winery.



Sue Gately, local historian, gave a history tour of West Barrier Bar.



Doug Dello Stritto gave a tour of the Sterling Nature Center's renovation project.



Watershed Inspection Division Takes on New Inspector

By: Adam Effler, Executive Director of the Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council

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Based in Fleming, NY, the Owasco Lake Watershed Inspection and Protection Division (OLWIPD) is responsible for identifying and responding to water quality concerns within the watershed, which exists within Cayuga, Onondaga, and Tompkins counties. The OLWIPD, originally called the Watershed Inspection Program, was established in August of 2007 through an agreement with the City of Auburn, the Town of Owasco, and Cayuga County. The Inspection and Protection Division's mission is to make regular and thorough inspections of Owasco Lake, its watercourses, and its watershed to ascertain compliance with the Rules and Regulations of the Owasco Lake Watershed, and to provide educational outreach to the watershed community to foster lake stewardship.

The OLWIPD strives to ensure that the quality of Owasco Lake's water is held to a high standard by providing those living within the watershed with the knowledge and tools required to help protect water quality. In 2018, the Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council (OLWMC) assumed the daily administration of the OLWIPD. The Watershed Inspection Committee is a Standing Committee of the

OLWMC that conducts monthly meetings to provide guidance to the Inspection and Protection Division and assist with case review. Inspection and Protection Division staff are Watershed Inspectors who spend most of their time in the field performing site inspections, monitoring lake and tributary conditions, and conducting visual assessments throughout the watershed. The OLWIPD routinely monitors areas of concern that may lead to violations of the Watershed Rules and Regulations, such as residential drainage issues, construction projects, septic issues, field erosion, and nutrient applications.

The OLWIPD is a unique body that serves the public through direct community engagement and education towards advancing watershed conservation for the protection of Owasco Lake, a drinking water supply for over 45,000 local residents; there is no other public benefit program that offers this sort of ‘boots on the ground’ service. Watershed Inspectors routinely gain wide-ranging voluntary compliance and play an important liaison role with other conservation partners within the watershed, including county soil and water conservation districts, departments of health, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, and municipal codes enforcement officers.

The OLWMC is proud of not only the public service function of the OLWIPD, but also the local and professional development opportunities that the OLWIPD provides through empowering employees wanting to make a difference in water resource conservation. City of Auburn local, Abbey Hai, was recently hired as a Watershed Inspector and will be working closely with Lead Watershed Inspector, Ally Berry, to familiarize herself with the watershed and learn the many facets of her new role. Abbey is excited about the opportunity her new role will provide, “This role provides a chance for me to further connect to members of the community to maintain the Owasco watershed’s beauty and health. As an Auburn native, the protection of our lake in addition to other components of the watershed, means more than just enforcing rules and regulations. It is the protection and regulation of a large piece that makes the Finger Lakes home to many. My educational background has focused on environmental studies with marine and aquatic specializations in addition to spending the last few years traveling to multiple countries to study biodiversity among and within ecosystems. I am happy to be back home to aid in the maintenance of our Owasco lake watershed.”



Abbey Hai (photo provided)

Cayuga Lake Watershed Network Update

By: Liz Kreitinger, Steward / Executive Director, Cayuga Lake Watershed Network,

The Cayuga Lake Watershed Network Celebrated 25 Years of Watershed Stewardship



Thank you to everyone who joined in the celebration!

On August 24th, over 100 Network members and supporters came together at Cayuga Shoreline event center in Interlaken for dinner and to celebrate a quarter century of education, engagement, and advocacy for Cayuga Lake and its watershed.

During this special Annual Meeting, members voted on the slate of Directors up for renewal as well as four new candidates. Congratulations to returning Directors: Mark Benjamin, Eric Devin, Bill Ebert, Patricia Haines-Gooding, and David Wolfe, and welcome to our new Directors: Charlie Cappellino and Heidi Lott of Seneca County, Dolly Donnelly of Cayuga County, and Louise Buck of Tompkins County!

These new Board members bring diversity, skill, and knowledge to the Network. Their expertise includes backgrounds in local government, law, farming, engineering, business, and integrative agriculture. Their contributions without question will enrich and inform the work of the Network.

To commemorate the anniversary milestone, Board Chair David Wolfe and Watershed Steward Liz Kreitinger shared reflections on the Network's current and future work. Dr. Liz Thorndike, a founding member of the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network, shared stories from the early days when the need for collective watershed-wide outreach and education was first being recognized and the Network was founded. For her leadership in this effort, Dr. Thorndike was recognized with the David Morehouse Award.

Special thanks to NYS Senator Rachel May for joining in our celebration and presenting a proclamation in recognition of our 25 years of service to watershed communities. We'd also like to thank our sponsors, Cayuga Lake National Bank and Lansing Harbor for supporting this event!



Liz Kreitinger and Senator May

Cayuga Lake Watershed Partners & Elected Representatives Cruise



On September 5, New York Assembly Member Anna Kelles, and NYS State Senators Lea Webb and Rachel May, hosted municipal leaders for an outing on Discover Cayuga Lake’s boat the M.V. Teal. Kelles wanted “leaders of our district to have a visceral experience with Cayuga Lake to truly understand that the health of the lake and its watershed is inextricably connected to the health and well-being of all the people in our district.” During the event, representatives from the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network, Community Science Institute, Discover Cayuga Lake, and the Cayuga Lake Intermunicipal Organization spoke about serious challenges like Harmful Algal Blooms and opportunities for watershed protection and stewardship.

Updates from the Cayuga Lake Hydrilla Task Force

Each month, the Cayuga Lake Watershed Steward joins Cayuga Lake Hydrilla Task Force partners to discuss updates on hydrilla management in our lake. Here's the latest:

Tompkins County – The [Finger Lakes PRISM](#) field survey team found **new patches of hydrilla at Myer's Park Marina** in Lansing on August 22nd around the docks and in the southeast corner of the marina. In response, they've been surveying the nearby shoreline. The hydrilla seems to be contained within the marina right now but they are continuing to survey efforts in the area. The Network is working with the Finger Lakes PRISM on additional signage and treatment plans are being made.

Cayuga County - The US Army Corps of Engineers Aurora area and Cayuga County shoreline herbicide treatments ended last week. The agency reports that through significant survey efforts, they believe they have found the northern extent of the Cayuga County infestations near Carrs Cove and will be focused on eradicating known patches and keeping the hydrilla from spending further north.

Seneca County - In the Sheldrake Point area, the NY DEC hasn't found any new hydrilla points since last season. They have had difficulty relocating several of the new patches that were found last year, which suggests that this infestation area is still low-density. The DEC is planning to treat the Sheldrake Point

boat launch patch and several additional known patches to the north with herbicide (chelated copper spot treatment) this season.

To learn more about Hydrilla in Cayuga Lake visit our webpage, [HERE](#).

September Harmful Algal Bloom Spike on Cayuga

Stay alert for HABs this month! While the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network's regular [summer weekly HABs email updates](#) ended in August, the HABs season on Cayuga Lake has not. There has been a real uptick in bloom occurrences during September, up 30% from August already and we are only halfway through the month. About half of the blooms this month were reported on 9/5. The vast majority have been off the Cayuga County shoreline from King Ferry north.

Cayuga Lake HABs Harrier volunteers, led by the Community Science Institute, monitor the lakeshore weekly until the end of September. Historically, we even see blooms occur in our lake through the first week or two of October. You can explore current and historic bloom reports using the [CSI HABs Database](#). We all need to be aware... and to repeat the mantra: know it, avoid it, report it.

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 YouTube channel is https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCS_s7xnbbsIV3MyCIWYEKNG.

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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