

# Lakewatch

A Publication of Seneca Lake Pure Waters Association, Inc. Serving the Seneca Lake Watershed Region

## ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

### SLPWA Board of Directors

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On August 17th over 60 SLPWA members attended the Annual Meeting & Dinner held at the Geneva Country Club.



President Phil Cianciotto, left, welcomed the attendees and introduced the BOD at the SLPWA Annual Meeting and Dinner at the Geneva Country Club.

President Phil Cianciotto presided and gave a brief summary of SLPWA's activities for the year. Recognition awards for exceptional service was given to Bruce Adams and Kathy Garcia.



Lt. Charles Maleski of the Seneca County Sheriff's Department talked about the challenges and issues of patrolling Seneca Lake.



Left, Chairman of the Marcellus Shale Committee, Ed Przybylowicz, talked about the next steps of the Review Process.



Lt. Charles Maleski, below

John Adamski showed a pictorial review of the Finger Lakes and gave an update of the proposed Finger Lakes Cultural & History Museum to be located on Keuka Lake.



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## SAVE THE DATE!

**November 9, 2011, 7:00 pm**

**Movie: Green Fire: Aldo Leopold and A Land Ethic For Our Time**

**Finger Lakes Institute (601 S. Main St., Geneva)**

*Co-hosted with the Finger Lakes Land Trust*

**November 15, 2011, 4:30 pm**

**Learning from Neighboring Watersheds: Submarine Geology of the Northern Galapagos Province**

**Finger Lakes Institute Classroom (601 S. Main St., Geneva)**

*Dr. Chris Sinton, Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies and Sciences at Ithaca College*

**November 16-17, 2011**

**Growing Green Infrastructure in New York State**

**SU Sheraton, Syracuse, NY**

*Hosted by Syracuse University Environmental Finance Center and SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry;*



For more information see: <http://fli.hws.edu/workshops.asp>

## **FROM THE PAST PRESIDENT:**

Not sure what you thought but it seemed to me that the summer (once it arrived) flew by. The summer started with high water levels as a result of our heavy spring rains and ended with higher than normal water levels with summer rains due to the effects of Hurricane Irene and Tropical storms Irene and Lee. We are at the high end of range for this time of year at 446.4 feet as recorded in Geneva at the beginning of October. One never really knows what Mother Nature has it store but is interesting to note how quickly conditions can change. We had at least four events this past year when lake levels appeared to have risen over 6 inches in a 24 hour period. On a lake the size of Seneca Lake that's a lot of water entering the lake from our watershed – it's no wonder that lake clarity was poor this year. It will be interesting to see what the nutrient loadings were like this year, based on all of the runoff experienced by the lake throughout the late spring and summer months. These events all point to a need for continued vigilance to manage runoff from fields, roadways and construction sites, provide buffers and means to reduce the flow rate and erosion potential from these heavy rains.

Two projects, **Gas Drilling in the Marcellus Shale**, and **LPG Gas Storage** in the salt caverns north of Watkins Glen have kept us busy this summer. In early July a Draft version (703 pages worth) was issued by the DEC regarding the Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement for gas drilling in the Marcellus Shale was released by the DEC. The final version (over 1500 pages worth) was released in early September. The 90- Day comment period extends to the end of business on Dec, 12, 2011. The SLPWA Marcellus Shale Committee is preparing a response to the DEC. If you have not seen it our committee Chair, Dr. Edwin Przybylowicz provided an excellent presentation to our membership during our Sept 22<sup>nd</sup> Membership Meeting. You can view the presentation on our Website [www.senecalake.org](http://www.senecalake.org) in our "Projects Page". The storage of LPG Gas in the salt caverns north of Watkins Glen also occupied us this summer with public meetings and the issuance of Inergy's updated Environmental Impact Statement that was accepted by the DEC and opened up a public comment period which ended Oct 10, 2011. SLPWA responded the DEC and out complete comments are available on our website mentioned earlier on the same Projects Page tab. In addition you'll see a letter that was sent to Governor Cuomo, Commission of the DEC Martens and our watershed state legislative representatives. Additional details on both of these projects can be found in the pages of this issue of LakeWatch.

I was thrilled to be able to announce at our Annual Meeting in August that the membership roll of SLPWA has increased to over 400 members. To think a few short years ago we had less than 20 members is very rewarding and we appreciate your support in revitalizing our organization. While we continue to work on increasing membership (Our Fall membership campaign is currently underway) we need members to help carry SLPWA's mission to protect Seneca Lake and its watershed. There are two very important ways that you as members can do that in addition to keeping your membership current. The first is to volunteer to work on one of our projects – we have many projects that are "on the shelf" because we lack the human resources to work on them. Contact us if you would like to volunteer to work on one of our active projects or would like to take a leadership position and Chair one of our "on the shelf" projects. As part of our educational mission, we try to provide our members with information on our website or in **LakeWatch**, which they can use to interface with their local town, village boards, city councils, county Board of Supervisors or Legislature and work for changes to help protect our lake and watershed. Our watershed comprises over 40 local government elected bodies that are elected by you, our members. Your voice, as a member of the local community is important to SLPWA at the public meetings of these governing bodies – and however you can assist in our mission and promote our position is greatly appreciated by Seneca Lake and its Watershed.

**PHIL CIANCOTTO**

## Drilling in the Marcellus Shale – Update

*Ed Przybylowicz, Chairman, Marcellus Shale Committee*

On September 8, 2011, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) issued its revised draft of the Supplemental Generic Environmental Statement (SGEIS) for high volume horizontal drilling in the shale deposits of New York State. Late in the month on September 28<sup>th</sup> the department also issued proposed regulations which would govern high volume hydraulic fracturing. It is apparent from these releases that the state is moving rapidly towards allowing such drilling in New York State. Both documents are available for public comments until December 12, 2011 (close of business). The documents are available on the NYSDEC website at the following links:

Revised Draft SGEIS on the Oil, Gas and Solution Mining Regulatory Program (September 2011)

<http://www.dec.ny.gov/energy/75370.html>

High Volume Hydraulic Fracturing Proposed Regulations

<http://www.dec.ny.gov/regulations/77353.html>

The NYSDEC will hold four public hearings on November 16<sup>th</sup> (Dansville), 17<sup>th</sup> (Binghamton); 29<sup>th</sup> (Loch Sheldrake) and the 30<sup>th</sup> (New York City). The hearings will cover both the draft SGEIS and the proposed regulations. Details of these meetings can be found on the websites given above. There is much concern across the state that the comment period is too short for the public to develop meaningful responses to the revised dSGEIS which is over 1500 pages long as well the regulations which are to be embedded in the regulations already in place in the NYSDEC. Pressure is mounting to have the comment period extended to 180 days, instead of the current 90 days.

**SLPWA's Marcellus Shale Committee** is studying the revised dSGEIS and has identified preliminary concerns which they are researching in detail. Those concerns are listed here in outline form and were presented at the September 22<sup>nd</sup> Members meeting.

### SLPWA Preliminary Issues of Concern in the 2011 dSGEIS

#### **General Observations**

- Document is much improved over 2009 dSGEIS, but still has many inadequacies
- Public needs to have adequate time to comment (180 days).
- All regulations should be publically reviewed before permitting process commences.
- Draft relies heavily on industry analyses and information which in some cases is faulted.
- No attempt to control rate of well drilling other than the rate at which DEC can issue permits.
- Controlling the rate would allow learning before major mistakes are made.
- 

#### **Protection of Human Health**

- Public health impact from potential air, water and noise pollution has not been analyzed.
- Health risk to residents is treated in the dSGEIS on a reactive not proactive basis.
- Toxic chemicals should be banned from the process. "Green" chemical substitution is voluntary.
- Benzene and its derivatives, known carcinogens, not banned from use in drilling and fracking fluids.
- NYS Department of Health should be involved in health assessment for this SGEIS.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

## Summer and Fall Lake Level Report

*Bob Kayser*

High lake levels early in the early summer turned out to be a blessing in disguise as the dry days of July and August drew lake levels down more than 12 inches to the bottom of target levels for the summer season. The Seneca Falls Power Company apparently kept their promise not to draw water for power generation if the lake level fell below 445.9BCD, and most boaters, anglers, and marinas seemed happy. Heavy spring runoff gave a huge boost to nutrient levels in the lake, causing a bumper crop of weeds, many in places where they had never grown.

Significant rain in September and October have brought lake levels to the high end of the Hanson Rule curve, and we can expect significant declines in water level as the winter draw down begins November 1<sup>st</sup>.



On Saturday, September 24, 2011, SLPWA sponsored its second annual Pharmaceutical Collection event. This year's event was held at TOPS Market on Routes 5 & 20 in Geneva. One hundred and fifty one (151) people attended and 354 pounds of unwanted/expired drugs were confiscated. TOPS pharmacist, Roland Lyndaker said, "I am amazed at the variety of drugs that people are handing in. There were drugs that were at least thirty years past their expiration date."



*Volunteers Cynthia Hsu, Marty Davis, Kathy Garcia and Phil Cianciotto at the Pharmaceutical Collection Event.*

Ontario County Sheriff's officers Brian Garman and Kevin Henderson oversaw the event and transported the confiscated drugs to the Covanta incinerator facility in Niagara County.

SLPWA will be holding another pharmaceutical collection in Geneva next year. We would like to thank our volunteers for the day; Phil Cianciotto, Marty Davis, Cynthia Hsu and Kathy Garcia. We would also like to thank, Justin Neal, TOPS pharmacy specialist; Roland Lyndaker, TOPS pharmacist and Scott Cronberger, manager of TOPS Geneva.

Check our website, [www.senecalake.org](http://www.senecalake.org) for information on future collection events.

**CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3—MARCELLUS SHALE DRILLING UPDATE**

**Protection of Water Resources**

- All principal aquifers and major drinking water sources in New York State, not just New York City and Syracuse should be given equal protection and be off-limits for drilling, whether they are unfiltered or filtered.
- Buffer zones around drinking water sources should be expanded so that horizontal drilling will not go under the drinking water sources.
- Buffer zones around drinking water sources should be fixed and not able to be reduced after one or two years.
- Setbacks for individual wells should not be allowed to be waived by land owners.

**Waste Management is a Major Problem**

- Gas industry has voluntarily indicated that they will not use open pits for waste water. It should be regulated against.
- Waste water should not be allowed to go to POTW's as suggested in 6.1.8.1.
- If waste water is treated to remove toxic materials, it should be recycled for use.
- Spreading of waste fluids on roads should not be allowed even with a Beneficial Use permit.

**NYS Socioeconomic Impact Analyses in the dSGEIS Are Faulted**

- Latest reliable scientific information is not used should be used, e.g. Finger Lakes Wine and Tourism industry, etc.
- Scientific statistical analysis of drilling experience in Pennsylvania should be used in the analysis, rather than four anecdotal examples.

**Gas from State Lands**

- Well pads on State Lands are banned, however, drilling under State lands appears possible.
- Definition of State Lands in this document is questioned.

***In summary, SLPWA has many areas of serious concern if high volume hydraulic fracturing is allowed in New York State under the guidelines and provisions described in these documents.***

***The public needs to actively question what is being proposed before these documents are finalized. Please become actively involved in their review before time runs out.***

## SLPWA Comments to the DEC on the LPG Proposal by Inergy

*Phil Cianciotto*

On October 3<sup>rd</sup>, SLPWA responded to the DEC regarding the Environmental Impact Statement submitted by Inergy to the DEC regarding their proposal to store Liquefied Petroleum Gas in the US Salt caverns north of the Village of Watkins Glen. In addition we sent a letter to Gov. Andrew Cuomo with copies to DEC Commissioner Joe Martens and representatives to the NYS State Legislature from our watershed. The full text of our response to the DEC and the letter to Governor Cuomo can be found on our website [www.senecalake.org](http://www.senecalake.org) on the "Project Page".

The following is a summary of our comments:

Seneca Lake Pure Waters Association has provided the attached comments regarding the proposed LPG storage facility by the Finger Lakes LPG Storage LLC in Watkins Glen, New York. Our comments were in response to a request by the NYSDEC for public comments in regards to the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) submitted for this project (DEC 8-4432-00085/00001 issued August 1, 2011. Our Association represents over 400 member residents within the Seneca Lake watershed.

We are concerned that the salt caverns do not have the geologic stability to properly contain the Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) under the pressures specified without failure and potential harm to Seneca Lake.

We are concerned about the environmental safety of Seneca Lake in regards to catastrophic failure of the proposed brine pond above Seneca Lake.

In addition, while outside of our association's mission as the "Voice of Seneca Lake", SLPWA believes that the DEC should give consideration to three other issues related to the proposal by Inergy.

An independent 3<sup>rd</sup> party evaluation of a Quantitative Risk Assessment has merit and should be pursued to evaluate the geologic stability of the US Salt solution salt caverns, and the feasibility of such a facility near Watkins Glen given the geographic location within a glacial valley.

A study to evaluate the social-economic impact of the project on the already established and growing tourism and wine industry of the region. Risking the vitality of this growth in an area that has faced economic uncertainty in the past may be misguided.

The ability of first responders (police, fire and rescue teams and medical facilities) to cope with an emergency at the proposed facilities should not be overlooked and properly funded by Inergy, prior to approval for construction.

Seneca Lake Pure Waters Association strongly recommends that the SEIS Scoping Outline include additional geological assessment of these salt caverns to assure that the proposed facility can be used safely for the long term storage of LPG. We also urge the DEC to require Inergy to look for a more environmentally suitable location for the brine pond that would protect Seneca Lake from a catastrophic failure.

## Financial Report

*Bob Kayser, Treasurer*



A significant increase in membership coupled with a number of generous donations placed SLPWA in its strongest financial position in many years. As of October 15<sup>th</sup>, our organization has over \$27,000 in current assets and no liabilities. While this seems like a significant amount, it will be useful in working on issues affecting the Lake and its watershed.

A big thank you to all members and donors who make our work possible! If your membership ends in October thru December of this year, look for your renewal notice in the mail soon!

## QUAGGA MUSSELS BRING CHANGES (*Dreissena Bugensis*)

The population of invasive mussels in the Finger Lakes is changing. Seneca and Canandaigua Lakes are both reporting significant changes in the balance of zebra and quagga mussel populations. (Quagga mussels are named for an extinct subspecies of zebra that had fewer body stripes.) Quaggas are displacing zebras.

### Identification:

Quagga mussels are somewhat larger than zebra mussels, about  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch long at adult size. They are light tan-white with narrow stripes. The ventral (bottom-side where the 2 shells attach) side of the quagga mussel is convex, so a quagga mussel will topple over if stood up on a flat surface. A zebra mussel will remain upright when placed in this position.

### Habits:

Quagga mussels are able to tolerate a wide range of conditions. Quaggas can not only be found at greater and colder depths, but can survive in warmer and shallower water than zebra mussels. They can colonize silty or sandy lake bottoms where zebras prefer solid substrate. Zebra mussels are dormant during the winter but Quagga mussels feed year around, filtering substantial amounts of phytoplankton and altering the food web by removing the food source for zooplankton. Impacts associated with the filtration of water include increases in water transparency, decreases in mean chlorophyll a concentrations, and accumulation of pseudofeces (rejected food particles covered in mucus, expelled before passing through the digestive tract).

Mussel feces and pseudofeces accumulate, contributing to a foul environment. As the waste particles decompose, oxygen is used up, and the water becomes more acidic and toxic byproducts are produced.

Quagga mussels have been found to accumulate organic pollutants within their tissues to levels more than 300,000 times greater than concentrations in the environment. These pollutants are found in their pseudofeces, which can be passed up the food chain thereby increasing wildlife exposure to organic pollutants. (Claxton et al. 1998). Water clarity increases light penetration causing enhanced growth of aquatic plants that can change species dominance and alter the entire ecosystem.

Some researchers believe that Lake Erie's dead zone may be related to the Quagga mussels' non-stop feeding, ability to live in deep water (up to 426 feet in the Great Lakes) and the excretion of phosphorous with their waste. Quagga mussels, like zebra mussels, clog water intake pipes and underwater screens, and can build up colonies on structures such as boat docks, breakwalls, buoys, boats. Sharp shells can inflict painful cuts on bare-footed beach-goers.

### Invasive Species:

The list of invasive species present in our lakes and landscapes grows longer every year. None of these would be present without past human activity. None can be controlled without current human intervention, but few are going to ever go away. The costs are high.

Economic losses are quantifiable in terms of dollars spent to clean water intakes, replace buoys and the like.

Environmental costs are less easy to quantify, but are no less real. Keeping more invasive species from entering local lakes requires keeping a few simple actions:

- *Inspect and remove aquatic plants, animals, and mud from the boat and equipment before leaving the boat launch.*
- *Drain water from your boat and equipment before leaving the boat launch.*



NEW!

Introducing:

Great Gift!

# DOCK & HOOSE PLATES



Not the actual size

ALUMINUM .063 REFLECTIVE PLATE  
 15" L X 5" W with screw holes, - ready for mounting  
 4" Die Cut Numbers  
 LOGO & Numbers are in "SLPWA Blue" Color on White Background

*\$28.25 + \$1.00 per number*

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Street \_\_\_\_\_ Town \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ # of Dock Plates (\$28.25)

\_\_\_ # of Numbers (\$1.00 each)

<input type="checkbox"/>					
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Fill in desired numbers (1 per box)

TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

Make check out to SLPWA and mail with order form to PO BOX 247, Geneva, NY 14456.

Questions? Email SLPWA at [slpwa@senecalake.org](mailto:slpwa@senecalake.org)





**SLPWA MISSION:**

...is to promote the understanding, preservation and improvement of the water quality, natural habitat and general environmental conditions of Seneca Lake and its watershed by sponsoring or undertaking scientific research, by collecting, preserving, publishing and disseminating information concerning Seneca lake and its watershed and by encouraging and supporting the enforcement of laws and regulations and patterns of development and technology aimed at preserving and enhancing the water quality of the lake.



Informative 'Issues' posters were display at the SLPWA Annual Dinner and Meeting in August.

Consider giving a SLPWA subscription to a friend, neighbor or family member for this holiday season. A SLPWA membership is great for those 'hard to buy for' individuals and you will be helping to protect Seneca Lake!

Membership forms can be found at:  
[http://senecalake.org/uploads/MembershipAppl\\_2011.pdf](http://senecalake.org/uploads/MembershipAppl_2011.pdf)



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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED