



December 2024

Fillmore Nature Preserve Grand Opening

By Adam Effler, Executive Director of the Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council and Michele Wunderlich, Associate Planner at the Cayuga County Department of Planning and Economic Development

Fillmore Nature Preserve is a 161-acre property that is critical for protecting water quality in Owasco Lake. A study by The Nature Conservancy ranked the property within the top 10 parcels in the Owasco Lake watershed with the greatest impact on water quality. The land includes diverse forests and approximately 40 acres of freshwater wetlands. The Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council (OLWMC) closed on the property transfer



from The Nature Conservancy in January 2023 and established the Fillmore Nature Preserve. The grand opening of the Fillmore Nature Preserve was held November 7, 2024 with promotional support provided by Cayuga County Chamber of Commerce, Cayuga County WQMA and the Citizen Newspaper.



The Fred L. Emerson Foundation provided \$9,117 for the OLWMC's *Fillmore Nature Preserve-Conservation Education Kiosk, Access Lot, and Trail Network* project to fund the creation of a public access lot and educational kiosk at the nature preserve. The Towns of Moravia and Summerhill hauled gravel to build the public access lot, and the Town of Owasco provided labor in-kind for creating the public access lot. The Town of Owasco has also formally committed to a mutual aid agreement for assisting with property maintenance, when available, at the preserve.

The OLWMC applied for, and received, program support for the creation and posting of trails within the Fillmore Nature Preserve through a Cornell University program called Design Connect. They assessed the conditions and locations of the existing trail network and gathered information for mapping and marking the trails. Their team worked with the OLWMC on a trail map and the educational kiosk panel.

FILLMORE NATURE PRESERVE
OPEN FROM DAWN TILL DUSK

Welcome to the Fillmore Nature Preserve, located in beautiful Sempronius and Summerhill, NY, less than a mile from the birthplace of Millard Fillmore, the 13th President of the United States. These 161 acres include hiking trails, natural wetlands, ponds, and dense forest.

TRAIL MAP

ABOUT
Organized in 2011, the Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council (OLWMC) is an inter-municipal nonprofit organization with representation from municipalities throughout the Owasco Lake watershed. OLWMC is the hub of programs and partnerships engaging stakeholders from the agricultural community, water supply purveyors, local academic institutions, and local/county/regional/state agencies committed to lake restoration and protection. The council focuses on adaptive management and building community awareness about the Owasco Lake watershed through public engagement and education initiatives.

MISSION

CAUTION: THE TRAIL FROM THE PARKING LOT MAY BE PRECARIOUS DURING THE WET SEASON DUE TO THE SURROUNDING WETLAND AREAS. ALTERNATE ACCESS IS CONVEYED ABOVE.

THANK YOU Town of Owasco - Town of Moravia - Town of Summerhill - The Owasco Watershed Lake Association (OWLA) - Cayuga County Planning Department - Cornell University's Design Connect - Fred L. Emerson Foundation

The Owasco Watershed Lake Association (OWLA) committed \$500 of compost and wildflower seed for the creation of a perennial pollinator wildflower garden adjacent to the lot. This work was done as a Lake Friendly Living event sponsored by OWLA and the OLWMC.



The OLWMC received a plant inventory of terrestrial invasive and sensitive native species from the Finger Lakes Partners for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM). They also provided plant pictures and blurbs for inclusion on the educational kiosk. With the help of the Cayuga County Department of Planning and Economic Development the OLWMC applied for and received a 'boot brush station' from the Finger Lakes PRISM.



Trade-A-Tree Program

Valerie Horning, Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District

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 balsam fir seedling will be given out to anyone who redeems their certificate on May 9, 2025 at the Annual Conservation District Spring Tree & Shrub Sale.

Trees must be free of decorations, tinsel, wraps and any other foreign objects. They can be donated at the Natural Resource Center, 7413 County House Road, Sennett, at the following times:

- 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Thursday and Friday, Dec. 26 and 27
- 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday, Dec. 30
- 8 a.m. to noon Tuesday, Dec. 31
- 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Thursday and Friday, Jan. 2 and 3
- 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, Jan. 6 through 10
- 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, Jan. 13 through 17

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.

December Outreach

By Ann Robson, Past President, Owasco Watershed Lake Association

The 49th Annual Holiday Festival Craft Faire at Cayuga Community College on December 7th and 8th was an ideal opportunity for the Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council and the Owasco Watershed Lake Association to collaborate with their outreach efforts to build awareness of the current concerns within the watershed to a diverse cross section of our community.

The intermunicipal Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council use their collective voices and resources to implement watershed protection projects. They actively monitor and evaluate the general health of the waters of Owasco Lake and its watershed. The Owasco Watershed Lake Association, (OWLA) is now in its 36th years as a volunteer run, citizen based not-for-profit entity determined to be the boots on the ground, hands dirty group supporting the projects identified as priorities to protect the drinking water source to 70% of our community. Their guardianship extends beyond the lake, into the 208 square mile watershed, where every drop of falling, flowing water eventually reaches Owasco Lake.





Congratulations to the winner of the OWLA Craft Faire Gift Basket, Cass Barker. Thank you to all who showed interest in learning more and to those who joined OWLA to participate further in protecting and promoting Owasco Lake and its watershed.

Visit our website at www.owla.org for more information.

Cayuga County Recycling Program Celebrates 2024 Successes **By Evan Tuthill, Cayuga County Department of Planning and Economic Development**

The Cayuga County Recycling Program has wrapped up another successful year of events aimed at promoting sustainability and responsible waste management. Under the guidance of the Cayuga County Department of Planning and Economic Development, and in collaboration with various County agencies including the Soil and Water Conservation District, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga, and the County Highway Department, the program hosted four recycling events in 2024, showcasing the community's dedication to protecting the environment.

Spring Electronics Recycling Collection

The first event of the year, the Spring Electronics Recycling Collection, was held on Saturday, April 27th. Residents brought over 54,000 pounds of electronic materials to the Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES facility, ensuring these items were recycled properly. From outdated computers and broken televisions to keyboards and other miscellaneous equipment, the collection prevented these materials from becoming landfill waste.

Tire Collection Event

On June 8th, the Tire Collection event provided residents with an opportunity to dispose of unwanted tires responsibly. The event resulted in the collection of a large number of tires (~100 tons), which were either used

as a carbon source for Nucor Steel products or recycled for further use. Proper tire disposal is crucial to preventing environmental issues like water contamination and mosquito breeding.

Household Hazardous Waste Collection

The October 5th Household Hazardous Waste Collection event was another milestone in the County's recycling efforts. Nearly 50,000 pounds of both solid and liquid hazardous materials, such as paints, chemicals, and solvents, were safely collected and processed. By ensuring these substances were managed appropriately, the event helped protect both public health and local ecosystems by preventing these hazardous materials from entering landfills.

Fall Electronics Recycling Collection

The second Electronics Recycling Collection, held on Saturday, November 2nd, capped off the year's activities. Hosted at the Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES facility, the event also featured two satellite drop-off locations at the Ira and Venice County Highway Garages, thanks to a collaboration with the County Highway Department. This collaborative approach made the event more accessible for residents across the County. The event was well attended and considered a success, amassing a total of just over 59,000 pounds of electronic equipment to be recycled.

Reflecting on 2024

This year's events highlight the effectiveness of the Cayuga County Recycling Program in reducing waste and fostering environmental stewardship. With well over 150,000 pounds of materials collected and recycled as a result, the program's impact is undeniable.

As the County plans for future initiatives, the success of the 2024 events underscores the importance of continued efforts in waste reduction and community engagement. By providing convenient and effective recycling opportunities, the Cayuga County Recycling Program is helping pave the way toward a cleaner, greener future.



For updates on upcoming events or to learn more about waste management and/or recycling in Cayuga County, visit <https://www.cayugacounty.us/699/Solid-Waste-Management-and-Recycling>.

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 friend us on Facebook at: <https://facebook.com/CayugaCoWQMA>

The Cayuga County WQMA YouTube channel is <https://www.youtube.com/@CayugaCountyWQMA>.

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.