

Network News

*It takes a
Network to protect
a watershed.*



Please give fifteen minutes to help update the Cayuga Lake Watershed Restoration & Protection Plan

**Public
input is
needed**

Special questions for stakeholders in the future of our lake: Youth!

Tee-Ann Hunter *Chair, IO of the Cayuga Lake Watershed*

As a member of the Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization (IO), the Town of Ithaca has accepted funding from the New York State Department of State (NYS DOS) to oversee an update of the Cayuga Lake Watershed Restoration and Protection Plan (RPP). During 2015 and into 2016, the Intermunicipal Organization is partnering with the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network (Network) and numerous others to conduct this update.

The original plan was completed in 2001, the result of a watershed-wide process that drew together town and village officials, local and regional agencies, experts and local residents via meetings and presentations. The group developed a long-range visionary plan, harnessing the energy of the watershed's 45 municipalities to evaluate the condition of Cayuga Lake and its tributaries, and formulate restoration and protection strategies.

As a result of the original plan (available at www.cayugawatershed.org), IO member municipalities have been awarded six rounds of funding from NYS DOS totaling nearly \$300,000 for projects devoted to streambank stabilization, habitat restoration, and flood control. In addition, the IO supports public engagement and youth education through the Floating Classroom, which provides scholarships, lake access, STEM enrichment cruises and "Trout in the Classroom" programs for over 2,500 students annually.

Hilary Lambert, the Network's steward, is coordinating the 16-month update process, which includes public meetings, special stakeholder group input, and expert updates to the Plan. A current opportunity for the public to provide input is a questionnaire seeking comments, observations, and recommendations from watershed residents, available online here: <http://www.cayugalake.org/watershed-plan-update-process.html>

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Sample of the watershed questions we need you to answer!

6. How do you enjoy Cayuga Lake, its creeks and streams? Please select all that apply.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Canoeing/Kayaking/ | <input type="checkbox"/> Wildlife Viewing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Paddling | <input type="checkbox"/> Hiking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Boating/Sailing | <input type="checkbox"/> Picnicking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing and ice fishing | <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic Enjoyment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Skating, Hockey | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Swimming | _____ |

11. In your opinion, which are the pollutants that most affect Cayuga Lake? Please select up to four.

- ☐ Sediment, including soil, sand and gravel.
- ☐ Fertilizers, including phosphorus and nitrogen.
- ☐ Pesticides, used in farms, homes and gardens, and on roadsides.
- ☐ Organic compounds, such as petroleum products; from pavement runoff, other sources.
- ☐ Heavy metals, such as zinc and copper; metals from road runoff, coal storage and combustion waste, other sources.
- ☐ Salts, such as the de-icer and brine used on roads in the winter; and from other sources.
- ☐ Pathogens—disease-carrying microorganisms, such as coliform bacteria, fungi and viruses.
- ☐ Invasive species—pests, weeds, exotic species, such as hydrilla, zebra mussels.
- ☐ Pharmaceuticals and personal care products, such as drugs, caffeine, microbeads.
- ☐ Other: _____

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Tales from the Littoral Zone

The littoral zone is that three dimensional outer, shallower region of a body of water, including the shore, where most of the life activities take place. These writings originate from the "Littoral Zone".

What is a "Bloom" on the Lake?

Mel Russo *Finger Lakes area naturalist and life-long resident*

Recently, much news has surfaced (no pun intended) about blooms on Seneca Lake. There are usually blooms on both Seneca and Cayuga Lake each summer. A "bloom" is a visible manifestation of algae.

Usually the algae are microscopic and commonly present in water but become obvious to the naked eye when they multiply exponentially. This mega-population explosion of phytoplankton is due to the presence of excessive dissolved nutrients in the water such as phosphates and nitrates, essential ingredients for plant growth. This aquatic event occurs in the upper layers of water where the temperature warms greatly due to atmospheric conditions and the stillness of the water. The increased heat in these waters causes the life activities there to accelerate. A rule of limnology is that for every 10 degrees Celsius increase in temperature, the metabolic activity of life in the water doubles.

This metabolic multiplication factor combined with increased solubility of nutrients with increase in temperature, is the initiating cause of blooms.

Often these events are usually accompanied by zooplankton blooms and biotic growth of all types. The common form of algae associated with these events is a type called *anabaena*. Another is *nostoc*. Both are single celled blue-green algae (now called cyanobacteria) but can form necklace like chains, which are noticeably visible with the naked eye. Although commonly occurring in aquatic environments, when present in the great

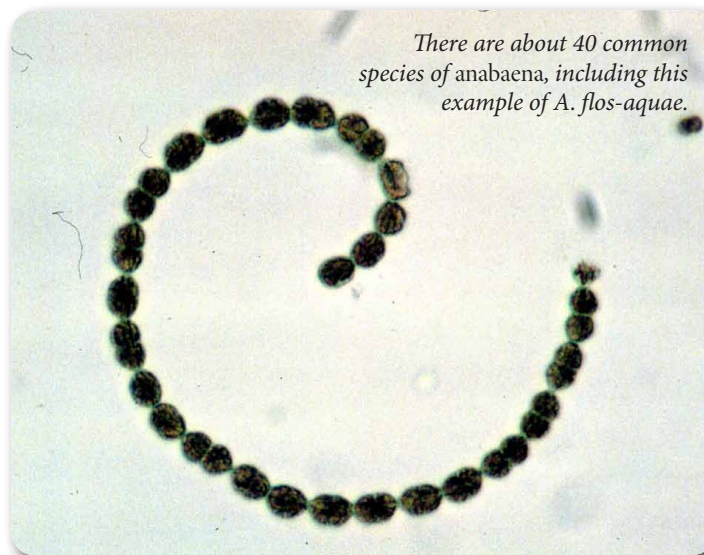
numbers characteristic of a bloom, these algae add toxicity to water. Swimming in, washing with, or drinking the water under bloom conditions may result in nausea, vomiting, dermatitis, blindness or other serious complications.

Blooms are normal phenomena of lakes. If they are frequent and of very long duration, it is a negative health indicator of a lake. Some blooms are usual and normal for a body of water. However, very many blooms, for very long, is a sign of increasing eutrophication (aging) of a lake.

So, no, the lake is not turning over. No, the lake is not cleaning itself, per say, but in a way it is. And no, it is not lots of

pollen on the surface. It is a normal event, one of which we should be aware and monitor. With the mixing and cooling of the surface waters, the bloom will diminish leaving normal populations of microscopic algae in the water until we have another heat wave with long days, at which time the bloom is bound to return. 🐸

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There are about 40 common species of anabaena, including this example of *A. flos-aquae*.

"ANABAENAFLOSAQUAE EPA" BY ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY - [HTTP://WWW.EPA.GOV/GLNPO/IMAGE/VIZ_NAT6.HTML](http://WWW.EPA.GOV/GLNPO/IMAGE/VIZ_NAT6.HTML). LICENSED UNDER PUBLIC DOMAIN VIA COMMONS.

Additional information about *anabaena*

A great information source about anabaena, other algae, and what to do about them is *Diet for a Small Lake, Expanded Guide to New York*

State Lake and Watershed Management, 2nd edition. NYSFOLA 2009. See chapters 3 and 7, online here: http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/water_pdf/dietlake09.pdf

Brand-new cyanobacteria guide, issued by the USGS Office of Tribal Relations: <http://pubs.usgs.gov/of/2015/1164/ofr20151164.pdf>

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Smart Steps to Clean Water: Responsible Sport Fishing

Mike Duttweiler *Board of Directors, CLWN*

Cayuga Lake offers a wide variety of warm and cold water fisheries that draw anglers from far and wide. As primary users of the Lake, anglers have both a clear interest in and responsibilities for protection of lake quality. In recent years, guidelines for environmentally responsible fishing have emerged along with practical suggested steps that each person can take. Example resources include the New York Department of Environmental Conservation's "Fishing Responsibly in New York State" and the Sustaining Angling, Fish, and Ecosystems (S.A.F.E) initiative of the Recycle Fish organization. See links below for references. Much of the content below is derived from these two sources.

Anglers as Boaters

Many anglers access the lake in watercraft of all sorts. As boaters, care should be taken to maintain a clean bilge, manage fuel properly, keep emissions to a minimum, manage wastes, maintain and repair equipment away from the water, and prevent spread of invasive plants and animals via boats and trailers. See the "Clean Boating" article of this series for specifics (Summer 2014 issue).

Tackle Tips

One clear way to contribute to water quality protection is to use non-toxic tackle, especially avoiding lead weights and jigs. Lost lead tackle can be ingested by animals and birds causing toxicity or death. About 30% of common loon mortality in New York is attributed to lead poisoning. New York has banned the sale of lead sinkers weighing less than half of an ounce. What can you do?

- Stop using lead tackle, including lead-weighted jigs and other lead-weighted lures. Dispose of surplus lead at community hazardous waste collection days.
- Buy lead-free tackle. Patronize retailers that stock the best assortment of lead-free tackle. Ask retailers to stock lead-free replacements for all weighted tackle products.

- Recover snagged tackle as much as possible. Hooks, lures and monofilament are hazards to wildlife, whether or not you are using lead.
- Encourage fellow anglers to follow your example.

Another tackle-related problem is loss of soft-bodied lures that mimic various forms of bait. Their characteristic pliability makes them susceptible to loss. These baits are indigestible and can directly harm fish and animals when eaten. Such baits typically are made from a variety of petroleum-based materials and can leach contaminants to the water. Inspect such tackle regularly to be sure it is in good condition and fastened securely. If not, remove and dispose the replaceable parts. Good alternatives are biodegradable molded baits increasingly available on the market and baits made from tear-resistant plastics. In some cases, natural alternatives like pork bellies may be available.

Improper disposal of monofilament fishing line happens all too often, particularly at popular fishing venues. Tangles of line can entrap fish and animals and may be ingested. Regularly inspect line for burrs or other imperfections and replace damaged sections to avoid accidental loss. If you strip line or replace line, dispose of it properly. Some popular fishing venues offer disposal sites specifically for fishing line. An example from Sodus Bay on Lake Ontario is depicted here.

Baitfish

Improper use of baitfish is a priority concern because of the potential to spread diseases such as viral hemorrhagic septicemia (VHS), displacement of native bait species, and direct predation on game species. What can you do?

- Only use bait purchased from a dealer selling certified disease free bait
- Don't move bait or other fish from one water to another.
- Dispose of unused bait in an appropriate location on dry land

There are many straightforward steps that contribute to protecting our exceptional water resources. In this series of articles, we replay and expand upon suggestions that were presented in our 2006 publication "Smart Steps for Clean Water" available in full at: <http://www.cayugalake.org/files/all/smrstps06.pdf>



MIKE DUTTWEILER, SODUS BAY, NY

- Use baitfish only in waters where their use is permitted.
- Report illegal stocking activities.

Non-Native Plants and Animals

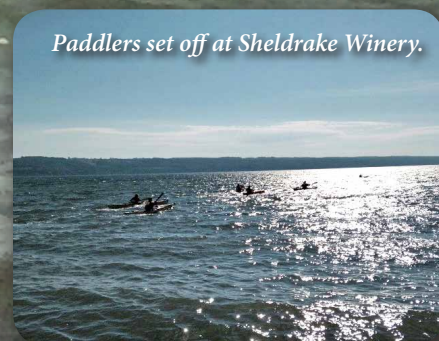
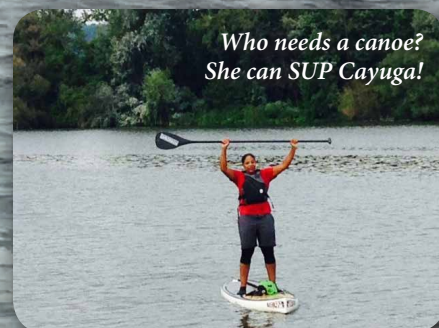
Anglers often visit different bodies of water in pursuit of their favorite species making transport of non-native plants and animals a particular concern. Here in brief are steps you can take to minimize the chances of contributing to spread of invasive species.

- Remove all mud and aquatic plants from all gear, boats, motors and trailers before departing from an access site.
- Drain all water including bilges, live wells and bait tanks before departing from an access site.
- Dry boat and equipment thoroughly after use, or flush bilges and clean boat with very hot water or steam clean.

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Can You Canoe Cayuga 2015 a Success!

Onshore at Taughannock, a
volunteer radios updates. Offshore,
a paddler heads south toward
Ithaca's Cass Park.



The fourth annual run of our signature paddling event was held on Saturday September 19. People in kayaks, canoes, and balanced on SUPs—Stand-Up Paddleboards—paddled a strenuous, challenging path south along the lake’s west shore to Ithaca’s Cass Park for the afterparty, with food by Kendra’s Catering, Lake Cake and brownies from Patricia Haines and Maureen Cowen, and music by the wonderful Purple Valley.

A day earlier, organizers John Mawdsley and Sharon Mier notified participants that strong big winds were predicted from the south to peak in mid-afternoon during the event. These winds would be in the face of the paddlers all day and so CYCC was shortened by 11 miles, beginning at Dean’s Cove State Marine Park instead of Cayuga Lake State Park to the north. This change ensured that participants were further down the lake when the wind and waves kicked up, after noon. Even with this switch, the “sporting” conditions were rough enough to convince some participants to get in their cars and head south to the next site. And even then, the wind and waves continued their boisterous pounding. The stretch from Sheldrake Winery to Taughannock State Park was especially tough going for the sturdy participants, who must have been unable to lift their arms for days afterwards.

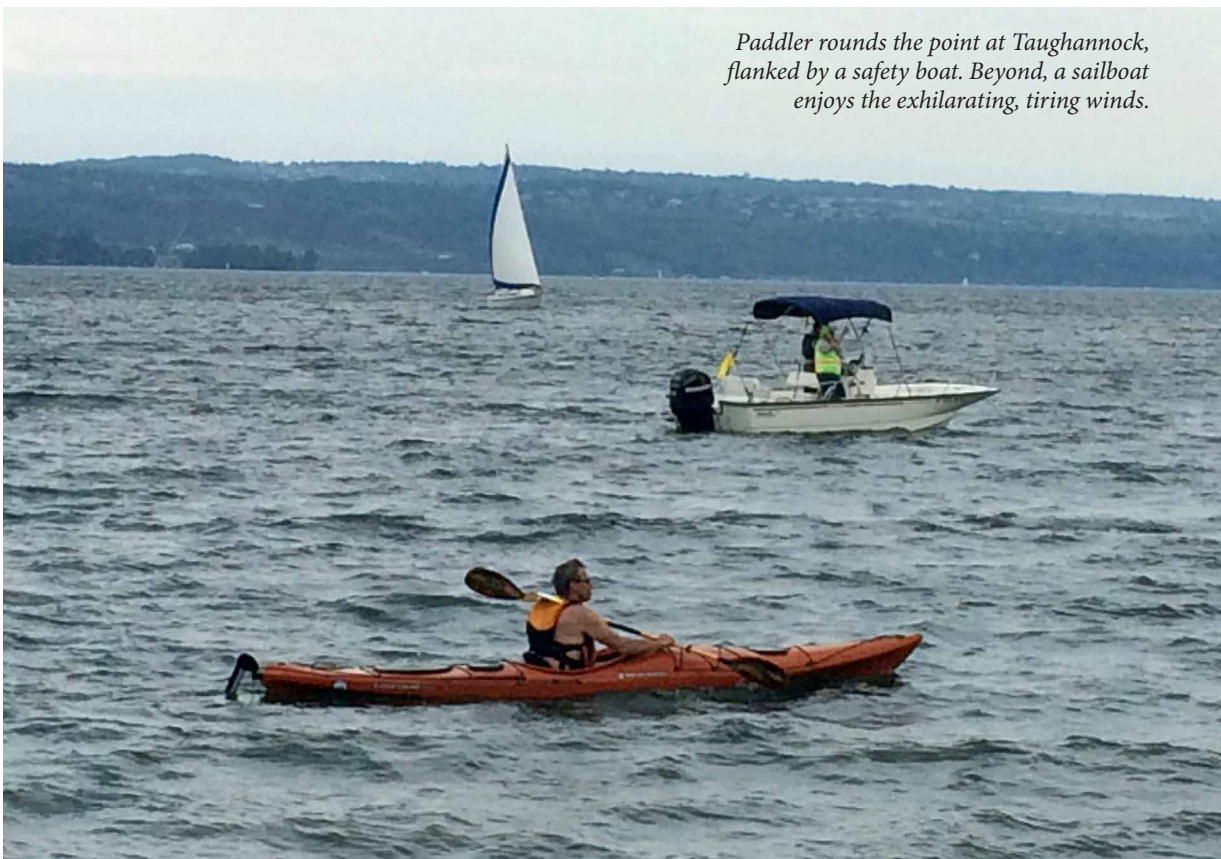
Organizer John Mawdsley reports that fifty-one paddlers started, including the outrigger. Thirty-four finished at Cass Park. The rest pulled out at various locations—they were not lost! In a further breakdown, eight started at Cayuga State Park in the outrigger, where it had been towed on the Friday. Fourteen started at Dean’s Cove, eight started at Sheldrake; and twenty-one put in at Taughannock State Park. Six paddlers got car rides from Sheldrake to Taughannock and resumed paddling there.

A big thank you to the West Shore homeowner south of the Ithaca Yacht Club, who gave two of the paddlers a beer!

The flexibility and uniqueness of this great event is demonstrated by the ease with which people were able to select one or more segments, and change their plans based on conditions. Participants could choose one stretch of lakeshore, or the whole event length. As long as paddlers checked in and out with the organizers at each launch point, they were free to create a lake-paddling adventure to fit skills, strength and conditions. One family, aware of the winds, spent the afternoon

noodling around in Cayuga Inlet—and then joined the others at Cass Park for the great food and music.

Over 50 volunteers worked behind the scenes, including onshore volunteers from Cornell’s Biology Service Leaders, the Trumansburg/Town of Covert’s Ambulance, and Seneca County Sheriff Stan Warne. Paddlers were tracked by the Tompkins County Ham Radio Operators, traveling in their mobile tracking unit (truck!). On the water, safety boats were at hand in case of paddler problems. These included the US Coast Guard Auxiliary



Paddler rounds the point at Taughannock, flanked by a safety boat. Beyond, a sailboat enjoys the exhilarating, tiring winds.

Flotilla 2-2 out of Ithaca. The key volunteer coordinating the safety boats was Greg Albrecht. Thanks to the coordinating team, who planned and prepared in advance, and were there to make sure it all went smoothly: Bonnie Shelley, Lois Chaplin, Brenda Wickes, and Maureen Cowen.

From Paul Davis: “This was an awesome event. Very well organized. Thank you so much!”

Tim Noon wrote: “Great event this weekend! Thanks for organizing. Also thanks to Lois for giving Nick (#6) and me (#5) the ride to Taughannock from O’Malleys. My little infant daughter also had a great time dancing it up with the band after. Great day! See you next year.” 🐾

Many thanks to our 2015 CanYou Canoe Cayuga Sponsors: Sciarabba Walker & Co., LLP; Sheldrake Point Cayuga Lake Winery; Tompkins County Tourism Grants Program; Tompkins Trust Company; Puddledockers Kayak Shop; and Paddle-n-More!

AT BEAUTIFUL CAYUGA LAKE STATE PARK

Lively Annual Meeting and Picnic/Cookout

Hilary Lambert

The Network's Annual Meeting and Picnic/Cookout was held in mid-August in an old-fashioned wooden picnic shelter at Cayuga Lake State Park, just south of Seneca Falls.

About twenty-five people showed up, bringing a wealth of good foods and drink to share. Thanks to Board member Patricia Haines Gooding and her husband David Gooding, who slaved over the hot grills to provide hamburgers, hotdogs, vegi-burgers, and a fantastic stew made by Patricia.

We were sorry that some of our regulars (Steve!) from previous events at Lansing's Myers Park did not make it around the top or bottom of the lake to this new spot, but we'll be back! A built-in geographical challenge to working on behalf of our beautiful lake and creeks is its long skinny shape, making it impossible to have one central gathering place.

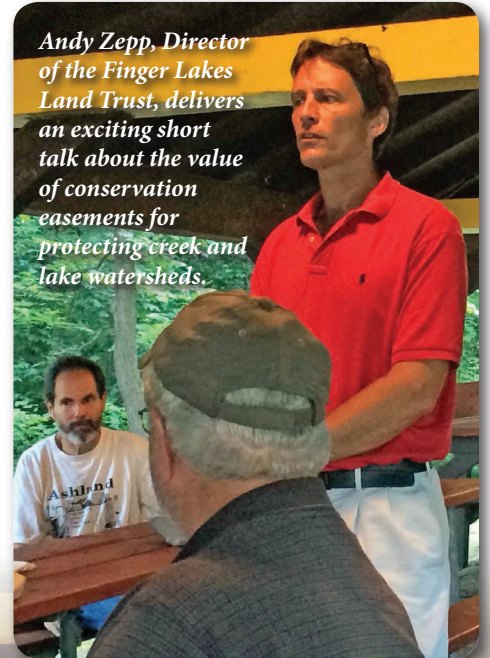
The Network is working hard to reach out around the whole lake, and we benefited on this occasion by meeting a number of new and old members

who live near Seneca Falls. We also got to hear from members of the new water monitoring group, the Canoga Shoreliners, who have been trained by the Community Science Institute and are carrying out water quality sampling along this stretch of lakeshore and its creeks. This new group, led by Board member Bill Ebert, will help area residents find out about the health of their creeks and lake, and how to better protect them.

Thank you to Board Chair Dale Baker and Treasurer John Abel, for providing concise annual reports on our activities and finances, and thank you to Mark Witmer for his several years of service as our Secretary, a role now taken on by Mike Duttweiler. Mark remains on the Board, and John Mawdsley has agreed to another stint. Our other returning board members are Penney Mapes Cook, Phil

Crimmin, Patricia Haines Gooding, Deb Grantham, Bill Ebert and Eric Devin. Liaisons to the Board are Dan Hill, Cayuga Nation; and Bill Foster, Cayuga Lake Floating Classroom. 🐾

Andy Zepp, Director of the Finger Lakes Land Trust, delivers an exciting short talk about the value of conservation easements for protecting creek and lake watersheds.



Attendees listen as CLWN Board Chair Dale Baker gives his 2015 Chair's Report.



Please give fifteen minutes to help update the Cayuga Lake Watershed Restoration & Protection Plan *continued from cover*

Please alert younger people—aged 0-18—to the set of questions designed for their response. Youth is an important stakeholder group in the watershed: they inherit tomorrow what we do today, and may have some interesting opinions and ideas about how to take care of the Cayuga Lake watershed.

It is important for people within the watershed to let their municipalities and New York State know how they value the watershed and how they view its condition. I hope you will take the opportunity to fill out the online questionnaire. Our beautiful and invaluable water resources will need our continual attention and care in the coming years and an updated Restoration and Protection Plan plays an important part in those efforts. This plan is funded by the NYS Department of State through the Title 11 Environmental Protection Fund.

To be added to the RPP Process Update email list, or to have a copy of the questionnaire mailed to you, please send an email request to Hilary Lambert steward@cayugalake.org or leave a message at the Network's office number (607) 319 0475. 🐾

12. Please choose the top five actions that could most effectively protect or restore the watershed.

- ☐ Improving stormwater management and erosion control.
- ☐ Improving communications, collaboration and partnerships across municipal and agency boundaries.
- ☐ Fostering stewardship through education and citizen engagement.
- ☐ Improving farming practices to reduce runoff and erosion.
- ☐ Improving public wastewater systems management.
- ☐ Improving private wastewater systems (septic systems).
- ☐ Providing lawn care education to reduce erosion and lawn chemicals runoff.
- ☐ Improving protection of wetlands and riparian corridors/buffers (land along the lake, creeks and streams).
- ☐ Improving forestry management.
- ☐ Improving control of invasive species.
- ☐ Other: _____

ANNUAL APPEAL Membership Renewal— Ithaca Alternative Gift Fair!

Ways to
support the
Network

Thank you to everyone who sent donations in support of our **Annual Appeal**. New donor gifts are matched in full by a generous grant from the Park Foundation. We are sending you a beautiful postcard of the lake as thanks (and tax-deduction receipt).

Next up is our **Membership Renewal** season, which runs from October to the end of the year. Watch for our friendly mailing, coming your way soon. We renew all memberships at the end of the year.

You don't have to wait for a mailed request! Go to our **website** at www.cayugalake.org and scroll down to the Clickable "Join" and "Donate" buttons to renew your membership and donate to support us.

We will be participating in the **Ithaca Alternative Gift Fair** again this year, partnering with the **Cayuga**

Lake Floating Classroom. The IAGF will be held on Saturday, December 5 from 11:00am to 6:00pm in "The Space" @ Greenstar, located on the corner of Fulton Street and Buffalo Street in Ithaca (NEW LOCATION!). Come visit and give to your favorite causes, in return for gift cards that you can give to family and friends in lieu of STUFF. Learn more at www.ithacaaltgiftfair.org ! 🐾



Smart Steps to Clean Water: Responsible Sport Fishing *continued from page 3*

- Do not transport fish from one body of water to another.
- Do not release unused bait into any body of water.
- Do not dispose of fish carcasses or by-products in any body of water.

Ethical Angling

The items above relate directly or indirectly to water quality protection. Other aspects of angling stewardship

relate to knowing and following regulations for protection of fish populations, protecting endangered and threatened species (the Lake Sturgeon in Cayuga Lake), selecting tackle that minimizes harm to fish, catch-and-release and selective harvest fishing, and proper handling of fish. See the references below for discussion of these and other aspects of responsible angling. 🐾

Sources:

- NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. 2015. Fishing Responsibly in New York State. <http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/9223.html>
- Recycled Fish. 2015. What is S.A.F.E. Angling? <http://www.recycledfish.org/safe-angling/index.htm>

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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- ✎ Education
- ✎ Advocacy
- ✎ Protection

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Cornell Biology Service Leaders



Ithaca College students advising the Network

Watch for our 2015 year-end/New Year's 2016 issue...

with a focus on thanking those who are helping the Network, our lake, creeks and watershed.

Student groups in Ithaca and Aurora are a big part of this story: Here you see the Cornell Biology Service Leaders planning to tackle Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, and Ithaca College's Students Consulting for Nonprofit Organizations advising the Network on how to grow and improve.

In this next issue we'll tell you more about these great groups, plus Wells College's Center for Sustainability and the Environment, Campus Greens, and cooperative work with the Cayuga Nation's S.H.A.R.E Farm. Also look for stories about an individual landowner's fight against HWA; Cayuga Lake's Floating Classroom; Dave Heck's heroic work against hydrilla; John Mawdsley's long work on behalf of his American watershed; Professor David Bouldin's decades of research into the nature of Cayuga Lake; and more! ✎