SPECIAL EDITION:

ANNUAL REPORTS
About important issues for Seneca Lake

MARCELLUS SHALE  LAKE LEVELS  LPG STORAGE  LAKE RESEARCH
INVASIVE SPECIES  PHARMACEUTICAL COLLECTIONS

ANNUAL DINNER & MEETING
If you are a member in good standing, you are eligible to vote in the BOD election. Please check the address label on this newsletter to see if your membership is up to date. A registration form is inserted with this newsletter….please use it to register for the dinner meeting. The dinner and meeting are open to members as well as the public.

Thursday, September 13
Watkins Glen Harbor Hotel

5:30-6:30 pm
Display, Exhibits, Raffle & Silent Auction
6:30 pm
Dinner
7:15 pm
Business Meeting
7:30 pm
Presentation,
Tom Wilber, Author

DISPLAYS
EXHIBITS
RAFFLES
SILENT AUCTION

See insert for registration form.
Several days ago I received a blog post written by Samantha Malone, MPH, FracTracker; University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health. The post, entitled Duke Study Prompts Confusing Headlines, documents the difficulty the press has in understanding technical and scientific issues and reporting them to the public.

Here are two of the headlines about the Duke study:

- **New research shows no Marcellus Shale pollution** *(The Wall Street Journal)*
- **New study: Fluids from Marcellus Shale likely seeping into PA drinking water** *(Syracuse.com)*

The study was highly technical and documented migration of brine and other naturally occurring chemicals from deep in the earth to drinking water, unrelated to drilling. But the study is not what caught my attention...it was the confusion in reporting about the study.

Other news reports have questioned the objectivity of scientists from major universities whose research is funded by the oil and gas industry or by major environmental advocacy organizations. We must be able to make decisions based on objective scientific data and analysis, so it is critical to know what is most accurate.

The SLPWA board and volunteers have been digging into the technical issues facing Seneca Lake and its watershed, to get the most up to date information for our members and the elected representatives in the region. Those headlines document the great difficulty that this mission entails. The articles in this newsletter give our best assessment of the problems.

The challenges of media reporting on Shale Gas is also the topic of our annual meeting speaker, Tom Wilber on Thursday, September 13th. Tom is an award winning reporter who wrote many of the early stories on this new drilling method and the potential hazards. He will be sharing the challenges he has faced in trying to get to the truth, from both sides, of the issues of hydraulic fracturing.

I sincerely hope you will join us. The dinner and meeting are open to the public as well as members.

http://www.fractracker.org/2012/07/confusingheadlines/
http://www.pnas.org/content/109/30/11961.abstract

Mary Anne Kowalski

Mary Anne
Lake Level Report
Bob Kayser

After a dramatically wet spring in 2011, lake levels rose to levels not seen in several years. High water levels in Cayuga Lake and in the watershed down stream of that lake made rapid reductions in Seneca Lake impossible. However, by early summer levels were within desired parameters, and remained so throughout the boating season. Sparse Spring runoff in 2012, coupled with drought conditions during the summer have reduced lake levels to near the bottom of the Hansen Rule Curve. SLPWA has been in contact with the California owners of the Seneca Falls Power Company who have voluntarily elected to cease water release for power generation at 0.2 feet BCD above the Rule Curve as an operating policy. This will be particularly helpful to lake users during low water periods, and is sincerely appreciated by SLPWA! Water releases will continue to be necessary to maintain VanCleef Lake in Seneca Falls and the Canal Lock System as is required by their contract with the State of New York.

The Marcellus Shale Committee – Ed Przybylowicz

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 report is being written in mid-July 2012. By the time the Annual Edition of the Newsletter is published, this report may be superseded by decisions issued from Albany. There have been ominous reports leaking from Albany, that the Governor is about to make decisions regarding the lifting of the moratorium on high volume hydraulic fracturing and drilling (HVHF) for natural gas in shale deposits in New York State. At this writing, the moratorium has been in effect for over 3 years and it has been a useful period of time which has allowed the study of the impact that such drilling has had in adjoining states of Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia.

Recent reports from Albany suggest that the Governor was considering allowing limited HVHF activity in the counties bordering Pennsylvania where there was predominant support for this activity. Environmental groups continue to oppose any drilling in New York State based on the fact that the process has high risk of environmental contamination both from the process itself and the waste byproducts from the process. This is consistent with the position that SLPWA has taken.

New York has not been totally free of impact from HVHF in adjoining states, since drilling waste and flow back waters from high volume hydraulic fracturing in Pennsylvania have found their way into New York State landfills and waste water processing facilities. In addition, the village of Painted Post, NY is setting up a facility to sell water from the aquifer on which it is located on to drillers in Pennsylvania for HVHF. The Sierra Club has challenged this project on the basis that an adequate environmental review was not carried out contending that the project is located over the Corning aquifer, one of only 18 primary aquifers in the state. A hearing is scheduled for the 23rd of July in State Supreme Court.

During the past year, SLPWA has studied the proposed Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement (SGEIS) and the proposed regulations governing HVHF. In conclusions reached around in early January 2012 and communicated to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, SLPWA sent detailed critiques of the draft regulations and SGEIS. The conclusion of this study was that HVHF should not be allowed in New York State because appropriate knowledge and safeguards were not in place to protect the environment and our communities from the hazards of this process.

Throughout the past year, SLPWA has communicated this position and concerns to the Governor and DEC. One outstanding issue which has not been responded to by the state administration is the call for a comprehensive health impact study of this process.

Specific documents with details of SLPWA position on these issues can be found on the Project Page of the SLPWA website: http://www.senecalake.org/Marcellus.php.
In December 2010, the SLPWA joined forces with the other eight lake and watershed associations in the region to form the Finger Lakes Regional Watershed Alliance (FLRWA), the first of its kind. Representing more than 10,000 citizens, the mission of the Alliance is to bring together the members, expertise and desires of the Finger Lakes watershed associations to preserve and protect the watersheds of the Finger Lakes region with a collective regional voice.

At its initial meeting, the Alliance identified six watershed-related issues (from 29 listed by member associations) for initial exploration by FLRWA:

- gas drilling in Marcellus Shale and other shale formations;
- phosphates, weeds & algae;
- invasive species;
- agricultural best management practices ("BMPs");
- landfills;
- tax equity throughout the watersheds.

During 2011, the Alliance, along with many others, was swept full-force into the hydrofracking debate. With the support of its member associations, the Alliance prepared statements and responses to the proposed guidelines that were presented by the Department of the Environment and Conservation. It met with Senators and Assemblymen, spoke at educational workshops, and worked with city, town and village boards on issues related to zoning and land use laws. The Alliance stressed the imperative of protecting water quality in the Finger Lakes region and it worked to exempt our lakes and watersheds from high volume hydraulic fracturing.

The Alliance also established itself as a non-profit organization, launched a website at www.flrwa.org with news about the alliance, and supported funding requests for projects, such as invasive species management. Board members shared the work of their respective member associations and many great ideas were picked up and implemented by other member associations across the Finger Lakes.

At its Board meeting in May 2012, the Alliance adopted two strategic initiatives for 2012-13, invasive species management and member association development.

In July, it hosted three speakers at an invasive species management workshop at the Finger Lakes Institute-Greg Sarkis from the Nature Conservancy, Lynn Bogan who is an ecologist with New York State Parks and Recreation, and Hilary Lambert who is the watershed steward for the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network. The speakers educated the Board about hydrilla in the Cayuga Lake inlet and other invasive species management issues in the Finger Lakes region. The Alliance is now working on the development of a regional invasive species project.

It is also working on the development of a strategy to ensure its member associations remain strong and vibrant. As this strategic initiative develops, it will be shared for review and comment. Since its formation, the Alliance has received positive support from legislators, the community, the press, and other regional associations, such as the Finger Lakes Institute.

The Alliance is proud of the work SLPWA is doing and the active involvement of its members. Phil Cianciotto, from the SLPWA Board, is on the FLRWA Board. Please don't hesitate to share your ideas with Phil and SLPWA about topics of regional significance you feel the Alliance should address as it continues to grow and develop. We are grateful for the continued support of FLRWA by SLPWA.
Aquative Invasive Species (AIS) Project
Finger Lakes Regional Watershed Alliance (FLRWA) – 2012 Focus
Phil Cianciotto, SLPWA Representative to FLRWA

In 2012, the Finger Lakes Regional Watershed Alliance (FLRWA) chose invasive species in the Finger Lakes as its major priority item for sharing information, educational materials and experiences among member associations. The recent discovery and outbreak of Hydrilla at the inlet on Cayuga Lake in Ithaca as well as concerns with Asian Clams, Bloody Red Shrimp, Zebra and Quagga mussels and Water Chestnut prompted FLRWA to focus on invasive species in all of the Finger Lakes.

The following information from the Cornell University Cooperative Extension – Tompkins County website: (http://ccetompkins.org/environment/invasive-species/hydrilla) is an excellent explanation of why Hydrilla is a major concern for any of the Finger Lakes and contains images of hydilla and other water plant species that look similar to hydilla.

The highly invasive aquatic plant, Hydrilla verticillata, known commonly as ‘hydrilla’ or ‘water thyme’ was first detected in August 2011 in the Cayuga Inlet by staff from the Floating Classroom (the first spotting was in the Linderman Creek area of the Inlet). In a follow-up survey, Robert L. Johnson, a local plant expert with Cornell University and Racine-Johnson Aquatic Ecologists, located several areas of the Inlet with extensive populations of hydilla. To date, hydilla appears to be localized to the Cayuga Inlet, with no evidence that it has yet rooted in Cayuga Lake.

This is the first detection of hydilla in upstate New York’s waters, and the risk of it spreading to Cayuga Lake and other regional waterbodies is substantial. Fragments of the plant, which are easily caught and transported by boats and boat trailers, can sprout roots and establish new populations. Fragments also float and are capable of dispersing via wind and water currents.

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<th>Hydilla grows aggressively, up to a foot a day.1 Early in the season, it grows mostly horizontally along the bottom of the waterbody. Side shoots and new tubers can develop at the nodes as the plant grows. As the water temperature increases, the stems elongate, sending the shoot tips, which can themselves grow an inch a day, toward the water surface. The plant creates a thick mat of vegetation when it reaches the water’s surface. It quickly shades out other aquatic plants, displacing native species like pondweeds and wild celery.</th>
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An excellent guide to Invasive Weed Identification including Hydrilla was published by the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network, a FLRWA member and can be found at: http://ccetompkins.org/sites/all/files/8/weeds-watch-out.pdf.

SLPWA members are encouraged to learn about these invasive species and to look for them in Seneca Lake. Sightings should be reported to SLPWA by contacting us at slpwa@senecalake.org. The experience from Cayuga Lake is important to all of us. While the infested area is approximately 160 acres at the inlet, eradication costs in 2012 are expected to top $1,000,000 and will involve treatment of the area with two herbicides (Endothall and Fluridone). During the treatments access to the areas being treated will be limited. Unfortunately eradication may take 5-8 years with similar costs each year.

As part of their Educational Outreach efforts, The Finger Lakes Institute has obtained funding through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative for 2012 to employ watershed monitoring stewards at many launch sites in the Finger Lakes Region. The stewards will be responsible for public outreach and education on slowing and preventing the spread of AIS. Each steward will be responsible for conducting watercraft inspections and educating watercraft operators according to a standard operating procedure for controlling AIS throughout the Finger Lakes/Lake Ontario waterways. Steward will collect daily data on boater activity and invasive species surveillance, and weekly progress reports will be required that summarize this information. The stewards will be monitoring 16 of the most used launch sites doing boat inspections and spreading the word to boaters on how to prevent the transfer of invasive species by practicing some simple preventative procedures.

Get involved and become educated in invasive species and their impact on our lake. Learn how to identify new invasive species in Seneca Lake and report them when found. Prevent invasive species spread from one body of water to another by checking your boat, trailer and live well for hitchhikers. Dispose of hitchhikers on shore – not in the water. Don’t cut weeds along shoreline property and let the cut weeds drift out into the lake. If you can’t harvest them out of the lake let them be. Cutting weeds and letting them float in the lake only aids in their dispersal.

What can SLPWA Members do about AIS?
While SLPWA had hoped to continue to expand the promotion of Pharmaceutical collections across the watershed this year and initiate a Hazardous Waste collection program, the fiscal constraints of watershed Counties made the realization of these program not possible this year. SLPWA is pleased that Ontario County has been able to maintain and expand their very successful Pharmaceutical collection program in 2011. Two collections are scheduled for Ontario County this fall. They are sponsored by the Ontario County Sheriff’s Department and the Partnership for Ontario County.

The collections will take place as follows:
**Saturday, Sept. 29, 2012** from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM at the Geneva TOPS Supermarket, Rtes 5 & 20, Geneva, NY
**Monday, Oct. 8, 2012** from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM at Victor Central Schools, High St. Victor, NY

If you are interested in working with us to promote and develop pharmaceutical and hazardous waste collection programs in the Seneca Lake Watershed in 2013 contact us via our website at [www.senecalake.org](http://www.senecalake.org). Its great fun and a wonderful way to help Seneca Lake stay clean!
FOR SALE:
LAKEFRONT PROPERTY

SLPWA has a parcel of lakefront property for sale on the West Side of Seneca Lake in North Kashong Point adjacent to and across the road from the West Lake Fire Department.

The property consists of 145.5 feet of lake frontage 38.5 feet deep. Total area is approximately .09 acres. Although it is zoned residential, it is not large enough to build a house. It would, however, be good for beach and lake access. The current assessed value is $36,200.

Website Communication
- Ed Przybylowicz

The purpose of our association website at: www.senecalake.org is to provide members and the public with factual information about the major issues that affect Seneca Lake water quality and environment. The website is updated frequently with information on the major projects of the association, members' meetings that are scheduled to take place, the Board of Director's meetings and a calendar of events that deal with environmental and water quality issues of the lake. The website posts presentation materials from speakers at their meetings as well as important published information which affect Seneca Lake. There are many other features on the site such as links to other sources of valuable information about Seneca Lake.

Over the past two years, the website has had over 40,000 visitors which is an indication of its value as a source of useful information. However, the usefulness of the website can only be maintained by input from members and readers who raise questions and concerns about issues affecting our lake. Such input is vital to the continued value of this website as a means of public communication.
From the May 2012 issue

**Lawn Fertilizer Phosphorus Restrictions Now in Effect**

As the lawn-care season gets into full swing, DEC is urging New Yorkers to be mindful of a new state law limiting the percentage of phosphorus in lawn fertilizers and restricting when and where they can be used. The fertilizer provisions of the NYS Dishwasher Detergent and Nutrient Runoff Law have been in effect since January 1.

**Highlights of the New Law**

*Too much phosphorus in the water can lead to algal blooms and other problems that lower water quality.*

The new restrictions will reduce the quantity of phosphorus entering the state's waters. Excessive amounts of phosphorus degrade water quality in ponds, rivers, lakes and streams. Under the provisions of the new law:

- The use of fertilizer containing phosphorus on lawns or non-agricultural turf is restricted those containing less than 0.67 percent phosphate by weight.
- Retailers must display fertilizer containing phosphorus separately from phosphorus-free fertilizer and post signs notifying customers of the terms of the new law.
- Application of any fertilizer containing nitrogen, phosphorus or potassium on lawns or non-agricultural turf is prohibited between December 1 and April 1.
- Application of any fertilizer on lawns or non-agricultural turf within 20 feet of a water body or on paved surfaces is restricted.

Phosphorus is carried from lawns into ponds, rivers, lakes and streams by stormwater runoff. Phosphorus dissolved in water has been linked to reductions in oxygen necessary for fish to breathe, algae that turn waterbodies green, and algae and algae by-products that degrade drinking water. Read about how the phosphate level of Seneca Lake has been rising in Professor John Halfman's update report on our website at:


**Many Waterbodies Degraded by Phosphorus**

More than 70 waterbodies used for drinking water, fisheries or recreation in New York are impaired or negatively affected due to phosphorus, including: portions of Lake Ontario, Lake Champlain, Onondaga Lake, New York City drinking water reservoirs, the Chesapeake Bay watershed and many other smaller ponds and lakes.

Phosphorus-impaired waters can negatively affect recreation and tourism, an important component of local economies. In addition, reducing the amount of phosphorus in stormwater is preferable to removing it after it has entered. Protecting drinking water from the effects of phosphorus can be costly. Municipalities located within watersheds of impaired waters must meet regulatory limits on the total amount of phosphorus entering the watershed from all sources, especially stormwater runoff. Improving a storm-sewer system (retrofitting) to remove phosphorus from stormwater can cost millions of dollars.

Find the full text of the new law, frequently asked questions, and a downloadable sign for retail display at the Dishwasher Detergent and Nutrient Runoff Law page on DEC's website:

http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/67239.html
Salt Cavern Gas Storage Committee  
- Phil Cianciotto

When it was announced in Sept 2009 that a $40 million dollar project to expand liquefied petroleum gas storage and distribution facilities at the US Salt Property located North of Watkins Glen, on Rt. 14, SLPWA began work to understand the impact of this proposed expansion on the Seneca Lake and its watershed. The proposal called for developing LPG storage in the solution mined salt caverns that were no longer in use at US Salt for the extraction of salt and to build a brine pond and railroad and truck distribution facility. The facility was being designed to store almost 90 million gallons of LPG. The petroleum gas would be liquefied by large electric compressors and pumped under pressure into brine filled salt caverns. The displaced brine would be stored in a brine pond along Rt. 14 above Seneca Lake.

SLPWA has followed the regulatory submissions by Inergy Midstream who took over ownership of the US Salt facility in January 2010, commenting on the draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement which was initially released by Inergy in April 2011 and rejected by the NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation, and again in August 2011 when the draft was accepted by the DEC. The DEC also asked Inergy to submit a Quantitative Risk Assessment (QRA) in the fall of 2011 as the result of public comments received on the dSGEIS submission. In April 2012, the DEC requested additional information from Inergy be submitted to the dSGEIS regarding water quality, the brine ponds, storage capacity and storm water management at the site. When Inergy submitted the QRA, they requested that the QRA be kept confidential, but this was rejected by the DEC and commented upon by SLPWA when it was made public.

In its comments on the dSGEIS SLPWA stated that:
1. 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.
2. We are concerned about the environmental safety of Seneca Lake in regards to catastrophic failure of the proposed brine pond above Seneca Lake.
3. An independent 3rd 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.
4. A study should be carried out 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 maybe misguided.
5. 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.

In our review of the QRA SLPWA stated that:
1. The QRA appears to be based on a typical LPG storage facility that could be located anywhere in the world and does not address what we believe are the unique site conditions for the facility in Watkins Glen.
2. The QRA does not assess the current capability or the future capability of area first responders in case of a major accident at the facility.
3. The QRA does not mention, and therefore does not consider, the unique nature of the proposed salt storage caverns to be directly adjacent to a 37 mile long and 630 foot deep fresh water lake. Seneca Lake has a 4 times higher salt concentration compared to the other Finger Lakes. One explanation is that salt is already leaching into the lake from the very layer in which the LPG is to be stored.
4. The QRA does not make any mention of the brine storage ponds or any potential environmental risk to the lake or surrounding wetlands in case of a failure of these ponds.
5. The QRA makes no assessment on the impact the proposal will have on the tourism and wine industry of the region on which a vast majority of the region’s residents rely for their livelihoods.

SLPWA will continue to follow the developments of this project in its efforts to protect Seneca Lake and its watershed from potential harm. You can follow our progress and volunteer to assist us by using the links on our website at www.senecalake.org.
SLPWA MISSION:
Enhance and Preserve the Quality of Seneca Lake

Seneca Lake Pure Waters Association will further its mission through efforts to:

- Promote the understanding, preservation and improvement of the water quality, natural habitat and general environmental conditions of Seneca Lake and its watershed;
- Sponsor scientific research of the watershed to establish baseline data and monitor changes;
- Collect, preserve and disseminate information concerning Seneca Lake and its watershed;
- Encourage and support the compliance with laws and regulations;
- Collaborate with like-minded organizations; and
- Promote patterns of development and technology to further our mission.

Fiscal Year 2011-12
Financial Report
- Bob Kayser, Treasurer

At year-end, Assets of the Corporation were $21,902 with no outstanding liabilities. Donation income for the year was $16,109 and expenses were $23,658.

Significant expenses included a $4,500 grant to Hobart and William Smith Colleges for lake research, payments to ARC of Yates for printing and mailing services, and contract administrative assistance.

Some time ago, a parcel of lake front property was donated to SLPWA. As it is not suitable as a building lot and is of no use to the Corporation, the Board has authorized its sale (see article on page 7).