

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP CREATES PLAN FOR SOUTH BASIN OF CAYUGA
LAKE:
Public Input Sought to Improve Plan

After any major storm, the water off Stewart Park swirls murky brown. The eastern corner can be dense with weeds in the summer. It doesn't take a scientist to know that the water isn't clean but it may take scientists to help the community uncover why the problem exists, to what extent we can improve the water and the most cost-effective methods on gaining clean water.

A partnership of scientists, agency staff and water management professional drafted a plan to answer these questions. The public is invited to a meeting at the Tompkins County Public Library's Borg Warner conference room on Wednesday, June 25 from 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. to learn about the plan and the process used to create it. A panel representing the partnership will answer questions and hear comments.

Joan Jurkowich, Deputy Commissioner for Tompkins County Planning, will give an overview of existing monitoring efforts, the genesis of the partnership and the history of public meeting that have been part of the planning process. Referring to the Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2004, Jurkowich stated, "It is the policy of Tompkins County to .protect the county's streams, lakes, and groundwater. In order to so, the Comprehensive Plan recommends the preparation of a water quality and quantity monitoring plan."

Existing monitoring provides much valuable information but some key questions remain. The new monitoring plan recommends continuation of existing monitoring and additional study of the circulation patterns in the lake and of lake biology. The monitoring plan states, "Existing monitoring efforts focus largely on monitoring chemical and physical characteristics of the lake. Our understanding of the overall health of the lake will be improved by looking at the Lake's food web, with a focus on organisms (e.g., Dreissenid mussels, alewife and grazing zooplankton) that can have major, 'top down' influence on water clarity." Another recommendation focuses on better understanding of the sources of sediment. Roxanna Johnston, watershed coordinator and lab director for the City of Ithaca Water Treatment Plant, will explain these aspects of the monitoring plan at the Wednesday's public meeting. Johnston is chairperson for the partnership.

Public comments have already influenced the plan and prompted investigation of the unusual plant growth in the southeast corner of Cayuga Lake. Additional public comments are sought in order to have the plan meet community needs. A panel representing the partnership will answer questions and listen to comments after the formal presentations by Jurkowich and Johnston.

The Monitoring Plan: Southern Basin of Cayuga Lake is available at www.cayugalake.org, website of the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network who is hosting the meeting.