

Network News

It takes a Network to protect a watershed.



Incoming CLWN Board chair speaks about priorities for 2021-22

David Wolfe *Chair, CLWN Board of Directors*

In the past year, under the leadership of our out-going chair of the Board of Directors, Deb Grantham, we went through a well-executed strategic planning process, and this really got all of us on the Board reinvigorated and more focused in our thinking. Now, as the incoming chair, I have the opportunity and challenge to work with the CLWN staff and Board to implement some of the ideas that emerged.

Perhaps the most overarching new priority we identified during our strategic planning effort was to better integrate the challenges of climate change into all of our programming. This is right up my alley because climate change has been a big part of what I've worked on at Cornell for the past few decades. I'm looking forward to working with CLWN members and our many collaborators to build resilience to climate change impacts on the lake, forests, farms, and communities within the watershed.

We've realized that reaching a broader audience than we have in the past will be important for us to be most effective at addressing this challenge. This would include youth audiences, farmers and other land managers, and also those who, for a variety of reasons, have not yet been able to take advantage of our amazing Cayuga Lake and streams or the many wonderful trails for hiking or other recreation. The limited public access to the lake is one thing that has come up numerous times. There also are "climate justice" issues we don't want to ignore. Not everyone in our watershed will be equally vulnerable to climate change impacts such as more frequent and expanding zones of flooding risk, more days of extreme heat and humidity in summer, etc. In the coming year we will be gathering input to determine

the most effective role for the CLWN in addressing some of these issues, while not being redundant with what other groups and government agencies are already doing.

This past summer, Cayuga Lake reached flood stage for a period of time in late August, and the heavy rains associated with this caused soil erosion and infrastructure damage with economic impacts well beyond the lakeshore. We are seeing this kind of thing more often—and historical records document that the Northeast has had more than a 60% increase in the frequency of heavy rainfall events (more than 2 inches in 24 hours) since the 1950s. Essentially, in a warmer world, more of our

planet's water evaporates and is in the air as water vapor, and warmer air can hold more water. The result is that when there is an upper atmosphere cooling event to cause rain, it can come down like a deluge.

It may seem counter-intuitive, but despite the increased frequency of heavy rain events discussed above, in summer months we are also experiencing more frequent short-term water deficits between the heavy rains. These have been significant enough to reduce water flow in creeks and negatively affect farmers, homeowners on wells, and aquatic and terrestrial

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wildlife. The pattern of these short-term dry spells typically varies across the watershed, but in 2016 there was a record-breaking summer drought with substantial yield losses for many farmers across central and western New York.

Coping with these new water challenges will require new guidelines for development and protection of resources, as well as some costly repairs and adaptations over the long term, such as improved storm drainage and flood control systems, new approaches to land management to reduce chemical and manure runoff during heavy rain events, and expanded irrigation capacity for our farms.

Another very important challenge will continue to be the threat of exotic invasive pests, which is exacerbated by climate change. From the aphid-like wooly adelgid creeping into our region from the south and threatening our hemlock trees, to invasive fish and plant species showing up in our waterways, these can severely disturb the function and health of ecosystems, create problems for recreation, or even directly impact human health and safety. Over the years, Hilary Lambert, our Executive Director and Steward, has been particularly effective at finding funds and also mobilizing volunteers to deal with invasives of all kinds, and this work will be even more important in the future.

In just the past few years the cyanobacteria species causing Harmful Algal Blooms” (HABs) has become a very serious issue in Cayuga Lake. When a significant bloom is observed, swimming becomes a health risk for humans and pets. The CLWN has played a major role in organizing a multitude of HABs Harrier volunteers who now monitor a significant fraction of the lakeshore on a weekly basis, and communicate the findings to the public. These volunteers are trained to collect

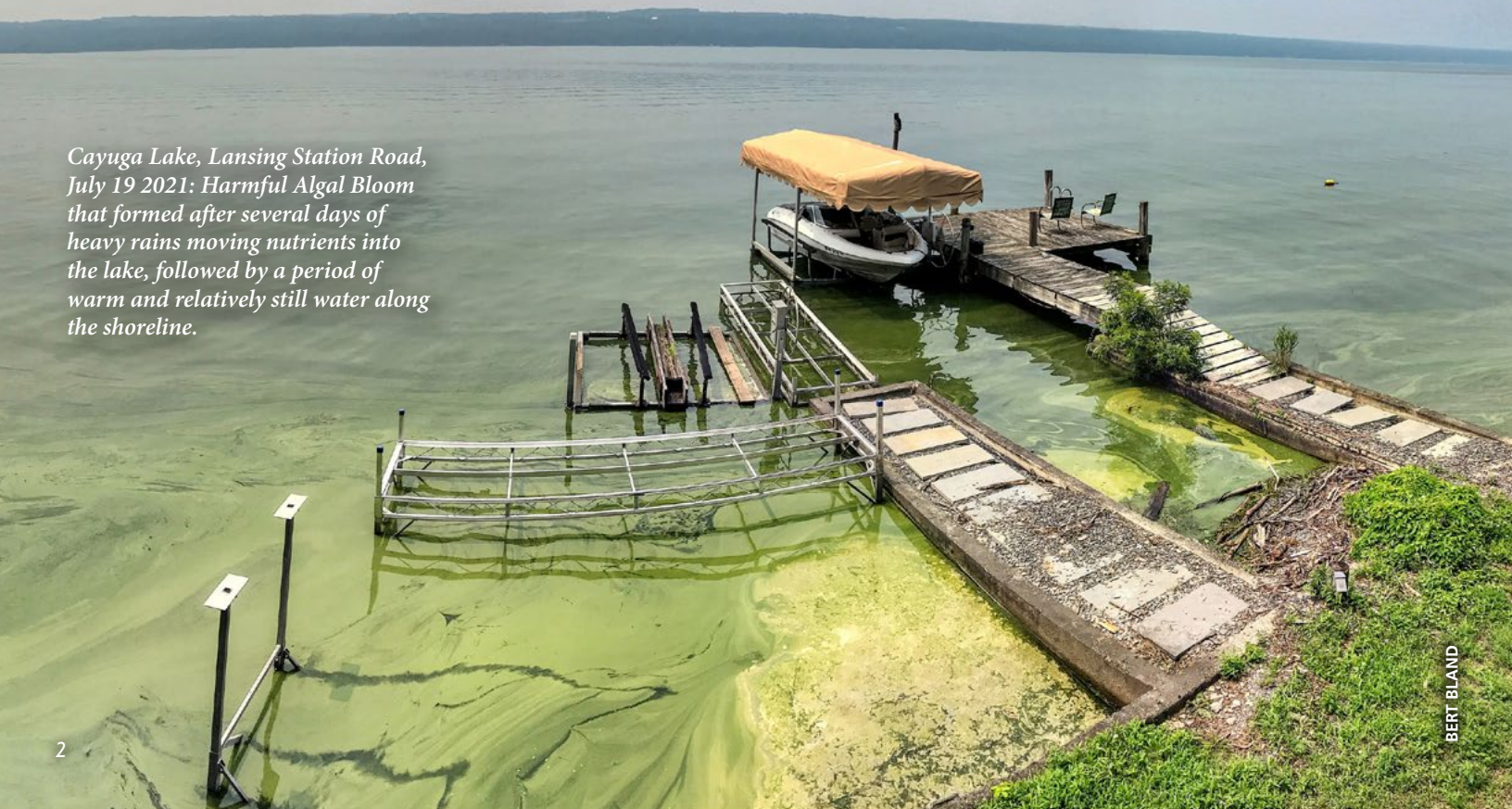
samples if warranted, and our partners at the Community Science Institute confirm whether HABs are indeed present, and also test for toxicity.

Scientists studying the recent HABs threat believe that warmer water temperatures and heavy rainfall events that result in more nutrients flowing into the lake (both increasing in frequency with climate change) can contribute to the blooms showing up. There are many groups and government agencies, such as our New York State Soil and Water Conservation Districts, working with farmers other land managers to come up with effective and economic ways to reduce nutrient loading into the lake by carefully timed and efficient use of fertilizers, and new approaches to manure management and runoff.

Our recent experience with climate change in our region brings home the point that the “average global temperature” increase we often hear about on the news should not be our focus. Much more important are the implications this has for the shifting range of invasive species and the frequency of extreme events with negative impacts on our ecosystems and communities.

Of course, even before humans were affecting the planet, “extreme” events have happened now and then. But the most recent UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report (<https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/#SPM>) documents that the frequency, intensity, and duration of heat stress, drought, and flooding events of the past several decades is well beyond what previous generations have had to face. That is what we have to prepare for, and also what should inspire us to try to slow the pace of climate change by reducing emissions of greenhouse gases by improving energy efficiency and moving away from reliance on fossil fuels. 🐾

*Cayuga Lake, Lansing Station Road,
July 19 2021: Harmful Algal Bloom
that formed after several days of
heavy rains moving nutrients into
the lake, followed by a period of
warm and relatively still water along
the shoreline.*



Thank you to Network members!

For participating in our 2021 election



Last minute changes—but you helped us get it done!

The bad news was that at the very last minute, owing to the emergence of the Delta COVID-19 variant, we had to cancel our long-planned and deeply desired in-person annual picnic and meeting at Myers Park in Lansing. The good news is that you, our members, responded gallantly to our combined email, mail-in ballot and postcard communications. Thank you! In time for our online 2021 Annual Meeting and August Board meeting on August 10, we received the needed number of your votes to validate our returning and new Board of Directors members election, and small but significant changes to our Bylaws.

The Bylaws changes make our leadership more dynamic. Your vote enabled us to replace the static three vice chairs—one from each of Seneca, Cayuga, and Tompkins counties—to a single vice chair, who will succeed as chair of the board when the present chair steps down. This adds a much-needed dynamic succession process. This also means that, instead of looking to three people for county-level leadership, all Board members are emissaries, representing and reporting on the water-related concerns of their area of the Cayuga Lake watershed.

The Bylaws requirement still stands that two to three Board members must come from each of the three shoreline counties. Cayuga County is presently underserved. We are actively seeking new members and welcome your input. The Network's updated Bylaws can be found at our website under the About > Organization heading.

Returning and new Board members and Chair, and a search for new Executive Director

We humbly thank Deb Grantham for her years of service, starting in 2007. She has stepped down from being Chair, her latest of many roles and tasks on behalf of the Network. Deb helped shape CLWN, and kept it on course through thick and thin, serving as treasurer and chair, more than once, and in a pinch serving in both roles simultaneously. We are in calmer waters now, and the Chair role has moved to David Wolfe, who had been hoping that he could simply



We'll get back to Myers Park in Lansing again for a members picnic—but not this year.

have a nice quiet retirement from Cornell University. Congratulations and thank you David for stepping up.

In the brand new singular Vice Chair role is Norman Porticella; and long-time Board member Patricia Haines has stepped up to be Secretary, replacing wonderful and wise Louise Mudrak, who has left the Board. Thank you John Abel for continuing as Treasurer, with Mark Benjamin as Co-Treasurer. Deep gratitude to you all. Also, two new members were elected: George Adams, who hails from the wild upland borders of Danby and Ithaca; and David O. Brown, whose home is near the famous Jennings Pond, which drains to both the Great Lakes and Chesapeake Bay. For a full list of our Board of Directors with photos and short biographical statements, check our website under the About > People heading.

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Statement of Support for Protection of the Bell Station Land as a Public-Access Preserve

Board of Directors and Issues Committee



*The beautiful 472 acre
Bell Station property,
Lansing NY.*

Bell Station is a 472-acre parcel of woodlands and croplands with 3400 feet of Cayuga Lake shoreline (including two beautiful gorges with waterfalls), located just north of the (decommissioned) Cayuga Power plant in Lansing, on the lake's eastern shore. Bell Station has strong support for its protection. It is designated as a future public-access conservation land in the 2018 Lansing Comprehensive Plan; is an official Tompkins County Unique Natural Area; and both the Finger Lakes Land Trust and DEC list it as a priority for conservation. Numerous documents cite land conservation as a major tool to reduce runoff, and to increase public access to water.

New York State Electric and Gas (NYSEG) owns this property. Until very recently, it was understood that NYSEG, NYS Department of Conservation (DEC) and the Finger Lakes Land Trust (FLLT) were working on plans to establish some form of conservation protection for this land, to include public access via trails and along the lakeshore. Also, the present owners of the power plant property have been interested in using some of the land for solar panel development.

This summer, NYSEG abruptly put Bell Station on the market, with public auction set first for September, then for mid-October. This led quickly to an online petition drive and letters from numerous organizations, municipalities, and the Tompkins County Legislature, calling for protection, not development, at this site. Following is CLWN's statement.

WE strongly support preservation of the Bell Station property in the Town of Lansing for public enjoyment and as an oasis for natural habitat and ecosystem protection. As climate change gains strength, we need to make local choices that prioritize protection of our priceless freshwater resource.

Water quality and watershed health will be best protected by keeping Bell Station's 3,400 feet of pebbly shoreline and two majestic gorges undeveloped, and by managing the uplands of this 472-acre parcel for reduced runoff and natural ecosystem restoration.

As we have seen during the difficult and tumultuous summers of 2020 and 2021, people are seeking more contact with nature and water, and inexpensive ways to keep cool. Better public access to Cayuga Lake is key to expanding these opportunities, as the climate heats up. Presently, only 10% of the Cayuga Lake shoreline is open to the public, for paddling, boating, fishing, and hiking on trails. Private home development on the Bell Station shoreline would be a short-sighted choice. Better to keep

*On September 24,
NYS Governor Kathy
Hochul announced
that Bell Station
has been taken off
the market, and
summarized plans
for preservation.
Wonderful outcome!*

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Defining Waters of the USA (WOTUS)

Comments submitted to US EPA

Since the Clean Water Act was created in 1972, its enforcement by US EPA and state agencies has led to enormous improvements for our country's water quality. However, recent administrations in Washington D.C. have weakened water protections, especially for small headwaters streams and wetlands. Essential to the continued health of Cayuga Lake and its creeks, our wetlands and small upland streams need effective protection. During 2021, US EPA proposed to revise and update the definition of what types of waterways receive protection under the Clean Water Act, and invited public comment.

Hilary Lambert CLWN Steward

From New York State's Cayuga Lake watershed, I am writing on behalf of our country's water—beginning with the infant rivers that form in the uplands and wetlands of Cayuga Lake's 870-square mile watershed. These quiet waters flow to join creeks, plummet over great waterfalls and into Cayuga Lake, and eventually reach the Atlantic Ocean. I also write on behalf of the rocky little headwaters streams in ferny uplands in so-called "coal country"; the pools and other undeniably water-filled declivities across the Great Plains; and on behalf of the hidden, grand cave rivers that undergird valleys, mountains and communities, spilling out via springs for human and ecosystem uses. These are some of the waters of the US—WOTUS. They all must be protected.

My action request in this comment was to have been removal of the 2020 Navigable Waters Protection Rule (NWPR), which minimized protections for wetlands and streams in favor of farming, development, and mining interests. However, on August 30 2021, Judge Rosemary Marquez, U.S. District Court for the District of Arizona, ruled that the NWPR is too flawed to stand.

Please build on this victory, a gift to the US EPA, while you undergo your own restoration in 2021.

I am concerned that you will fall back to implementing the equally-flawed 1986 regulation as interpreted by the Bush-Cheney administration in 2008. That action and accompanying legal decisions threw into question the definition of what is and is not a water of the US. This opened the door to widespread abuse of and disrespect for the Clean Water Act, one of the most effective of our landmark federal environmental protection laws.



US EPA is working to restore and strengthen headwater streams and wetlands protections for areas like this forested wetland in Dryden NY, which drains via streams and small creeks to Cayuga Lake.

Energy companies were quick to use new loopholes and exemptions to irretrievably pollute vulnerable water sources, fracking for fossil fuel gas and oil.

Please take this opportunity to strip away the layers of circuitous legalese that have been imposed on the CWA's original intent, which was to protect and restore the waters of the US. Not some waters, or special subsets of waters. But all waters.

I attended EPA's August 25 webinar. While I was delighted that it was proposed to remove the 2020 rule—which has now been done for you—I was concerned to hear that attention would be paid to all interest groups for the sake of inclusion. That sounds like your door is still open for special interests to lobby for loopholes big enough to drive a bulldozer or tractor through.

This comment is being submitted at the close of a week of nationwide

extreme, catastrophic, climate change-fueled weather events focused around too much and too little water. Familiar landscapes and long-established weather patterns are shifting under our feet as I write these words. We cannot know what will happen next, so now is no time to be supporting outdated industries that are entering a period of profound flux and transformation.

Please focus on the law's impacts to the resource itself: our country's waters. Please simplify and strengthen the Clean Water Act's original objective, to "restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation's water," with the goals of eliminating pollutant discharges and providing for the "protection and propagation of fish, shellfish, and wildlife" and "recreation in and on the water." —CWA, Section (101(a)ouse). 🐾

What is...

New York Proposal 2, Environmental Rights Amendment (2021)?

New York Proposal 2, the Environmental Rights Amendment, is on the ballot in New York as a legislatively referred constitutional amendment on November 2, 2021.

A **“yes”** vote supports adding a right to clean water, clean air, and a healthful environment to the New York Constitution’s Bill of Rights.

A **“no”** vote opposes adding a right to clean water, clean air, and a healthful environment to the New York Constitution’s Bill of Rights.

What would this ballot measure add to the New York Constitution?

Proposal 2 would add a right to clean water, clean air, and a healthful environment to the New York Constitution’s Bill of Rights.

To learn more, go to [Ballotpedia.org](https://ballotpedia.org/New_York_Proposal_2,_Environmental_Rights_Amendment_(2021)): [https://ballotpedia.org/New_York_Proposal_2,_Environmental_Rights_Amendment_\(2021\)](https://ballotpedia.org/New_York_Proposal_2,_Environmental_Rights_Amendment_(2021)) ➤

Thank you Seneca County Soil & Water Conservation District!

Nancy and Ed Currier *Volunteer and Board member*

CLWN is most grateful to Erin Peruzzini for her significant contributions in developing our new Lake Friendly Living Cayuga Lake Homeowner’s Guide and Pledge Cards. Erin, who is the Seneca County Soil and Water Conservation District Manager, acquired a grant to revise and print our new guide for homeowners.

Working with Nancy and Ed Currier, LFL Liaisons from the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network, and Samantha Dreverman, graphic designer, Erin edited several iterations of the Guide, which now clearly features three levels of involvement in being lake friendly. Starting at the Pledge level, progressing to the Cayuga Lake Champion level, and on to the Care for Cayuga Lake level, homeowners can move toward being more involved in their concern for water quality.

We wish to recognize Erin’s foresight, sensitivity and dedication to this project. Her resources not only produced 1000 copies of an appealing and informative publication, but also supported new pledge cards.

Current LFL Champions and the CLWN Board have received copies of this new Guide. Thanks this support, the Guide can be shared electronically or by mail with all interested watershed residents.

This new Guide will be available soon on the LFL section of the CLWN website. If you have not yet taken the pledge, please consider doing so and sign up! ➤

Hot off the press! Check out the Lake Friendly Living page at our website under the Resources heading. Take the Pledge to adopt best practices, and you will receive this booklet, yard sign, car sticker—and simple, detailed tools to take better care of our waterways, wherever you live in the Cayuga Lake watershed.

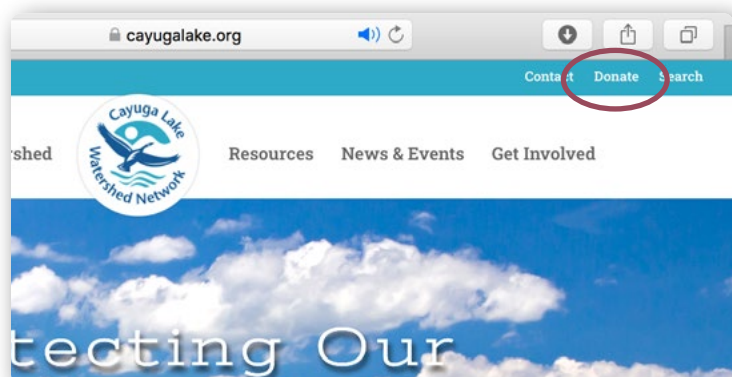


Subscription donations now available!

The Network recently adopted Stripe as our primary donation processing vendor.

BY implementing Stripe, we can accept subscription (also known as recurring) payments. Have you ever wanted to make a larger donation to the Network but needed the flexibility to do so over time? Now you can!

Please visit our website and click on the "Donate" button, select your donation amount, and complete the transaction via Stripe. For those of you who prefer Paypal, it is still an option! Please keep in mind that subscription donations are not available through Paypal unless you have a Paypal account. Please let us know if you have any questions or difficulties—thank you for supporting the CLWN! 🐾



Thank you to Network members! For participating in our 2021 election

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Also, the 2021 Annual Meeting was the right time to announce that, later this year, Hilary Lambert is stepping down as Executive Director/Steward. Hilary has enjoyed this wonderful job since 2009, and feels that it's time for new energy and skills to move our watershed and organization forward into the heart of the climate change era. The Board has launched a search for her replacement. Hilary will be helping with Network fundraising, doing part-time consulting, completing Book 2 of her sci-fi saga, and enjoying her family. Thanks to our stalwart members/program staff Jenn Tufano for her able assistance during this period. 🐾

Statement of Support for Protection of the Bell Station Land as a Public-Access Preserve

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the land untouched, which supports the Cayuga Lake Blueway Trail and other programs that increase public access to our beautiful lake.

We call on NYSEG to negotiate with the Finger Lakes Land Trust for management and full protection of this rarest of properties, which is compact and large enough for ecologically effective human and natural protection. The Town of Lansing's future appeal to residents and visitors will be greatly enhanced by a major public access resource at this location. 🐾

Become a Member of the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network!

PLEASE JOIN CLWN, your lake's watershed protection organization. Your membership strengthens our ability to protect the lake at the center of our lives. **ENCOURAGE FRIENDS, FAMILY, GROUPS AND BUSINESSES TO JOIN.** You can use the form below to join or renew. Mail completed form with check to CLWN, PO Box 348, Aurora NY 13026. *Thank you.*

Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____ May we add you to our listserv? ☐ Yes ☐ No

We have membership levels to suit everyone's needs. Please check one of the levels below.

- | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> \$10 Student/Senior | <input type="radio"/> \$35 Family | <input type="radio"/> \$50 Business/Farm | <input type="radio"/> \$250 Lake Sponsor |
| <input type="radio"/> \$25 Individual | <input type="radio"/> \$50 Organization/Agency | <input type="radio"/> \$100 Headwaters Donor | <input type="radio"/> \$500 Watershed Benefactor |

We are growing and expanding our effective programs.

Would you like to make an extra donation to support this work?

\$ _____ Unrestricted – for general operations.

\$ _____ To support water quality tests on Canoga, Burroughs, Yawger and Milliken Creeks.

\$ _____ To expand our springtime Embrace the Lake creek, lakefront & ditches cleanups.

TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$ _____ Check # _____ (payable to Cayuga Lake Watershed Network please)

Payment can also be made via Paypal/credit card at our website www.cayugalake.org

Your Contributions to the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network are Tax Deductible.



Would you like
☐ 1 or ☐ 2
full-color CLWN logo
window stickies (4 x 6")

If you are interested in learning about donating stocks to CLWN, please contact Jenn at programs@cayugalake.org.

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, sustainable communities.



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- Educate
- Advocate
- Protect

Current Resident

Upcoming Events in the Cayuga Lake Watershed

Check our website, listserv and Facebook page for announcements about events, and contact steward@cayugalake.org or programs@cayugalake.org for the latest information.

Online Fall Community Conference, October 27 & November 14

All presentations will be recorded and made available at the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network YouTube channel.

October 27—Water quality in the Cayuga Lake watershed.

Nathaniel Launer (Community Science Institute) will report about the 2021 HABs (Harmful Algal Blooms) season on Cayuga Lake. **Rebecca Schneider** (Cornell University) will present about ditches, drainage, runoff, and water quality impacts.

Time: 7-9 p.m. contact Jenn Tufano at programs@cayugalake.org to pre-register and receive Zoom information.

November 18—Hydrilla monitoring and treatment around Cayuga Lake in 2021.

Kathryn Monacelli (Finger Lakes Institute & FL PRISM program) will report on 2021 hydrilla monitoring and control on Cayuga Lake and across

the Finger Lakes.

Michael Greer (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Buffalo office) will report on the 2021 hydrilla projects in Ithaca at the south end of Cayuga Lake and on the east shore at Aurora.

Time: 2:30-4 p.m. contact Jenn Tufano at programs@cayugalake.org to pre-register and receive Zoom information.

CLWN Annual Membership Renewal Drive

Watch for CLWN 2022 membership renewals and invitations in the mail during November/December. Please support our work and help protect the Cayuga Lake watershed, by joining and renewing. **Join/Renew/Donate** now at our website, under the Get Involved heading.

Network News 2021 Issue 4

The final news-packed 2021 issue of *Network News* will be mailed to members during December. Back issues are archived online at our website under the News & Events heading. ➤