

Lakewatch

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

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President's Message by Phil Cianciotto

During the winter months around Seneca Lake I tend to reflect on what we personally did the previous year and about plans for the upcoming year on the lake. The past week provided me with an opportunity to reflect on what SLPWA has accomplished this past year and what opportunities lay ahead for us in 2011.

2010 saw a number of significant milestones for SLPWA:

- **The Marcellus Shale Committee sent out a number of comments, letters, emails and press releases to our public officials expressing our concerns with various aspects of drilling for natural gas in the Marcellus Shale.**

In 2011 we expect to see the NYS Department of Conservation issue the updated Draft Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement for Natural Gas drilling based on the input that they have received from SLPWA and other organizations around the state. It is still too early to tell what direction the new state administration will take but you can be sure that the Marcellus Shale Committee will work to represent the lake and watershed and keep you informed of our position. We all hope that the state will take no action until the EPA study examining the potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water which is due out in late 2012. In the meantime we can all learn from developments in Pennsylvania as they struggle with the effects of this industrial process on their environment and infrastructure.

- **SLPWA applied for its first grants since our reorganization and has received for 2011, \$3500 from Freshwater Futures for lake water quality research, \$1000 from Ontario County Water Resources Council for lake water research and \$2500 from Ontario County Water Resources Council for Watershed Education.**

We expect to continue searching for grant opportunities to support our educational and research activities devoted to Seneca Lake and its watershed in 2011. The programs we have are ongoing – each year we have a new class of students learning about our watershed and their relationship to it and the research data monitoring the water quality of the lake needs to continue to establish a baseline and be able to detect changes that may signal both; improvements or degradation to our water quality. We are making gains in expanding the scope of this testing throughout the full length of the lake. We are thinking of ways to expand our ‘reach’ but financial support will be crucial as the testing of these water samples is costly.

- **SPLWA initiated and co-sponsored with Wegmans a pharmaceutical collection event in Geneva.**

September saw the first pharmaceutical collection in the watershed in a number of years with over 400 lbs of unwanted and expired drugs being collected. In 2011 we would like to see the program expand throughout the watershed and become common place so that these collection events become the way for all of us to dispose of these materials.

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(President's Message Continued)

SLPWA would also like to partner with watershed communities to hold hazardous waste collection events so that these materials are properly disposed of and don't enter our water supply. If your community is interested in holding a hazardous waste collection event - let us know and we'll explore together what is needed to get one going. Wouldn't it be great to have a 5 County Seneca Lake Watershed Hazardous waste collection event some Saturday late next summer?

- In partnership with the Canandaigua Lake Watershed Association, the Finger Lakes Regional Watershed Alliance was formed with the 9 publicly owned watersheds lake associations of the Finger Lakes to use our regional recognition and collective voice to speak for the protection of our watersheds.**

The work to legally form the Finger Lakes Regional Watershed Alliance is almost complete and we will begin to work on common issues to all watersheds within the Finger Lakes Region. These include the potential effects of natural gas drilling and hydraulic fracturing on drinking water supplies in the watershed, the impact of landfills and leachate on our water quality and the control and prevention of the spread of invasive species throughout the region. WE all face a number of common issues and believe we can better resolve these issues by working together.

- SLPWA held 12 membership meetings including our Annual Meeting in August with speaker presentations at 10 of our meetings.**

We plan to continue to hold monthly membership meetings during 2011 with speakers who bring their knowledge about our watershed or programs about our lake or watershed that may be of interest to our members. We are always looking for ideas that would satisfy an interest expressed by our membership. Let us know if you would like us to present a particular program topic or arrange for a speaker by contacting us at www.senecalake.org and we'll see what we can do.

- SLPWA participated in the start of drafting an updated Seneca Lake Watershed Management plan in partnership with SLAP-5 (the organization representing Seneca Lake water protection agencies) and Finger Lakes Institute (FLI).**

This new watershed management plan which will be completed in 2012 will set the direction for programs to maintain and improve the Seneca Lake watershed. The management plan will list gaps in our knowledge regarding our watershed, critical issues that are faced by the watershed and recommendations for closing those gaps and tackling the issues so that we can preserve, protect and improve our watershed.

Our goals for 2011 besides what was reflected upon above, is to:

- Increase our membership and membership participation in SLPWA. You can help us by talking about SLPWA with your friends and neighbors and by letting us know what we can do to further our mission. It would be great if every member resolved to attend at least one SLPWA event in 2011.
- Expand our recognition by the State, county and municipal governments in our watershed as the voice of Seneca Lake. SLPWA takes to heart its mission to speak for the lake and watershed since it can't speak for itself. Please help us by lending your voice to ours for the benefit of Seneca Lake and its watershed. Look for opportunities to join our efforts to inform our governmental leaders of SLPWA's mission and the knowledge we are building about the needs of our lake and our desire to protect the lake and watershed from harm for the enjoyment by future generations.

Sincerely,

Phil Cianciotto,

President, Seneca Lake Pure Waters Association

Learn! Live! Act!

A Finger Lakes Green Lake Living Guide

(*This article from the Hobart and William Smith Colleges Finger Lakes Institute Publication:
"Learn! Live! Act! A Finger Lakes Green Lake Living Guide" written and Edited by Sarah Meyer is reprinted with permission.
Funding for this booklet was provided by: 2009 Ontario county Water Resources Council Small Projects Grant.
The full publication can be found on the FLI website at http://fli.hws.edu/pdf/2010/publications/LearnLiveAct_FLI.pdf)

An Environmental Steward is defined in many ways:

- one who manages the environment;**
- one who strives to sustain natural resources and the natural environment for future generations; or**
- one who serves to protect and conserve the environment.**

Although this concept has deep roots in history, environmental stewardship and resource conservation have recently become of increased aspiration by homeowners, businesses, corporations, academic institutions, churches, municipalities, celebrities, and schoolchildren alike. Individuals feel the most effective and achieve a sense of positive change through acts of service.

There are many assertive environmental organizations in the Finger Lakes region. These organizations strive to provide measurable ways of improving environmental performance, promote diversity and habitat preservation, conserve natural resources, and develop environmental education opportunities for everyone. With environmental stewardship and public service a priority, the Finger Lakes Institute offers opportunities to students and the public to get outside, improve the environment, and make a difference through service.

The FLI has coordinated many public service projects including roadside cleanups, stream monitoring, invasive species pulls, and tree planting events. The FLI also has an annual Seneca Lake Beach Cleanup in the Fall.

The conscience actions taken by Finger Lakes Institute volunteers and the numerous regional environmental organizations that the FLI partners with are examples of a commitment to grow as environmental stewards. through **LEARNING, LIVING, and ACTING** like environmental stewards.

BE AN ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARD: 3 THINGS YOU CAN DO

Recycle Your Electronics:

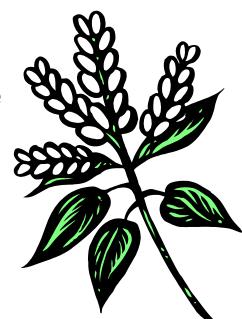
In 2005, the Finger Lakes Institute began to collect cell phones and accessories to not only create an awareness of electronic waste and its impacts on land and water, but to also creatively fundraise for Finger Lakes scientific research. Recycle your cell phone, batteries and chargers at the Finger Lakes Institute or inquire with your waste collection service provider to assure they are recycled!

Take a Stay-cation:

Exploring the beautiful gorges, lakes, wetlands of the Finger Lakes will decrease your carbon footprint and build a greater appreciation for nature, conservation, and preservation.

Plant Native:

Adapted Plants. Native plants are adapted to the local climate and require less special attention for watering and chemical treatment in fighting pests.



More ideas on page 4

Are You an Environmental Steward?

Learn Like an Environmental Steward

According to the Campaign for Environmental Literacy, Americans still widely lack the environmental knowledge that would enable them to safeguard public health, protect natural resources, support energy conservation efforts and engage in the movement towards a more sustainable future (<http://www.fundee.org/facts/envlit/litgap.htm>). The Finger Lakes Institute regularly schedules programs for individuals to learn about a variety of environmentally related topics. In the past, these events have focused on topics such as Finger Lakes water quality, alternative energy, invasive species, and green design. Participants obtain a sense of place and strengthen their ability to identify the ways in which their actions associations, County Cornell Cooperative Extension and Soil and Water Conservation Districts also provide programs for individuals to increase their environmental knowledge and understanding. Enable yourself to make the best decisions for your health, community and the environment.

Live Like an Environmental Steward

No P on the Lawn

Keeping phosphorus out of lakes is extremely important because one pound of phosphorus supports the growth of approximately 500 pounds of aquatic plants! Lawn and garden plants only take in what nutrients they need therefore, leftovers wash off the surface of the land and pollute our waterways. Phosphorus can be used to establish roots in a new lawn, however after the lawn has grown in, additional applications of P are usually unnecessary and a waste of money.

Light up the Lake

All too often celebratory flares and fireworks are extinguished by tossing them into the lake, polluting the water. A greener alternative to flares would be LED lights and lanterns. If flares are used, don't toss them on the shoreline or in the water.

Scoop the Poop

Doggie doo-doo is no exception to the materials that enter our waterways via stormwater runoff. Dog waste not only contains nutrients, but also bacteria, such as E-coli, and viruses, such as salmonella and giardia. Responsible pet owners clean up after their pet to assure healthy drinking water and safe recreational areas. Greener options for disposing of pet waste include putting it in the trash, flushing it down the toilet, or burying it in the yard. Dog waste should not be composted.

Test it, Protect it

Well water supplies need to be tested for purity annually. The well is your source of drinking water; you do not want it at risk of bacteria, nutrients and sediment. A wellhead should be kept clean and free of debris, soil compaction, parked cars and pets to assure good health and low environmental risk.

Mow Less

Less Weeds. Believe it or not, longer blades of grass provide shade and keep the lawn cooler and reduce the need to water. Lawns kept at 3-4 inches high are denser and detour weed growth leading to reduced need to treat with chemical herbicides and pesticides. If you are going to treat your lawn,

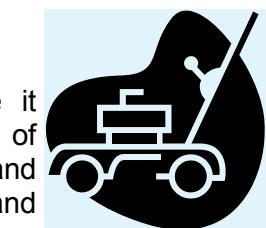
Catch the Rain

 Rain gardens collect water that runs off the land and protects streams and lakes from erosion and chemical contamination. Plant a rain garden to enhance the beauty of your backyard and provide valuable habitat for birds, butterflies, and beneficial insects.



Here, Wildlife...

The built environment has become habitat for many creatures like the barn owl. With increased development, food sources, natural habitat, and migration patterns are lacking or disrupted. Planting buffers and hedgerow, restoring stream banks and crossings, and providing shelter for over-wintering critters reassures the presence of beneficial and admirable wildlife year round. Hanging a birdhouse or bat house and planting cattails and thick bushes will attract birds, bats, and dragonflies, all predators of mosquitoes.

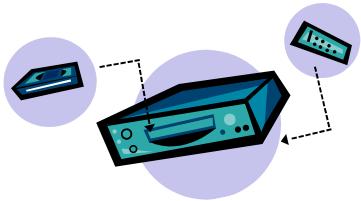
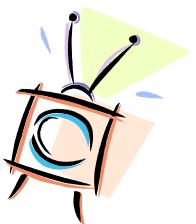


spot treat it to limit the amount of toxic chemicals introduced to the natural environment.

The Electronic Equipment Recycling and Reuse Act

The NYS Electronic Equipment Recycling and Reuse Act was signed into law by Governor Paterson on May 28, 2010. The law will ensure that every New Yorker will have the opportunity to recycle their electronic waste in an environmentally responsible manner. The law requires manufacturers to establish a convenient system for the collection, handling, and recycling or reuse of electronic waste. Manufacturers of covered electronic equipment will be responsible for implementing and maintaining an acceptance program for the discarded electronic waste, with oversight by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. Look on the SLPWA website (www.senecalake.org) for information on how these items will be handled within our watershed once we learn what return processes have been established in our area. In the meantime – don't trash these items! Beginning **April 1, 2011**, manufacturers of covered electronic equipment will be required to accept the following:

- Computers
- Televisions (as well as cathode ray tubes)
- Small Scale Servers
- Computer Peripherals
 - Monitors
 - Electronic Keyboards
 - Electronic Mice
 - Facsimile Machines
 - Document Scanners
 - Printers
- Small Electronic Equipment
 - VCRs
 - Digital Video Recorders
 - Portable Digital Music Players
 - DVD Players
 - Digital Converter Boxes
 - Cable or Satellite Receivers
 - Electronic or Video Game Consoles



NY Adopts Statewide Rechargeable Battery Take Back Law

New directive for rechargeable batteries to reduce toxics in our environment



New York, NY (December 15, 2010) On Monday, Governor Paterson signed into law a new requirement for manufacturers to take back and recycle rechargeable batteries in a statewide, manufacturer-funded program. This action follows the enactment of New York's first product stewardship law, the Electronic Equipment Recycling and Reuse Act, in May, 2010.

Last year SLPWA reported in the newsletter about recycling rechargeable batteries. Here is the link to find stores that will accept rechargeable batteries: <http://www.call2recycle.org/drop-off-your-old-batteries.php?c=1&d=486&w=9100&r=Y>

But that leaves the question: What should we do with all the other household batteries?

Most of the batteries we have at home are **alkaline batteries** which are not considered a threat to the environment and can be placed in the household trash. Many of us think they are still dangerous, but they stopped using mercury in them in the 1990, so there is no need to recycle them

However there are several non-rechargeable batteries like those in Medical Equipment:

Calculators; Watches; Camera;
Hearing Aids; Pagers; Computers

Check with your Local Recycling Coordinator to find out where you can recycle those batteries.

The DEC website:

<http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8511.html>

Are you getting email notices for our member meetings and events?

If not, email us at
slpwa@senecalake.org
to get on our email list!





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.

COMMUNITY TRAINING IN ECOLOGICAL DESIGN

February through April 2011—Montour Falls

Are you a landowner, farmer, or gardener?

Do you want a more sustainable and abundant life?

Learn a design method to improve home scale food and forest production, to conserve resources, and save money.

Study basic ecological principles and permaculture methods and use them to solve problems on your own home and landscape.

Design subjects include gardens, water management, earthworks, small woodlot management, buildings, energy, soils, compost, animals, and more.

Weekend Workshop: February 12 & 13

Tuesday evenings: 6:30 to 9:00 p.m.,

February 15 - April 12

Tuition: \$200 - \$400

(based on what you can afford).

Location: Schuyler County Human Services Building, 323 Owego Street, Montour Falls, NY 14865

Contact: Call (607) 227-0316 or visit

<http://www.FingerLakesPermaculture.org> for information and registration.



Seneca Lake Pure Waters Association

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED