



June 2026

Invasive Species Management in the Finger Lakes Region

Sam Beck-Andersen, Associate Director of the Finger Lakes Institute at Hobart and William Smith Colleges and the Coordinator of the Finger Lakes Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM) presented “Finger Lakes PRISM: Leveraging Partnerships to Address Invasive Species in the Finger Lakes” at the June 2026 Cayuga County WQMA Meeting. This presentation discussed invasive species and highlighted the programs of the Finger Lakes PRISM. The presentation can be viewed on the Cayuga County WQMA YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/@CayugaCountyWQMA>.



Cayuga County Enhances Invasive Species Management with FLOWPA Funding

By Michele Wunderlich, Principal Environmental Planner, Cayuga County Department of Planning and Economic Development

Cayuga County continues to strengthen its invasive species outreach, education, and management efforts by utilizing grant funds from the Finger Lakes–Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance (FLOWPA). These funds help the County leverage additional support to implement projects that protect local waterways and promote responsible recreation.

One 2026 project was the construction and installation of new invasive species disposal stations at three popular boat launches on Little Sodus Bay. The new stations replace older, damaged boxes at the Cottage Street, King Street, and West Barrier Bar launches, providing boaters with a convenient way to properly dispose of aquatic plant fragments and reduce the spread of invasive species. FLOWPA funds were used to purchase materials and signage for the stations, while the Village of Fair Haven Department of Public Works contributed in-kind labor by constructing and installing the units. This partnership exemplifies the cooperative approach that strengthens invasive species prevention efforts across Cayuga County.



FLOWPA and Cayuga County funds support the Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District's (SWCD) Aquatic Vegetation Control Program. This program helps maintain healthy, accessible waterways across the county by mechanically removing nuisance and invasive aquatic plants. These efforts improve waterway navigation, support recreational use, and help reduce nutrient levels in local waterbodies. In 2025, the program removed an estimated 692 cubic yards of aquatic vegetation. This amount represents approximately 90,065 dry pounds of material containing 1,891 pounds of nitrogen, 161 pounds of phosphorus, and 1,005 pounds of potassium.

Table: Volume of Vegetation Removed from Cayuga County Lakes Through the Aquatic Vegetation Control Program

Year	Owasco Lake Volume (Yd ³) Removed	Cayuga Lake Volume (Yd ³) Removed	Fair Haven Bay Volume (Yd ³) Removed	Lake Como Volume (Yd ³) Removed
2025	345	164	167	16
2024	165	188	76	78
2023	371	141	58	136
2022	286	193	233	36
2021	566	596	871	68

This program operates on Owasco Lake, Cayuga Lake, Otter Lake, Lake Como and Fair Haven Bay. Cayuga County SWCD maintains two weed cutting boats, one transport barge, an on-shore conveyor, and a small dump truck for this work. The largest boat is a paddlewheel type boat that is designed to access heavy vegetation in shallow water and it cuts and picks up the weeds. The second boat is a transport boat which is used on the larger lakes to cut down transport time from the cutting area to the truck, increasing the overall efficiency of the program. The weeds are off-loaded onto the dump truck using the conveyor and then taken to nearby farms where the vegetation is used as compost to enrich the soil.



FLOWPA funds were also utilized for the operation and maintenance of the CD3 boat cleaning station located in Emerson Park. Cayuga County Parks and Trails provides the funds for the electricity and pump outs as in-kind. The Cayuga County Department of Planning and Economic Development developed and provides flyers promoting the use of the CD3 boat cleaning station to Emerson Park to distribute to people launching their boats.

Cayuga County Department of Planning and Economic Development also uses FLOWPA funds to provide outreach and education on invasive species. Michele Wunderlich partnered with the Finger Lakes PRISM and the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge to hold a Macrophyte Survey Program In-Person Workshop at the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge on June 18, 2026. Nine people participated. Michele Wunderlich and Natalie Stanton also participated in Conservation Field Days in 2025 by teaching approximately 200 sixth grade students about invasive species.



Laurel Williams from the Finger Lakes PRISM demonstrates how to survey for aquatic macrophytes at the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge

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.gov.



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