

# Lakewatch

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

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## SPECIAL EDITION: ANNUAL REPORTS

Read  
reports  
about:



- MARCELLUS SHALE
- LAKE LEVELS
- LPG STORAGE
- LAKE RESEARCH
- MEMBERSHIP DRIVE
- GRANTS
- PHARMACEUTICAL COLLECTIONS

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## ANNUAL MEETING DINNER

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 17

GENEVA COUNTRY CLUB, GENEVA, NY

Please join us for a fun and  
informative evening in  
support of Seneca Lake!

Meet your Board of  
Directors

Buffet dinner, exhibits &  
displays, raffles and  
presentations

MEMBERS IN GOOD STANDING  
SHOULD HAVE RECEIVED A NOTICE IN  
THE MAIL. IF YOU  
MISPLACED IT, A REGISTRATION  
FORM IS INSIDE THIS ISSUE ON  
PAGE 4.  
PLEASE REGISTER ONLY ONCE.

## Message from the President and Vice Presidents

*Phil Cianciotto, Mary Anne Kowalski, Jim Bromka*

This year we decided to change the format for our Summer Edition of **LakeWatch** to make this edition more of an Annual Report of the Association to coincide with our Annual Meeting that will take place on **Wednesday August 17<sup>th</sup>** at the Geneva Country Club. You can find more information about our Annual Meeting in this newsletter.

As you will see throughout this newsletter our Association continues to grow and carry out its mission to protect and serve as the voice of Seneca Lake and its watershed. Besides the traditional issues facing the protection of a lake and its watershed, like stream runoff, shore line erosion, invasive species, nutrient loading we also face the potential threat from the effects of drilling for natural gas and the impact of the controversial process of high volume hydraulic fracturing (HVHF) and the use of the salt caverns outside of Watkins Glen for the storage of LPG and the potential risks of the storage of this liquefied gas under high pressure in those salt caverns. While we won't know the final outcome of either of these potential threats to our lake and watershed for several more months, it appears likely that they will proceed in some form. Opponents of both programs predict dire consequences for our lake and watershed while the sponsors of the programs and the New York State DEC believes that these programs can be done safely with minimal impact to the environment, our lake and its watershed.

This brings us to what we see as our major goal for the upcoming year for **SLPWA**, and that is to secure adequate funding on an annual basis to support a water quality testing program for the lake so that if there are changes to the water quality of the lake as a result of these programs and other activities, we can detect them as soon as possible and have the data to support that those changes have occurred. To that end we have increased funding for water quality research on Seneca Lake from \$2,000 in 2010, to \$9,500 in 2011 and are looking to find funding for \$40,000 worth of research on Seneca Lake in 2012. In addition, we will continue to seek funding to provide opportunities for watershed education to students in our watershed school districts. Our research and educational programs are contracted with the Finger Lakes Institute of Hobart and William Smith Colleges.

In the past year we held our first **SLPWA** sponsored Pharmaceutical Collection event at the Geneva Wegmans' facility and this year we are repeating our sponsorship of a collection at the Tops supermarket, Pyramid Mall in Geneva. That event will occur on **September 24<sup>th</sup>**. This year we are also looking to expand our focus to include Hazardous Waste Collections by partnering with local governments and other partners. Our feeling is that if we can properly collect and dispose of these materials they won't find their way into our lake.

Regional issues like gas drilling in the Marcellus Shale, invasive species, nutrient loading, algae outbreaks and others have prompted us to partner with the lake associations of the nine other publicly owned Finger Lakes to form the Finger Lakes Regional Watershed Alliance. We have just recently applied for our 501(c)(3) organizational status and in the near future we will be launching our website at [www.flrwa.org](http://www.flrwa.org). The Alliance has engaged our state and federal officials regarding the drilling for natural gas in the Marcellus Shale and has had the opportunity to meet with a number of local officials to push for strong protection of our watersheds. This Alliance increases our voice from 400 SLPWA members to over 10,000 Alliance members and a regional voice.

In the coming year, we plan on continuing to hold April – November monthly meetings of topics of interest on the lake and its watershed. If you have a topic you would like us to cover write us at [slpwa@senecalake.org](mailto:slpwa@senecalake.org) and let us know what you are interested in hearing more about.



Enjoy the summer – it sure took its time getting here and we look forward to seeing you at our Annual Meeting on August 17<sup>th</sup>.



LAKE SIDE RESIDENTS!

Introducing DOCK 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 is in "SLPWA Blue" Color on White Background

*\$25.00 + \$ 1.00 per number (if picked up at Annual Meeting)  
OR \$28.00 + \$ 1.00 per number (if mailed)*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address (if plate is to be mailed)

Street \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ # of Dock Plates (excluding numbers)

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

Fill in desired numbers ( 1 per box)

TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Please mail to above address. I have included \$3.00 extra for S/H for each plate.

\_\_\_ I will pick up at Annual Meeting (please include this form with your dinner reservation).

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

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

# ANNUAL MEETING

AUGUST 17th—GENEVA COUNTRY CLUB

5:30-6:30

REGISTRATION, CASH BAR, DISPLAYS & EXHIBITS

6:30

BUFFET DINNER

7:15

*Business Meeting*

Election of Board of Directors  
Review of Annual Report  
Special Recognition Awards

7:30—8:30

*Presentations:*

**Seneca County Sheriff's Department:** *Patrolling Seneca Lake*

The Seneca County Marine Patrol will discuss issues the Marine Patrol has while cruising Seneca Lake

**John Adamski: President & Executive Director, Finger Lakes Museum**

*The History, Geology and Beauty of the Finger Lakes*

John will present the video entitled "Imagine a Place" about the history, geology, and beauty of the region with photographs of the Finger Lakes region by local photographers and archival materials were assembled to show why we are committed to protect and preserve the lakes and the watershed. He will also update us on the progress on planning the museum and the next steps in development.

EXHIBITS  
&  
DISPLAYS

## RAFFLE ITEMS:

- \$100 Gift Certificate @ Glenora Verisons Restaurant
- Sailing Trip for 2 on the Lee Sea Anne Seneca Sailing Adventures
- 1 Night Stay at Sunrise Landing Bed & Breakfast
- Sailing Trip for 2 on the True Love Schooner

## SILENT AUCTION

Case of assorted local wines

## Registration Form for SLPWA Annual Meeting and Dinner- August 17, 2011

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

**(\$25.00 Per Person)**

Please use this form ONLY if you misplaced the one mailed to you earlier

I/We are attending the Business Meeting & Presentations ONLY at 7:15 PM — NO DINNER

(# \_\_\_\_\_ please indicate number attending Business Meeting/Presentations only)

**RETURN BY AUGUST 8th: SLPWA, PO #247, Geneva, NY 14456**

## Salt Cavern Storage - *Phil Cianciotto, Chairperson*

In September 2009, Inergy the parent company of US Salt, proposed a \$40 million project to expand the storage and distribution of propane and butane on a 576 acre site near Routes 14 and 14A, north of Watkins Glen. The proposal is to use existing salt caverns with a capacity of 88.2 million gallons to store LPG. The caverns currently are filled with salt brine. The LPG would displace the salt brine which would be stored in a 14 acre lined surface pond above Seneca Lake. As LPG is withdrawn the stored brine from the pond would be used to displace the LPG in the cavern. Inergy has also announced plans for a transfer station to transport propane and butane by truck from the site and butane by rail.

As of this writing we are still awaiting the reply to the DEC from Inergy regarding a number of issues that the DEC raised in response to Inergy's initial Environmental Impact Statement. The main issues raised by the DEC were:

- Sound analysis for the truck and rail facility
- Need for a site operations plan
- Model for a worst case brine pond failure and effect of 80 million gallons of brine entering the lake
- Operational procedures for an emergency drawdown of the stored brine and removal of stored gas from the caverns
- The use of multiple brine ponds rather than a single large pond
- Sonar testing of the caverns and any deficiencies identified
- Information on typical accidents at this type of facility and the ability of local first responders to manage those incidents
- Design of the brine pond liner system
- Groundwater monitoring program

SLPWA will provide comments to the DEC when the revised EIS is submitted by Inergy to the DEC and available for comment. Our concerns remain with the catastrophic release of the brine from the brine pond, integrity of the salt caverns when pressurized and ground water contamination due to leaks in the brine pond liner system.

## Pharmaceutical Collections Committee—*Kathy Garcia, Chairperson*

On September 25, 2010 SLPWA sponsored the first ever pharmaceutical collection event in Ontario County. Over 400 lbs of unwanted and expired drugs were collected. SLPWA's efforts spearheaded the Ontario County Pharmaceutical Collection Initiative, which sponsored similar events in Canandaigua and Victor. This year SLPWA will again sponsor a collection event. Please mark your calendar. This year's pharmaceutical collection event will be held in Geneva at TOPS Market on Routes 5 & 20 on **September 24** from **10:00 AM until 2:00 PM**.

Prior to collection events, most people would flush unwanted drugs down the toilet or throw them into the garbage. The discarded drugs would drain into leachate or be part of sewage that would be treated at wastewater treatments plants. These facilities are currently not equipped to filter out or even test for pharmaceuticals. The best method at the present time to keep pharmaceuticals out of Seneca Lake is to dispose of unwanted drugs through pharmaceutical collections. SLPWA will be working to increase the number of events in Yates, Schuyler, Chemung and Seneca counties.



## Research on Seneca Lake – *Phil Cianciotto, Chairperson*



Seneca Lake Pure Waters Association is committed to support water quality research on Seneca Lake and its watershed so that we can monitor the water quality of our lake and watch for potential threats to it. To that end we have contracted with the Finger Lakes Institute of Hobart and William Smith Colleges to carry out research activities on the lake. Dr. John Halfman of FLI/HWS a SLPWA member and past member of our Board of Directors is our technical advisor and chief research scientist. While John and the FLI/HWS staff spend time on many of the Finger Lakes, they have agreed to spend any additional funding we can provide directly from SLPWA or through grant acquisitions on Seneca Lake and its watershed. In our first year since our reorganization SLPWA provided an additional \$2000 in funding to expand the collection of water quality sampling from the Northern area of the lake to the Southern end for the first time in many years. This year with additional funding from FreshWater Futures, the Ontario County Water Resources Council and the Tripp Foundation for a total of \$9500 we have been able to set up a water quality testing program. The grant from FreshWater futures allowed us to add five more lake sites that complete a mid-lake north to south transect of the lake, and sampling of Catharine Creek which has not been sampled in many years. The Grant from the Tripp Foundation will allow us to do heavy metal testing on the water samples – something that has not been done in decades.

The expansion of the current testing program will help provide baseline data for the entire lake before it is possibly impacted by Marcellus Shale drilling or liquid petroleum gas storage in the salt caverns at Watkins Glen. Seneca Lake is 37 miles long and 3 miles wide at its widest section. Additional monitoring of the southern end is critical since significant amounts of contaminants could enter the lake without changing the baseline conditions in the north. For instance, the agricultural loading potential at the southern end of the lake is much higher than in the north. Also, there are five chemical bulk storage facilities, six inactive hazardous waste sites located at the south end of the lake. The majority of landfills and dumps are located near the mid and southern areas. The majority of mined land is in the mid and southern regions of Seneca Lake. This testing could be vital in evaluating the environmental impact of future hydrofracking activities and provides current data on what chemical contaminants are actually entering the entire lake from all point and non-point sources.

We have already begun the work to seek funding for 2012. Our goal is to fund \$40K of testing, greatly expanding the water quality testing of Seneca Lake, add additional major Seneca Lake tributaries besides Catharine Creek to the study and begin a study to monitor for biological changes in the tributaries of the lake in the hope that simple life forms in these streams will help signal changes (good and bad) to the water entering the lake and as a result changes to the lake itself. The hypothesis is that these simple life forms can be the “Canary’s of the lake” – signaling changes before they can be detected in the whole of the lake due to the tremendous dilution effects of the lake. A program of this magnitude is a significant undertaking for SLPWA as it is a long term effort of research and funding. With your help, and with the help of those in our community to seek grants we are confident we can get the necessary funding to carry out this vital work to protect our lake.

You can find research reports that have been published by FLI staff and Dr. Halfman at:

<http://people.hws.edu/halfman/#Publications>.



### **Grants Committee**—*Kathy Garcia, Chairperson*

Last year SLPWA applied for its first grants since reorganization. In 2011, we received \$3,500 from Freshwater Futures, \$1000 from the Ontario County Water Resources Council and \$5000 from the Tripp Foundation to subcontract with Dr. John Halfman to conduct lake water quality testing at a variety of testing locations throughout the entire lake. Prior to these grants, there was no testing done in the southern end of the lake. With the possibility of Marcellus Shale drilling and US Salt-Inergy LPG storage in the Watkins Glen area, this testing will provide baseline data for monitoring the lake.

SLPWA also received an Insight grant from Freshwater Futures to help increase our membership, and a second grant from the Ontario county Water Resources council for \$2500 for the development of watershed educational materials for use in watershed area schools.

## Membership Committee Report

Mary Anne Kowalski—Chairperson

During the 2010-2011 business year, the membership committee, with the assistance of other board members, has been working very hard to build membership.

President Phil Cianciotto obtained names and mailing addresses for property owners around the lake from the county tax agencies and prepared them for mailings to prospects. This resulted in lists of over 600 business prospects and about 4000 individual and family member prospects.

Bulk mailings were sent out monthly to each county from around the lake starting last October.

A grant from Freshwater Futures for expert assistance in managing membership campaigns. Through their guidance, SLPWA has maintained and increased memberships, discussed future fundraising efforts and added a new level of membership, the Corporate member.

Memberships have increased in number from 250 to 420 in the 2010-2011 business year.

### We are growing!



Tell your friends & neighbors  
about SLPWA!  
Help us protect Seneca Lake!

## SLPWA Website

Ed Przybylowicz—Webmaster



Our association communicates with its members through many avenues: mail, email, newspaper publicity and the internet. The SLPWA website represents one of our main avenues to communicate with our membership and the public.

As a communication channel, our website must be easy and attractive to use for the reader as well as easy to update with new information as that becomes available.

During the past year, [www.senecalake.org](http://www.senecalake.org) has been redesigned and is approaching the goals of ease of use, attractiveness etc. In addition to general information about the Mission of our association, it contains a timely message from our President, an ongoing status page for each of our major projects, an archive of both the members meetings and Board of Directors meetings as well as a current calendar containing items of potential interest to our members and the public at large which are in some way connected to the Seneca Lake watershed. The website also has registration forms for individuals and businesses to apply for membership.

Maintaining a website has to be a dynamic activity and as SLPWA's membership grows, so must the website expand to include these activities. One item which is being considered to be added to the website is a blog which would allow members to share information related to the SLPWA Mission.

The association website will continue to grow as a communication link between and among the membership on issues affecting the environment and the water quality of the Seneca Lake watershed.

Check it out!

[www.senecalake.org](http://www.senecalake.org)

## The Marcellus Shale Committee — *Ed Przybylowicz, Chairperson*

The Marcellus Shale Committee, formed in October, 2009, has the task of monitoring the impact that commercial drilling for natural gas in the shale deposits could have on “the water quality, natural habitat and general environmental conditions of Seneca Lake and its watershed.” As appropriate, the committee recommends to the SLPWA Board of Directors appropriate actions to be taken by the association to “collect, preserve, publish and disseminate information” regarding this activity.

This potential activity in the Seneca Lake watershed is perhaps the biggest factor looming on our horizon which could change the environment and quality of life in the Seneca Lake watershed. The experience of other states who have allowed high-volume hydraulic fracturing (HVHF) of their shale deposits to exploit natural gas deposits have developed a history of air, water and noise pollution that have been documented in the annals of their state agencies, legislatures and news media. From an economic standpoint, this exploitation has resulted in local “booms” to the benefit of the service industries that support these activities and the landowners from whose land good natural



Aerial view of several ‘fracking’ sites in Dimock, Pennsylvania

gas production has resulted. The present environment, quality of life and business environment in the Finger Lakes area is threatened by this potential, massive assault on the shale deposits of our region to exploit the natural gas deposits.

Over the last 21 months, the association has communicated its concerns to its members, the local public and appropriate government officials at local, county, state and federal levels. Access to the association’s position papers and communications can be found on the SLPWA website ([www.senecalake.org](http://www.senecalake.org)).

It would be redundant to review the many actions that have been taken during this period in this summary. A brief status of potential for drilling in the Seneca Lake watershed follows.

In October, 2009, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) released a draft Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement (dSGEIS) to regulate the use of HVHF technology used to commercialize the natural gas in shale deposits in western states as well as in the Marcellus Shale in Pennsylvania and West Virginia. Our association submitted a highly critical, 25 page letter to the DEC in November 2009 which can be found on our website. Since the December 31, 2009, the NYSDEC has been revising the dSGEIS and has announced the release of a new draft for public comment on August 1, 2011. This draft is being studied by the Marcellus Shale Committee which is preparing an association response.

(Continued on Page 9)

*Marcellus Shale Report....continued*

The just-released draft would allow drilling to occur in 85% of the land area of New York State under the proposed rules. Only the watersheds of New York City, Syracuse and several primary aquifers would be excluded from drilling. Except for the Skaneateles Lake watershed (Syracuse water supply), the Finger Lakes would receive no special protection under these generic regulations. SLPWA needs to complete its review and publicize the impact of this proposed dSGEIS in the near future. The goal will be to insure environmentally and fiscally responsible drilling for natural gas in our watershed.



Bradford, Pa. "fracking" site next to an operating farm.

This will continue to be a major involvement of SLPWA and the Marcellus Committee. With the prospect of HVHF drilling in the very near future in our watershed, SLPWA monitoring the water quality, natural habitat and general environmental conditions of Seneca Lake and its watershed will require more active participation from our membership to insure that we preserve the Seneca Lake watershed as we know it today and not allow its future to be degraded.



After a Summer and Fall 2010 of predictable and more or less stable water Levels in Seneca Lake, a Winter and early Spring 2011 of above normal precipitation caused Lake levels to rise 1.6 feet above the target Summer level of 446 feet BCD (Barge Canal datum). Minor shoreline damage and flooding occurred in low-lying areas south of Geneva, and along the Canal during early May.

In part because the Seneca Falls Power Company did not anticipate the extent of snow pack runoff, and in part because of flooding conditions downstream in Seneca Falls, Cayuga Lake, and the Cross Lakes Area, water levels were slow to decrease. There was simply nowhere for the water to go. Working collaboratively, the NYS Canal System, Seneca Falls Power Company, and water authorities in Penn Yan reduced water levels in Seneca Lake by decreasing Keuka Lake discharge into Seneca, and by increasing water flow through the Canal both through maximum power generation and opening of by-pass gates on the canal. The Chair of the Lake Level Committee toured the hydro-stations at the height of the problem to ascertain that all that could be done was being done to lower the Lake.

As of July, water levels have returned to desirable levels, and barring a summer drought, should remain within the desired range for the remainder of the boating season. In a recent discussion with the owner of Seneca Falls Power Company, I received his commitment that, should the water level decline to 445.9 ft. BCD, all power generation at Waterloo will cease, and that the only water discharges through the Canal will be locking by the Canal Corporation (1.5 million gallons per cycle at Waterloo, and 3.5 million at Seneca Falls), and whatever additional water is needed to maintain Van Cleef Lake at prescribed levels.

After three years, we now feel that we have a working relationship with both the Seneca Falls Power Corp. and the NYS Canal System. SLPWA will continue to independently monitor water levels of Seneca Lake, and work to maintain appropriate levels as needed.

Looking forward to potential problems, the possibility of hydro-fracturing for natural gas in and around the southern end of the lake has the potential to remove tens to perhaps hundreds of millions of gallons of water per week from the lake. SLPWA is working hard to assure that any water taken from the lake is controlled, and that waste produced as a result of drilling does not pollute this precious resource.



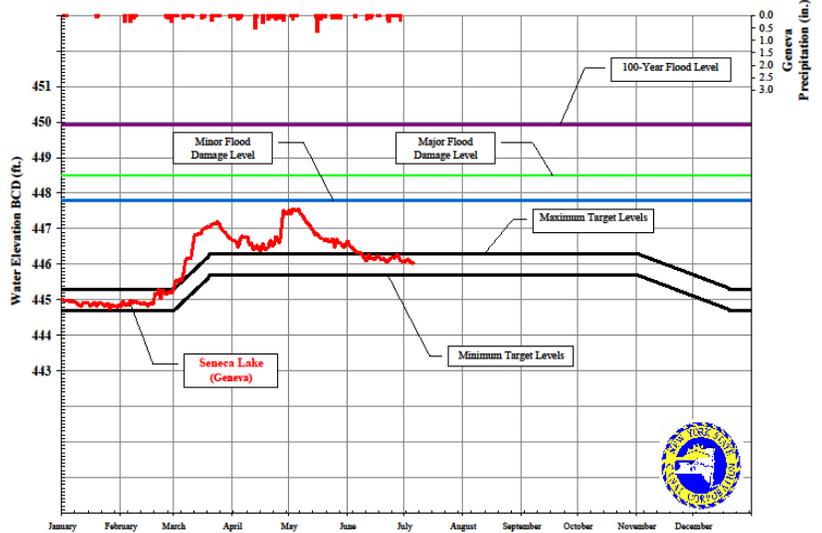
**SLPWA MISSION:**

...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.

**Seneca Lake Levels**

Last Modified: 07/06/2011

SENECA LAKE LEVEL at GENEVA - 2011



[http://www.senecalake.org/Lake\\_Links.php](http://www.senecalake.org/Lake_Links.php)

**Seneca Lake Pure Waters Association**  
**P.O. Box 247**  
**Geneva, NY 14456**

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED