

# Network News



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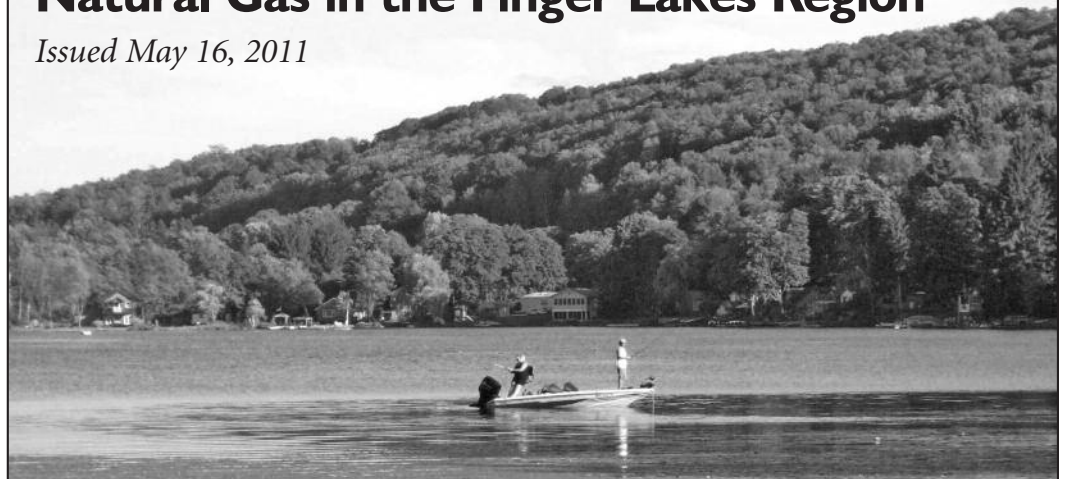
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## ***Finger Lakes Regional Watershed Alliance: Statement Concerning Horizontal Drilling with High-Volume Hydraulic Fracturing for Natural Gas in the Finger Lakes Region***

*Issued May 16, 2011*



### **Background**

In October 2009, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation ("NYSDEC") released, for public comment, a draft Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement ("dSGEIS") relative to the potential for extensive drilling in the shale deposits that underlie major portions of New York State. Many individuals and organizations across the state submitted critiques of the dSGEIS to NYSDEC.

Since the issuance of the dSGEIS, ongoing study of the drilling experience in other states has deepened lake and watershed stakeholders' understanding of the risks inherent in the hydrofracking process. Scientists and organizations have uncovered new information and concerns about this technology and the manner of its implementation, particularly in extracting natural gas from the Marcellus Shale formation.<sup>1</sup>

*continued on page 6*

*Fracking would not be good for the Finger Lakes, according to a May 2011 statement from the Finger Lakes Regional Watershed Alliance. This summertime photo is of Lake Como, headwaters for Cayuga Lake's Fall Creek in Cayuga County.*

# Embrace the Lake Cayuga Lake Gets a Big Hug! PART I

*Between late March and mid-May 2011, over twenty community, tribal, Scout and church groups gave Cayuga Lake and its watershed a big hug via creek and lakefront cleanups.*

Hilary Lambert



*A 19th century settler graveyard is cleaned up for spring. The creek to Cayuga Lake is behind Elisa Tumino-Van Amburgh and Roberta Parseghian, and Cayuga Lake is downhill to the right.*

Our Embrace the Lake campaign was a rousing success in this, its second year. The goal is to get folks to act local – and to think watershed-wide! Plan ahead for fall 2011 or spring 2012, and contact us if you'd like to plan a cleanup. Trash bags are provided by American Rivers, and gloves are supplied by CLWN member Mike Strok's business, Shamrock Manufacturing Company of Chino CA. We'll help you find a good place for a cleanup, provide guidelines, map-posters, and provide assistance (where possible) in getting the trash picked up afterwards.

Big thanks go to Ashley Benning, our Wells College intern, who put a lot of work into this project. We're looking for donor-sponsors in the future, so keep Embrace the Lake in mind as a very good cause. Here are three cleanup reports, with more to follow in forthcoming issues.

## Canoga Creek Clean-up a Success - March 27, 2011

*Keith Tidball, Secretary, Kuneytown Sportsmen's Club*

Thanks to all the members of the Kuneytown Sportsmen's Club who participated in the 2011 Canoga Creek Clean-up. There were more than twenty people involved, from the Finger Lakes chapter of Trout Unlimited and Kuneytown Sportsmen's Club, with support from Cayuga Lake Watershed Network. We are well on our way to establishing the Canoga Creek Conservancy Consortium (C4).

Seven bags of trash were collected, as well as at least as many tires and even an old TV set. A great deal of effort was expended removing the invasive and

*continued on page 3*

## Cayuga Lake Watershed Network

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The Cayuga Lake Watershed Network thanks Westhill Graphics of Ithaca and Pioneer Printing of Lodi for their support and excellence.

noxious Multiflora rose. The removal of this invasive species will allow greater access for anglers as well as for future conservation efforts to address erosion, improve in-stream habitat for brook trout, and reforestation activities in the state-owned Canoga Creek Wildlife Management Area. A special thanks to Andy Buss for bringing his enthusiasm and skills to the project, and to Eric Riegel for hauling the refuse and the use of his business' dumpster. For more information and photos: <http://kuneytown.blogspot.com/>.

### **King Family graveyard cleanup, above a small creek in King Ferry NY - April 17, 2011**

*Hilary Lambert, Steward*

Taking care of our creeks includes respecting those who lived here in earlier times under different circumstances. In early 2010, two local residents found a small 19th century graveyard hidden in overgrowth on the banks of a small creek that runs steeply downhill from Lake Road to Cayuga Lake, in King Ferry NY.

In cooperation with local farmers, Elisa Tumino-Van Amburgh and Roberta Parseghian cleaned up the place and planted daffodils. They moved several grave-stones back to the graveyard from where they had been discarded in the surrounding fields. Among others, there are stones for Little Hellen and Edmon, both small children in the King family who died in the mid-19th century. Elisa and Roberta wonder if the family established the graveyard at that spot so they could see it from their house across the small creek gorge.

On April 17, CLWN Steward Hilary Lambert accompanied them on their spring visit. We cleaned the area of winter debris, and several stones were moved from the field back to the graveyard. Elisa and Roberta hope to come back again before the crops get too tall, to repair the graveyard entrance gate. They have shared their work with the Genoa Historical Association in King Ferry.

### **Bolter Creek Citizens Assessment, Trumansburg NY - April 22, 2011 (Earth Day)**

*Hilary Lambert, Steward*

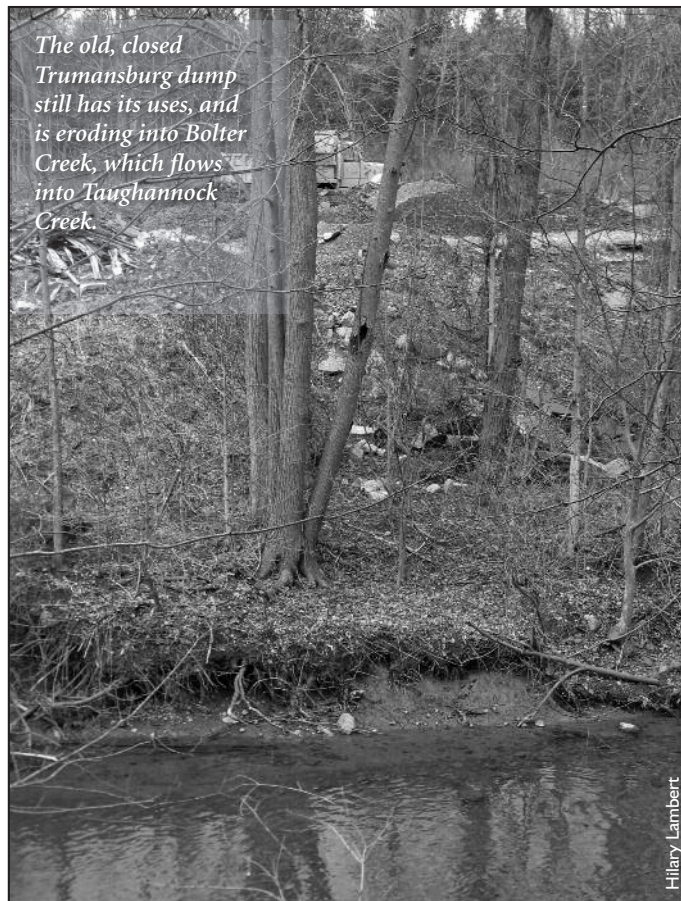
A big challenge to our watershed's health are the many lost and abandoned local town dumps that were shut down when modern landfilling regulations came into force in the late 1970s. A map and database were produced by the Tompkins County Planning/Department of Health in 2000 documenting thirty abandoned landfills within the county. The old Trumansburg dump (in Ulysses Township) is being eroded by adjacent Bolter Creek, resulting in possible safety problems for creek users that may worsen and have impacts downstream.

On April 22, Emily and Anthony Ouckama took Hilary Lambert for a hike around their land on Waterburg Road in Trumansburg to assess the area of Bolter Creek bordering their property. A cleanup of this big site is beyond

our limited means. Trash is eroding from the old dump into the creek and is washed downstream, along with who knows what chemicals. From our cross-creek vantage point, we could see where waste materials are apparently being dumped in an open area above the creek by the town – leaves, branches and grass clippings, and demolition debris. The creekbed is studded with broken glass, metal and plastic litter, and cannot be used for wading or swimming by the Ouckama family or their downstream neighbors.

The newly-issued Taughannock Creek Watershed Assessment (April 2011) cites problems on Taughannock Creek downstream of its confluence with Bolter Creek (p.45) and mentions the landfill on pages 58-

59, with a suggestion that remediation is needed. A showcase and icon for our waterfall-rich region, Taughannock Creek deserves to have this problem cleaned up. The report (Milone & MacBroome Inc., 2011, "Watershed Needs Assessment, Taughannock Creek Tompkins County, New York." April 13) can be viewed online: [http://www.tompkins-co.org/planning/Water%20Resources/watshd\\_assess.htm](http://www.tompkins-co.org/planning/Water%20Resources/watshd_assess.htm). 🐾



*In our next issue watch for cleanup reports on Levanna Creek, Paines Creek and other Aurora locations, the Cayuga Inlet, Dryden roadsides, the SHARE Farm and Great Gully, the Wells College Waterfall, and more.*

# Gas Drilling, Sustainability & Energy Policy: Searching for Common Ground

Rebecca Ruggles, CLWN committee member and watershed landowner

**S**earching for Justice was the provocative title of just one panel at the Energy Conference of the Cornell Environmental Law Society (ELS). From March 31 to April 2, 2011 a powerhouse of lawyers, regulators, business leaders, and advocates explored issues of shale gas drilling. With no consensus about the impact on New York State, speakers addressed national and regional energy policy and often delved into specific legal practice conundrums posed by shale gas extraction.

Mounted by Cornell Law students and led by ELS president Ben Tettlebaum and ELS leaders Emily Green and Alexis Saba, the event was free and open to the public. As a result, it drew a diverse audience of academics, environmentalists, community members, students, and local leaders.

Panelists covered topics related to environmental law, national energy policy, local and federal regulatory approaches, property rights, consumer and landowner protection, and the science behind hydrofracking.

A take-home message for me was "regions can change their fate". New York State has a very different economy and history from those states that have preceded us in the extraction of shale gas. The lack of a coherent national energy policy creates uncertainty for industry, but makes room for states to shape their own approach.

How often do we hear a detailed dialogue between industry and community? The conference aired the views of



Audience participation among the experts and advocates at the ELS 2011 Energy Conference.

gas industry lawyers and business people, as well as environmental defense lawyers and community activists. A lively dialogue between panelists and moderators was enhanced by the wide ranging questions raised by audience members.

Three stand-out presenters, in my view, were Ithaca-based attorney Helen Slottje, of Community Environmental Defense Council, Cornell Law Professor Theodore

Eisenberg, and John Kassel, President of the New England-based Conservation Law Foundation.

Slottje explained complex legal concepts such as the Rule of Capture and the basis for the exemption of oil and gas drilling activities from the Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, Clean Drinking Water Act and other federal laws. Eisenberg debunked the appealing idea of trusting in science, with examples of troubling research studies suppressed in the medical field. Kassel asked the audience to consider justice from many angles. US energy policy has implications worldwide and protecting our own standard of living at the cost of others cannot be considered true justice in a global world.

Amid a torrent of divergent views, one impression remained. The issues posed by shale gas drilling in New York State are complex and deserve the kind of thoughtful debate made possible by the Cornell Environmental Law Society. I hope they'll continue the conversation next year! 🐾

## Sunset on Cayuga: Dinner-Dance Fundraiser, October 8

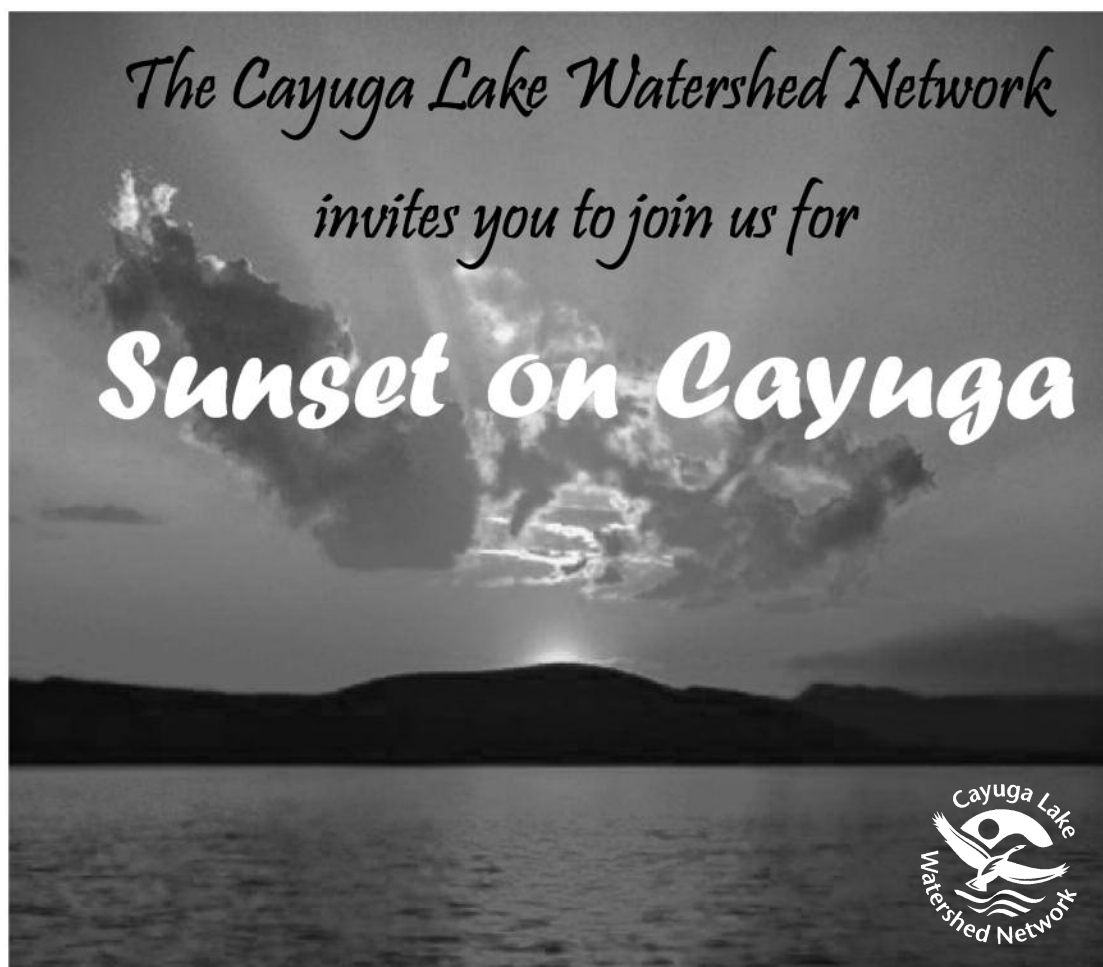
Dale Baker, CLWN Board member

**Y**ou will not want to miss Sunset on Cayuga this year. It will be our biggest and best ever! It will be held October 8th from 6-10 pm at Wells College's Sommer Center, on their beautiful lakeside campus in Aurora NY. The hors d'oeuvres and dinner will be a gastronomical delight with food prepared by Wells-Aurora Inn. You can enjoy your hors d'oeuvres and cocktails while bidding on the many silent auction items and entering the different raffles.

Following the delicious dinner, we will announce the 2011 recipients of the Morehouse Award and Lake Friendly Farm Award. Live music will be provided by

Backtalk, and you can dance and sway to the tunes until late into the evening.

It will be a wonderful evening and an important fundraiser for the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network. Tickets for the event are \$60 per person, or you can purchase a special table for 8 for \$600 (and help out the Network!). These special "Stream Sweetheart" tables will have additional surprises. Please contact Judy Pipher, Chair of the Organizing Committee at [jpgipher@pas.rochester.edu](mailto:jpgipher@pas.rochester.edu) or Hilary Lambert, Watershed Steward, at [steward@cayugalake.org](mailto:steward@cayugalake.org) for more information or to order tickets. 🐾



## *Fundraiser for the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network*

*Wells College Sommer Center*

*Main Street, Aurora NY*

*October 8, 2011*

*6-10 p.m.*

### *COST*

*\$60 per person*

*Price includes 2 bottles of wine at the table*

### *Special tables for 8*

*\$600 for Stream Sweethearts*

*Special recognition*

*Extra bottle of wine for the tables, and 8 drink vouchers*

*[www.cayugalake.org](http://www.cayugalake.org)*

*Appetizers, dinner and dessert*

*Food by the Aurora Inn*

*Silent Auction and Raffle*

*Acquire your holiday gifts early!*

*Music and dancing*

*Back Talk*

*Environmental stewardship awards*

*Lake Friendly Farms*

*David Morehouse Memorial Award*

### *Tickets and information*

*Contact the Steward 859-421-3609*

*[steward@cayugalake.org](mailto:steward@cayugalake.org)*

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# **Finger Lakes Regional Watershed Alliance: Statement Concerning Horizontal Drilling With High-Volume Hydraulic Fracturing** *continued from cover*

The potential environmental danger of the continuation of hydrofracking in the Finger Lakes region of New York State has been a priority concern of both the Finger Lakes Regional Watershed Association (“FLRWA”) and its member associations. FLRWA and its member associations have reassessed the impact of horizontal drilling with hydraulic fracturing of shale, based on research and the environmental problems that continue to be created by this drilling technology. Of particular concern is the potential impact to our region’s signature lakes, which serve as a source of drinking water for over 1.5 million residents. Any inadvertent impacts to water supplies would have grave consequences for the region.

## **FLRWA statement of position:**

- FLRWA fully supports fiscally and environmentally responsible drilling for natural gas in New York State. However, based on the research and the environmental problems that continue to be created by the use of this technology, FLRWA has concluded that the use of hydrofracking technology as it is currently being practiced for the extraction of natural gas, poses significant risks to the watersheds and environment in New York State.
- FLRWA believes that hydrofracking for natural gas should not take place in the Finger Lakes region of New York State at this time. We strongly urge the State of New York to continue its moratorium, and ban the use of hydraulic fracturing for the recovery of natural gas in the Finger Lakes region, until the environmental risks to drinking water supplies that are associated with the use of this technology are fully understood and resolved.
- FLRWA further believes that the unique nature of the Finger Lakes’ watersheds warrant special consideration by NYSDEC. A single set of permit stipulations across New York State will not adequately protect public drinking water supplies. FLRWA urgently requests that the Finger Lakes watersheds be addressed as a separate entity, much like the New York City and City of Syracuse water supplies, and that unique EIS requirements be implemented for the Finger Lakes region.
- FLRWA encourages its member associations to speak out based on the local impacts of hydrofracking on their lakes and watersheds. Individual FLRWA member associations have issued formal statements describing their specific positions on this topic.

*FLRWA believes that hydrofracking for natural gas should not take place in the Finger Lakes region of New York State at this time.*

- FLRWA believes that the current moratorium on drilling for natural gas in New York State should not be lifted until, at least, the following conditions are met:
  - ◆ the completion and review of EPA and NYSDEC studies;<sup>2</sup>
  - ◆ the completion of legislative actions that require energy companies to bear the full cost of regulation and remediation,
  - ◆ the implementation of a robust and accountable inspection program; and
  - ◆ close regulatory oversight by EPA and NYSDEC of the entire natural gas extraction process.

**Contact:** Dr. Lynn Thurston, Chairperson,  
Finger Lakes Regional Watershed Alliance  
thurston@rochester.rr.com

## **About the Finger Lakes Regional Watershed Alliance**

In 2010, nine lake and watershed organizations representing the inhabited Finger Lakes in New York State formed the Finger Lakes Regional Watershed Alliance (“FLRWA”). This alliance represents over 10,000 individual property owners, residents and voters across the entire Finger Lakes region.

The purposes of FLRWA are to bring together the members, expertise and desires of the Finger Lakes watershed associations to preserve and protect their watersheds with a collective regional voice; to join forces to advocate for mutually beneficial regional changes, backed by sound research; and to promote collective actions that represent the desires of the entire Finger Lakes region.

## **Member Associations**

Canandaigua Lake Watershed Association, Otisco Lake Preservation Association, Cayuga Lake Watershed Network, Owasco Watershed Lake Association, Conesus Lake Association, Seneca Lake Pure Waters Association, Honeoye Valley Association, Skaneateles Lake Association, Keuka Lake Association. 🌿

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<sup>1</sup> Soeder, D. J., & Kappel, W. M. (2009). *Water resources and natural gas production from the marcellus shale* (Fact Sheet No. 3032). West Trenton Publishing Service Center: USGS.  
<http://pubs.usgs.gov/fs/2009/3032/pdf/FS2009-3032.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <http://water.epa.gov/type/groundwater/uic/class2/hydraulicfracturing/index.cfm>

# PRESENTATIONS AVAILABLE ONLINE

## Wetlands Symposium a Success

The Network's spring symposium, "Our Wetlands: A Community Treasure" was held April 9, 2011 at the Montezuma Audubon Center. Sixty attendees and warm support from the Friends of Montezuma Wetlands made for a lively series of presentations, with insightful give-and-take during the panel discussion – and great refreshments. The Montezuma Audubon

Center is a part of the 36,000 acre Montezuma Wetlands Complex, situated on Route 89 just north of Savannah NY. Frank Moses, The Center's Director, took participants on a bird-watching walk after lunch.

All the presentations are online at [www.cayugalake.org](http://www.cayugalake.org). Please check out the informative preliminary remarks by Jim Eckler (NYS DEC) and Linda



*Following the symposium, participants went on a birding hike with Frank Moses (in white cap), Director of the Montezuma Audubon Center*

Ziemba (MNWR), and these inspiring talks:

- **Howard Goebel** (NYS Canal Corporation), "Managing water levels in the Oswego River basin."
- **Sarah Fleming** (Ducks Unlimited), "New York conservation update."
- **Tony Eallonardo** (SUNY ESF), "Inland salt marshes of Montezuma."
- **Zack Odell** (The Nature Conservancy), "A history of Central and Western

New York protection - a bird's eye view."

Thanks to symposium co-sponsors Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge, Montezuma Audubon Center, and the NY Department of Environmental Conservation; and extra special thanks to organizers Judy Pipher and Andrea VanBeusichem and the Friends of Montezuma Wildlife Refuge for all their hard work. 🦋

**For membership and donation information: Contact [steward@cayugalake.org](mailto:steward@cayugalake.org)**  
**Learn more at [www.cayugalake.org](http://www.cayugalake.org)**

## Protecting Our Water

*Thanks to CLWN member Deborah Jones for this excellent recent letter to the Editor of the Ithaca Journal. Please speak up and be counted among those actively protecting our lake and watershed! If you don't...who will?*

**A**mong the dangers resulting from hydraulic-fracking gas drilling, the two that most influenced my decision not to lease are (1) the vast quantity of water used in the process, and (2) the disposal of the produced toxic waste-water sludge. Because water scarcity is, and will continue to be, a major problem globally, it is immoral of gas companies to turn billions of gallons of fresh water into non-renewable sludge. At least 40% of the water used in gas drilling is removed from the natural water-cycle. People should know that New York State has no strong laws to prevent the gas drilling industry from extracting all the water they want.

The shrinking water supply and the growing global demand make it crucial that water extraction be regulated in all places, including the Finger Lakes. Corporations are formed to make money for investors, who all too often abandon ethical behavior to achieve their goals. We cannot suffer a drop in the water table or risk the contamination of water sources from the dirty process of natural gas extraction. Corporations can develop methods that do not waste our precious resources and do not contaminate the environment, but, it seems, only when they are regulated to do so.

NYS legislators must not be beholden to gas corporation lobbyists and must be willing to undertake regulation that protects the environment, the public, and resources for future generations. Contact your legislators to insist on laws that constrain the gas drilling corporations' gluttonous consumption of our planet's most precious and finite resource, fresh water.

Deborah Jones, Trumansburg, NY

# UPCOMING EVENTS *in the Cayuga Lake Watershed*

**JULY 1: Your Invitation to A Year in the Life of Six Mile Creek gala launch! From 5-8 pm, Downtown Creek Walk, Ithaca:** Celebrating Six Mile Creek through photography, music, sculpture, other arts and sciences. Folks of all ages are invited to document life in, under and around Six Mile Creek through a full round of seasons, and help protect Ithaca's water supply and Cayuga Lake's sparkling waters. Following the gala launch, watch for photo walks in Yellow Barn Forest, Brooktondale, the Nature Reserve, Southside and Parkside neighborhoods, down to the Inlet; rock sculpture weekends; creekside music and dance; pleine aire painting; poetry workshops; improv theatre; youth video contest; a Headwaters Expedition - and exhibitions to share it all back to the broader community. To sign up for activity alerts and endorse the vision by joining the Creek Coalition, contact [SixMileWatershed@gmail.com](mailto:SixMileWatershed@gmail.com); watch for activity dates on [www.cayugalake.org](http://www.cayugalake.org) and Facebook "Six Mile Creek". Sponsored by the Level Green Institute, Cayuga Lake Watershed Network and Ithaca Center for Environmental Sustainability, in collaboration with a Creek Coalition of City, County, Town, School, campus and community groups and area artists. Join us!

**Community EcoCruises onboard the M/V Haendel. Every Thursday and Sunday, 2:30-4:30 pm from the Ithaca Farmers Market boat dock:** Guest presentations by local art and science experts and hands-on activities suitable for people of all ages. "Our goal is to make sure that everyone is well-acquainted with our Lake. Great for visitors and residents: "It's Your Lake, Get to Know It!"

**JULY 17: EcoCruise speaker Hilary Lambert, Steward, Cayuga Lake Watershed Network.** Get onboard the M/V Haendel departing from the Farmers Market dock at 2:30 for a relaxing cruise and stimulating talk about the challenges facing Cayuga Lake (and all of us). For details on this and other EcoCruise dates and presentations: Schedule, prices, coupon info available at [tioherotours.com/specialitytours.htm](http://tioherotours.com/specialitytours.htm); email [info@tioherotours.com](mailto:info@tioherotours.com) or 607-697-0166.

**AUGUST 13: Lansing Harbor Festival, Myers Park, Lansing NY.** Details soon – save the date! Footraces, fishing derbies, displays, food, vendors, music and more! <http://lansingharborfest.org> 🐦

*Please send details about interesting upcoming events in the Cayuga Lake watershed to [steward@cayugalake.org](mailto:steward@cayugalake.org).*

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**The Mission...** *The Cayuga Lake Watershed Network identifies key threats to Cayuga Lake and its watershed, and it advocates for solutions that support a healthy environment and vibrant communities.*

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