

# Network News



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## Less Phosphorus Entering Cayuga Lake

By Lynn Smith and Jose Lozano, Ithaca Area Wastewater Treatment Facility

**P**hosphorus and silt are the major causes of pollution in Cayuga Lake's southern end, according to the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation's list of impaired waters. Wastewater is one source of phosphorus, a nutrient that spurs plant growth in the lake. Conventional treatment plants can remove 92 to 95 percent of the phosphorus from wastewater.

The Ithaca Area Wastewater Treatment Facility (IAWWTF) is rated to treat 13.1 million gallons per day (MGD) of wastewater, though daily flows are typically closer to 7 MGD. The original treatment process consists of primary settling, secondary aeration, final settling followed by disinfection with chlorine and lastly dechlorination with sulfur dioxide. The City takes its environmental stewardship responsibilities seriously, and in 2006, with financial help from New York State Clean Air – Clean Water Bond Act, installed a tertiary treatment system for phosphorus removal. Tertiary treatment consists of chemical precipitation of phosphorus using microsand to speed up settling.

The tertiary treatment system has been in operation for over a year now. There is enough preliminary data to evaluate whether it is generating the desired effect of further reducing phosphorus and improving the quality of the lake's water. The annual phosphorus loading to southern Cayuga Lake was estimated at 110.0 pounds per day in the Cayuga Lake Watershed Restoration and Protection Plan created by the Intermunicipal Organization in 2001. Since the upgrade the IAWWTF contributes 10.1 pounds of phosphorus per day, a drop from 31 percent to 10 percent of the annual phosphorus load.

In the fall of 2005 and the summer of 2006, IAWWTF staff sampled the southern end of Cayuga Lake. Using a hydrosonde, they collected data on temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen, total dissolved solids and ammonia. Samples were collected for phosphorous analysis in the laboratory. The sampling grid centered on the IAWWTF outfall that is located about 3,000 feet off shore from Stewart Park. The outfall discharges the treated

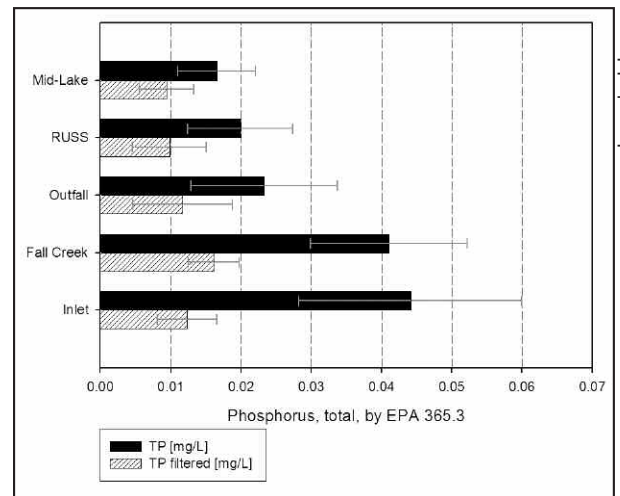


Fig. 1. Filtered and unfiltered phosphorus concentrations at south end of Cayuga Lake. 95% confidence intervals are indicated.

Image by J. Lozano

## WATERSHED STEWARD'S MESSAGE

# Who Has Inspired You? Who Do You Inspire?

Could you name five World Series winners? Or Nobel Prize winners? Or winners of the Pulitzer? All of these winners were the best in their field. But after the headlines have past, most of us don't remember. Here's another quiz. Name five people who taught you something worthwhile. Five people whose example has inspired you. Five who have made you feel appreciated.

Which questions were easier for you to answer? The people who make a difference are not the ones with the best credentials, the most money or international awards. We give awards, like the Morehouse Award and Lake-friendly Farm Award, and we recognize the achievement of the organization's leadership for two reasons. Their accomplishments and efforts are praise worthy without doubt. But most importantly they are local people who live in a way that motivates others. Their caring, energy and effort is a beacon that shines the way for the rest of us. I hope their stories in this newsletter will inspire you. 🐦

Sharon Anderson



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## AT WORK IN THE WATERSHED

*When it rains, the water leaving the Village Hall in Lansing is cleaner. A new rain garden captures and filters water running down from the driveway.*

The water carries whatever lands on the pavement – drips of oil, road salt, and air pollution that is washed down with the rain. The rain garden naturally cleanses these pollutants and lets water seep into the ground. So far over 50 people have attended trainings and an open house to learn how these bowl-shaped gardens can blend into existing landscapes and cleanse stormwater. Native plants such as winterberry and Joe Pye Weed are blended with ornamentals canna lilies and grasses to create a changing tapestry of color and texture.

Monitoring the quality of the

lakes and streams is one way to identify problems and set priorities for projects. This is possible when monitoring programs are thoughtfully designed and used to inform management activities. While very valuable, monitoring is also expensive. To help foster the wise use of limited resources, the Watershed Network in partnership with the Intermunicipal Organization is drafting a guidance document suggesting locations and parameters for water monitoring. The guide was introduced by the Watershed Steward at a public meeting sponsored by the Intermunicipal Organization and it will be summa-

rized in the winter issue of *Network News*.

We were also kept busy with Lakefest and the award programs we announced there. Those important celebrations are highlighted throughout this issue. 🐦



## Cayuga Lake Watershed Network

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# Morehouse Award Goes to Desch

*Treating wastewater is something most people would rather not think about. Thankfully, there are others who understand that cleaning wastewater is critical to the health of Cayuga Lake and the vitality of local communities.*

The 2007 David Morehouse Award recognizes the role of Noel Desch in the establishment and evolution of the Ithaca Area Waste Water Treatment.

“Noel Desch has devoted his entire adult life to improving the quality of his community, with special devotion to the difficult, complex, costly, but critical need for improved treatment of waste water throughout the southern end of Cayuga Lake. More than any other, his key and often crucial role as a public official, volunteer, and community leader has guided our communities to the quality treatment we have and will continue to appreciate for decades,” noted the nomination submitted by Bill Shaw, previous City of Ithaca Mayor.

Desch served on the Town of Ithaca Planning and Town Boards before being elected Supervisor (1978 - 1987). In these roles, Desch championed an intermunicipal solution to wastewater concerns in the more urbanized areas of Tompkins County. He was active with analysis, proposal preparation and building community support. Through tireless effort, Desch was instrumental in securing the State and Federal funds needed to bring the state-of-the-art Ithaca Area Waste Water Treatment Facility to fruition. As a consequence, Ithaca has had the benefit of an advanced wastewater treatment decades before many other similar communities. The 10 million gallon per day capacity provided sufficient treatment for twenty years despite the growing population and demands on the system.

More recently Desch was invited by the Town of Ithaca and the Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce to join a team wrestling with concerns over waste water



*Bill Shaw presented the Morehouse Award to Noel Desch at a Rotary Club meeting.*

treatment for the communities in Lansing (Town and Village), Dryden (Town), Cayuga Heights and Ithaca (Town and City). This “group of six” met regularly for years. Desch served as its Secretary and steady hand providing engineering, public policy, financial and planning considerations needed to utilize existing facilities in the City and the Village of Cayuga Heights. That multi-year effort secured \$25 million dollars from the State Bond Act for upgrades to the overloaded Cayuga Heights wastewater treatment plant and expanded capacity to 13.5 million gallons per day for the Ithaca Area Waste Water Treatment Facility. After the upgrades, both plants will release to the lake less phosphorus, a nutrient that feeds the growth of aquatic weeds and algae. Funds are also allocated to improve the

infrastructure that transports waste water to take advantage of the Ithaca plant’s excess capacity. Projected improvements will meet the needs of the community until 2023.

The award is given in memory of David Morehouse who exemplified dedication and leadership. Throughout his life he worked to protect Cayuga Lake including serving as a founding member of the two organizations that sponsor this award, the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network and the Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization.

Shaw noted, “It is hard to calculate the impact of any one person on these collective community projects. However, Noel Desch’s skill, knowledge, respected judgment and opinions, and his sustained leadership for nearly forty years make him a singular candidate for recognition by the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network with its’ annual Morehouse Award.”

## EDITORS NOTE:

The criteria for this award are:

- A minimum of five years of actively working to restore and protect the water resources of the Cayuga Lake Watershed.
- Leadership in an endeavor that has lasting benefit

A nominee may be an individual, group or business and it is not necessary for the nominee to live in the watershed. The award is announced each year in August.



# Sharing the Planet with Birds

Lily Glidden, Essay Contest Winner, TST BOCES New Visions

Cayuga Lake is a fundamental part of our community. Whenever I drive down Route 13 into Ithaca [in the winter] I admire the frozen expanse of the lake, but tend to take it for granted. I cannot image anything but clean, safe, lake water... Residents of the Cayuga Lake Watershed have always enjoyed the birds and wildlife present here and... it is essential that the community continue to protect their habitats.

There are preserves and parks throughout the Cayuga Watershed that are vital to the survival of certain bird species. The Baldwin Preserve is one of the rare local habitats for prairie as well as other warblers, indigo buntings, ravens, among others and... it is a hot spot for local birders and general nature observers. Other local areas including Myers Point, Sapsucker Woods, Reynolds Game Farm, Dryden Lake and Stewart Park, which contain a variety of exciting wild birds [ranging from]... water thrushes, loons, sandpipers and cormorants, to woodpeckers, tanagers, hawks, falcons, owls and ospreys. Visitors to Stewart Park are treated to occasional views of bald eagles and peregrine falcons. These two rare species are both considered endangered. It is inspiring that bald eagles have successfully made a comeback and... often migrate through the Cayuga Watershed... We each need to do our part to preserve clean water and nesting habitat for them...

It is easy to help preserve the quality of our local water, land and air. One way to help is to use your yard to filter water and runoff. Arrange gutters and downspouts so the water they collect and transport, gathers in porous areas where it can soak into the soil. Many ornamental plants and herbs can be grown in the resulting wet areas (including bee balm, mints, and the flower astibles). When making paths or a new driveway, avoid pavement! Instead use porous materials like gravel and bricks, spaced apart. You can help our watershed by simply picking up after your pet... Simply being aware of the consequences of your actions can help protect our wildlife. Try to prevent erosion on your land: maintain native plants especially on slopes and in wetlands. These are essential areas for watersheds, as well as unique ecosystems and habitats.

There are additional effortless things you can do to further keep chemicals out of our watershed and protect our numerous local birds. Look for cleaning products that do not contain toxic ingredients or phosphorous. When available, buy cleaning and personal products that are

unscented. Use fewer pesticides; most households use more than necessary as is, and pests can be discouraged by other methods, such as plugging access to your house from the outdoors. Keep surfaces in your house dry to prevent bacteria, mold, and mildew, and reduce the need for disinfectants. Dispose of your wastes responsibly. Most labels tell you how to properly discard of their contents. Avoid wasting water and throwing any garbage (liquid or solid), on the land. Dump only water, ever, down a storm drain!

Air pollution affects not only wildlife, but people as well. Allergies, asthma, and other respiratory illnesses are on the rise throughout the country. You can take several straightforward steps to reduce emissions, save gas money, and help our planet. Keep your tires properly inflated to



Elaina McCartney

*This summer eagles nested at the north end of lake just west of the lake's outlet at Mudlock*

improve fuel efficiency by up to ten percent. Maintain your car and engine, and drive to minimize gas use, avoiding sudden stops and starts, as well as excessive air conditioning. If you can, purchase a car that produces fewer emissions and is more efficient. Whenever possible carpool or use public transportation. These steps save money, resources, and benefit our own species as well as the many others we share this planet with.

The birds of the Cayuga Lake Watershed are a beautiful reminder of the health of our environment. When we preserve clean resources and wild land to ensure the survival of our feathered companions we can be sure that we are also helping ourselves... 🦅

EDITOR'S NOTE: The theme of the essay contest was "Sustaining Our Precious Water Resources: What Can an Individual Do? What Can Government Do?" Read the unabridged version and other winning essays at [www.cayugalake.org](http://www.cayugalake.org).

# 10th Anniversary Lakefest Surpasses All Expectations

By Judy Pipher, Outreach Committee

On Saturday, August 18, nearly 200 participants enjoyed Cayuga Watershed Network's 10th annual Lakefest, held this year at Cass Park in Ithaca. The day was windy but sunny and clear. First on the agenda was a picnic lunch, provided courtesy of Wells College, the Watershed Network and Wegmans with cookies provided by the Watershed Network Board and Committee members. As we ate, we enjoyed the mellow tunes of Wendi Hunter and the Hunter Family. Wendi (with different groups) has performed at Lakefest for several years.

In the tent adjacent to the eating area there were a number of interesting and educational displays. Interactive displays, such as tracing contaminants through the soil, painting fish forms, prospecting for fossils, were particularly popular with the children. In addition to many repeat displays, we were delighted to welcome several new groups, including Finger Lakes Institute and Museum of the Earth. Kids of all ages enjoyed Tom Knight's puppets again this year, as well as reading stories about water to Jack, Reading Education Assistance dog, and participating in Children's Garden activities about the water cycle. Throughout the afternoon door prizes were drawn.

During the annual meeting, awards were presented to Lake-Friendly Farms, and the annual Morehouse Award was presented to Noel Desch by Claire Morehouse. This award is in memory of her late husband Dave, a founding member of the Watershed Network and an activist in the promotion of

good watershed practices. A special award was given to retiring Board member Janet Hawkes to thank her for her many years of service to the Watershed Network, from founding member to the Chair of the Board. As a special treat, Janet made a 10th anniversary cake which her husband Rod decorated – it was delicious! Activities continued with a great performance by the Compost Theatre (after several years' absence) and a Walk through Local History with Vikki Armstrong. 🐦



Kari Richards explains how water is endlessly recycled via the water cycle.

## We Thank All Those Who Donated Door Prizes

Bellweather	Montezuma Winery
Buttonwood	Tiohera Tours
CJS winery	Puddledockers
Cobblestone Farm Winery	Second Wind
D.A.'s Liquor	Seneca Waterways
Deerhead Inn	Museum
Fox Dealerships	Swedish Hill Winery
Gimme coffee	Tom Knight
Goosewatch	Village Greenhouse
Julie Patterson's art	Wild Hare Farm
Marina's Restaurants	Women's Hall of Fame

## HONORING JANET HAWKES

By Bill Shaw, Board Director, and Sharon Anderson, Watershed Steward, on behalf of the Board of Directors

More than ten years ago a small group of committed citizens joined hands around our lake to begin the discussion and organization process for what has become the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network. Janet Hawkes was on the initial steering committee. She, along with many others, devoted precious hours, days, and weeks of time and skills to benefit our Watershed. The Cayuga Nature Center, Janet's place of employment at that time, generously served as the umbrella organization until the Watershed Network crystalized its bylaws and obtained its own nonprofit designation.

In the years since those first visionary meetings, Janet provided a unique beacon of direction, determination, flexibility, creativity, zeal, and skill that inspired us all to dig deeper and give more. Without her leadership spirit, and enthusiasm, the burdens that lay ahead might never have been overcome. From our first Lakefest and organizational meeting at Goosewatch Winery in 1998 through the ensuing years obtaining funding to hire a Watershed Steward and the transition of that position to an Executive Director, she worked shoulder to shoulder with the other volunteer leaders

to grow the organization.

While glad to have others leading the organization as Chair, Janet graciously stepped in as interim Chair in order to support a health leave of the person who was then Chair. Her dynamic personality and extraordinary knowledge of subject matter, community leaders and officials, as well as individual stakeholders and volunteers, made her a natural choice to then be elected as Chair, a vote that was repeated multiple times.

Many who had worked with Janet over the years gathered at Lakefest to honor Janet's efforts as a founding member and long-time chair. While stepping down from such a prominent position, Janet has promised to continue being an active leader of the organization through serving on the long-range financial planning committee. We look forward to her continued contributions. 🐦



Peter Shuster, who previously served on the Board, was among those recognizing the contributions of retiring Board Chair Janet Hawkes.

# Members Support Clean Water

Members are the heart the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network. Your support allows us to continue our work of teaching school youth, restoring wetlands, forging collaborations among diverse stakeholders, supporting municipal officials, and bringing you timely information. All this is in the interest of preserving the environmental health and quality of life in the area that we love. The watershed is more than the lake itself, jewel that it is. It is also the tiny streams, changeable creeks, hard working wetlands and the ground water that quenches the thirst of so many.

Join or renew your membership to receive a year of our award-winning newsletter, as well as knowing you are helping care for our streams, lake and wetlands. We have streamlined our membership to allow greater flexibility for

multi-year members and to provide a rolling membership renewal date (meaning that each person's membership is based on when they join or renew). Long-time members (of four years or more) are invited to provide a free newsletter subscription to a friend. Take advantage of this opportunity if you received a salmon-colored certificate with the letter that acknowledges your membership renewal.

Share your love of the lake and your support for the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network. Give a gift membership this holiday season, for a birthday or just for fun. Pass on your newsletter once you have read it, bringing a friend to a program and request extra copies of *Smart Steps for Clean Water* to pass on to a neighbor. 🐟

## Less Phosphorus Entering Cayuga Lake

*continued from cover*

water into the lake. Samples were also collected at Fall Creek and the Cayuga Inlet to document the contribution from these streams. In addition, samples were taken from two other sites deemed to be relatively unpolluted, a site mid-lake and one near the Cornell monitoring station known as the RUSS unit. EPA recommends that mid-lake phosphorus be at or below 0.02 mg/L, which it is.

Test results are presented in Figure 1. It is easy to see that the bulk of the phosphorus at these locations is tied up in the particulate matter in the sample (the unfiltered data). A likely source of the particulate matter is silt from run-off from streets, lawns, agricultural land, and streambanks.

Test results of samples that centered on the outfall are shown graphically in Figures 2 and 3. Figure 2 is a composite of the results from 2005, before the tertiary treatment was on line. Figure 3 shows sampling results from 2006, showing the effect of tertiary treatment. It is important to keep in mind that the data from each day's sampling is like a snapshot of changing conditions, such as heavy rains and wind. By comparing Figure 2 with Figure 3 it is evident that the phosphorus plume in the lake has shrunk noticeably since tertiary treatment went online. It appears that the two tributaries, Cayuga Inlet and Fall Creek, have remained the same. 🐟

*Editors Note:* visit [www.cayugalake.org](http://www.cayugalake.org) for a video showing maps of the data from individual sampling dates. One map shows the dramatic loading of phosphorus from a rain storm. The file format is Windows Media Video (WMV).

*Authors' Note on the Mapping Methodology:* The maps show *one* interpretation of an average of the concentrations found at the sample locations. Each map is an interpretation of the point data based on the following methodology used in ESRI's ArcGIS Spatial Analyst. The concentrations at each point were first converted to a raster image using an analysis mask (which creates the artificial boundary shown by the various grayed areas in the lake). The extent was set to the same area as the analysis mask and the cell size for the grid was set at 25. The points were then interpolated to a raster using inverse distance weighted conversion based on the concentration found at each sample location. The interpolation does not account for physical barriers, such as the pier. The raster image is simply clipped at the boundaries based on the original analysis mask. The maps were prepared by Susan Nixon, GIS Data Development Specialist, City of Ithaca GIS Program.

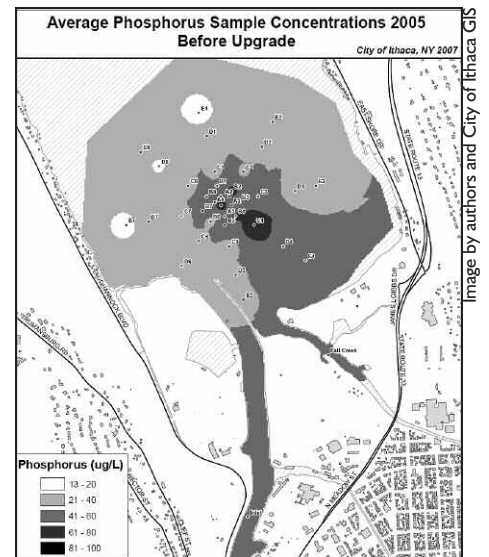


Fig. 2. Phosphorus concentration distribution before upgrade

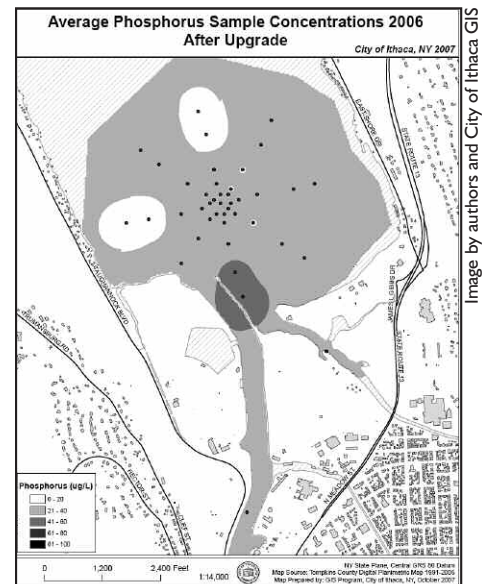


Fig. 3. Phosphorus concentration distribution after upgrade

# The Longest Bridge in the World

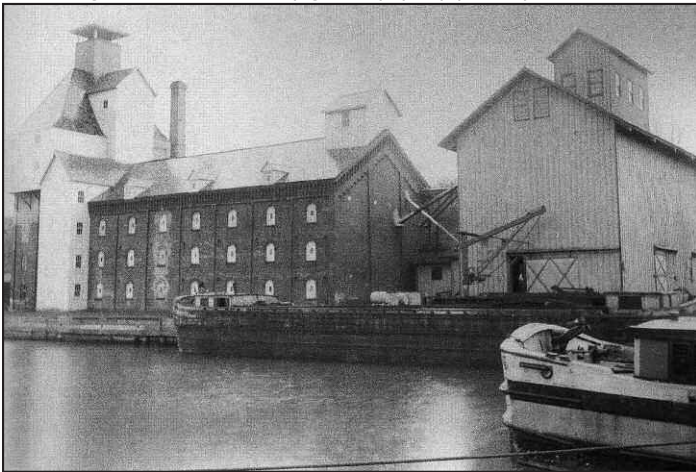
By Katherine Lee

*In the northeast corner of Cayuga Lake sits a village of the same name. Though one of the earliest settlements, the Village of Cayuga didn't incorporate until 1857, meaning this year it celebrates its sesquicentennial anniversary.*

Early on, the settlement was a hub of mercantile and commercial activities. It was considered the dividing line between the more civilized east and the wilderness to the west. Sojourners came from the east and in the village bid farewell to familiar comforts as they headed west.

The role of water has been intricately woven into its history. The long, thin Cayuga Lake with a vast wetland at its north end proved a barrier to western progress. A group of men seeing that westward emigration overwhelmed the existing ferry service formed the Cayuga Bridge Company. "In 1797, a group of enterprising men of the region... conceived the idea of building a bridge across the lake at the site of the ferry, to speed the flow of immigrants and mercantile traffic and also to turn the bottleneck into a profit," according to Cayuga Bridge by John Wells.

Source: Images of America: Around Cayuga County by Przybylek and Jones, 1996.



*The deep-water marina helped support commerce in the village once the bridge no longer drew travels.*

The Cayuga Bridge, with its eastern terminus in the settlement now known as the Village of Cayuga, joined both shores of the Lake in 1800. Built by the Manhattan Company and New York State it initiated the unique proposition of allowing a private company to operate a state toll bridge. Furthermore bridges and ferries were forbidden within 3 miles of the bridge and anyone crossing the lake, except in his own boat, within that limit still legally had to pay the toll. Exempt from the toll were any persons living within 3 miles of the bridge and state or federal troops and their supply wagons. The completed bridge was one mile and eight rods

long (or 5,412 feet), 22 feet wide (breadth enough for three wagons), with 22 feet between trestles. It was considered the longest bridge in the world

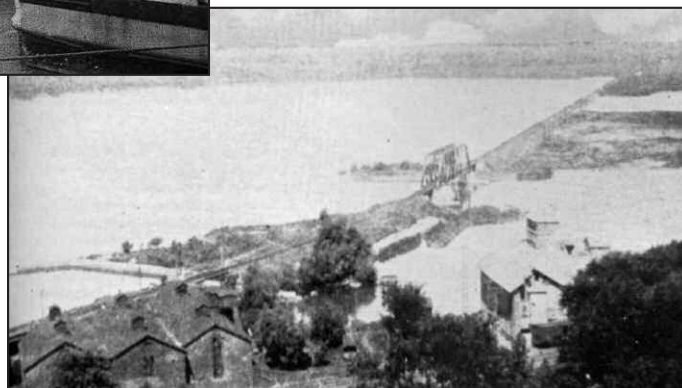
For a great number of years the Cayuga Bridge was considered one of the greatest public improvements in the State. Severe ice conditions of an unfortunate chilly winter season destroyed the bridge in 1808. It wasn't until 1812 that rebuilding the bridge began. Once completed it was very profitable for its owners and stockholders. After a life of twenty years, it was replaced with a third bridge. This last bridge had competition from the New York Central Railroad and the Erie Canal, which opened in 1825. By the mid-1850s, the era of the bridge had ended. The addition of a deep-water marina helped buoy Cayuga's economy.

Vestiges of the bridge can be seen through historic piles raising from the lake bottom and just visible under the surface of the water. With a little bit of imagination, it extends up and out of the waters to re-form the visible symbol connecting water to people and the Village of Cayuga to Geneva on the other end of the Lake.

While the bridge is no longer there, water and Cayuga Lake continues to be central in the life stream of the Village. The natural beauty and natural resources of the north end of the lake drew tourists. Fish abound in Cayuga Lake, both then and now. The great wetlands that are now the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge at the northern end of the lake are a reliable resting spot on the flyway for

many water fowl. Sportsmen and women have replaced the westward emigrants

The last census recorded the population of the Village of Cayuga at 509. Summer cottages and year-round residences line the lakeshore from the Village north to Mudlock.



*This photograph of the bridge was found in Images of America: Around Cayuga County by Przybylek and Jones, 1996.*

Cayuga Lake, with its natural beauty, brings with it reflective waters a deep, rich history that will always bridge the past to its plentiful future. May the next 150 years be fruitful and beautiful for this wonderful, friendly Village of Cayuga. 🍀

# Lake-Friendly Farms Recognized

Five more farms join the ranks of those recognized for their environmental stewardship. All the farms have incorporated into their operations practices that protect and conserve water resources. The farm enterprises are located within the Cayuga Lake Watershed where agriculture is the largest single land use. Agriculture is important ecologically, economically, aesthetically and culturally. Sharon Anderson, Watershed Steward explained, "Most farmers are dedicated stewards of land and water resources. On behalf of all those who benefit from clean water and fresh agricultural products, we thank them for their efforts. There is a substantial cost to the farmers, even when they receive some funding for innovative manure handling facilities, planting trees along a stream or restoring a wetland."

The farms, which are selected based on their progress through the steps in the NYS Agriculture and Environment Management program, received a sign stating they are a lake-friendly farm. Shawn Bossard with Cooperative Extension in Seneca County stated that farmers strive to be sustainable environmentally, economically and socially; all three elements are needed if farms in the Finger Lakes are to survive.

The Watershed Network is pleased to recognize Scipio Springs Dairy and Elkendale Farm LLC of Cayuga County, Canoga Springs Farm of Seneca County and Smith Farms and Beck Farms of Tompkins County. 🐦



*The Canoga Springs Farm accepts the award from Board member Keith Tidball (right)*



*The Scipio Springs Farm accepts the award from Board member Brian Boerman, on the left holding the sign.*

## Visit the Watershed Network at the Alternatives Gift Fair

**Saturday, December 1st  
10:00 am - 4:00 pm**

Dodds Hall, First Presbyterian Church  
315 North Cayuga Street, Ithaca

*Give a gift of service this holiday season, instead of "more stuff," while supporting the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network and other local area non-profits.*

Holiday shoppers are invited to purchase meaningful gifts at the Ithaca Alternative Gift Fair. The Fair offers a wide variety of charitable giving opportunities, most ranging from \$5 – \$100. The tax-deductible gifts will be offered in a festive atmosphere by about 20 not-for-profit organizations. Each purchase comes with a holiday card and a description of the gift and the organization. All donations go directly to the not-for-profits. Soon all of the gifts will be available for preview at [www.ithacaaltgiftfair.org](http://www.ithacaaltgiftfair.org).

The Watershed Network will be offering a variety of items such as removal of invasive plants, planting of trees along a creek shore, wildlife habitat improvement, water quality testing of the lake, and educational programs for school-aged youth. 🐦

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**The Mission...** *The Cayuga Lake Watershed Network seeks to protect and improve the ecological health, economic vitality and overall beauty of the watershed through education, communication and leadership.*

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