

# The Crossing Place

A newsletter dedicated to the Owasco Lake watershed and the Finger Lakes Region

- Economic Development
- Environmental Management
- Land Use and Transportation Planning
- Regional Information and Research Services

The Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board (CNY RPDB) is a public agency that was established in 1966 by Cayuga, Cortland, Madison, Onondaga, and Oswego Counties under the provisions of Article 12B of the New York State General Municipal Law. The CNY RPDB is governed by a board of directors that is appointed by its five member counties. Financial support for the agency is provided by member county contributions, state and federal grants, and contract service revenue. The CNY RPDB provides a comprehensive range of services associated with the growth and development of communities in Central New York with a focus on the following program areas:

**About our Name**  
The name of this newsletter—"The Crossing Place"—is derived from the Native American word "osco," which means "crossing place." Today, Owasco Lake crosses several municipal boundaries and represents a merging of cultures, religions, occupations, and interests of the people who live and work in the watershed.

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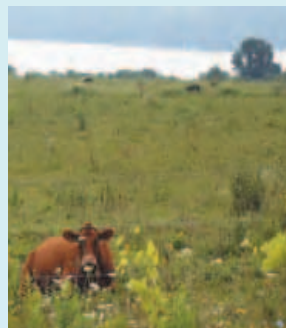
## What is the Finger Lakes Water Resources, Agriculture and Open Lands Conservation Program?

The Finger Lakes Water Resources, Agriculture and Open Lands Conservation Project, funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development through a grant secured by Congressman James T. Walsh, is designed to help communities throughout the Finger Lakes region protect water resources, agriculture, open lands, and scenic vistas while maintaining the traditional character of the region. This project is a joint effort among the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board (CNY RPDB), the Cayuga County Department of Planning (CCPD), and the Institute for the Application of Geospatial Technology (IAGT). The Finger Lakes Water Resources, Agriculture and Open Lands Conservation Project encourages communities to become proactive by identifying and documenting their vision for the future by updating comprehensive plans and local land use regulations to determine when and where growth and development is appropriate.

This project was designed to help Owasco Lake watershed communities establish guidelines to protect

fertile soils, scenic views, drinking water resources, recreational opportunities, and open lands, and offers a variety of strategies and techniques to address challenging land use and development issues. The CNY RPDB, CCPD, and IAGT can also work with municipalities to create a customized approach to protect community assets, locate critical areas in need of protection, and develop a plan for the future. As more communities become involved, a watershed-wide planning project can be initiated to develop a comprehensive strategy for protecting the watershed's valuable amenities. We encourage all of the Owasco Lake communities to participate in this innovative project to help plan for their future.

For additional information please contact  
Kristy LaManche  
(315) 422-8276 or [klamanche@cnyrpd.org](mailto:klamanche@cnyrpd.org)  
or Amy D'Angelo  
(315) 253-1276 or [adangelo@co.cayuga.ny.us](mailto:adangelo@co.cayuga.ny.us).



The Finger Lakes Water Resources, Agriculture and Open Lands Conservation Project

August 2005

# NEWS from Around the Region

## Cayuga Lake Watershed Agriculture Committee Reconvenes

The Cayuga Lake Watershed Agriculture Committee—a joint effort between the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network and the Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization—has reconvened. Originally formed in 2000, the Agriculture Committee reviewed and commented on the agriculture section of the Restoration and Protection Plan. Now, the committee is a forum for representatives from counties, agencies, watershed groups, and farms to discuss pertinent issues such as agriculture priorities in the watershed, state AEM (Agricultural Environmental Management) requirements and county AEM strategic plans, Finger Lakes friendly farm designation and signage, purchase of development rights programs, agricultural waste and recycling opportunities, riparian buffer priorities, and the Cayuga Lake Scenic Byway.

The Agriculture Committee meets quarterly. Contact Darby Kiley at (607) 533-8896 for more information.

Darby Kiley, Watershed Project Manager  
Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization  
[www.cayugawatershed.org](http://www.cayugawatershed.org)

*Our culture and our place are images of each other and inseparable from each other, and so neither can be better than the other. In short, what we do to the land, we do to ourselves.*

~Wendell Berry

## Aquatic Plants: Good and Bad News for Water Resources

Aquatic plants are vital to healthy and productive water resources in the Finger Lakes. Native aquatic plants help maintain water quality, reduce shoreline erosion, and provide habitat and food for waterfowl, fish, and other aquatic life. Native aquatic plants such as coontail, northern watermilfoil, duckweed, and waterweed have historically existed in our area and are adapted to competing with other aquatic plants.

Invasive plants are species that when transported outside their native range spread profusely and out-compete native vegetation for nutrients and space. Invasive plants can alter ecosystems and restrict recreational activities, reduce waterfront property values, and contaminate drinking water supplies and reduce habitat and food sources for native fish and aquatic life. Currently, water chestnut, European frogbit, and fanwort threaten the waterbodies of the Finger Lakes region.

Weeds Watch Out! (W2O!) is an education program designed to thwart the spread of invasive aquatic plants into, within, and from the Finger Lakes. The W2O! partners are hosting several events this summer to help residents, local officials, and water enthusiasts protect the Finger Lakes from these invaders. Contact Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County at (315) 255-1183 for additional information on upcoming events or visit the project's web site at [www.co.cayuga.ny.us/wqma/weedswatchout](http://www.co.cayuga.ny.us/wqma/weedswatchout).

Kelly Fallone, Resource Educator  
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County  
[cce.cornell.edu/~cayuga/cayuga.html](http://cce.cornell.edu/~cayuga/cayuga.html)

## New Digester Enhances Manure Management

Summer 2005 will be a busy time for the Patterson Dairy Farm in Cayuga County. In addition to planting and harvesting 2,400 acres of crops for their 1,500 dairy cows and heifers, they will be putting manure into their anaerobic digester as one of the final stages in a manure management project aimed at addressing odor pollution associated with farm activities. The digester will heat the manure to 100 degrees, creating a biogas that will be vacuumed off the top of the manure and fed to a 200-kilowatt caterpillar engine generator. Once the manure has been digested the solids will be separated and composted for bedding or sold as a soil amendment. The total project cost is over \$1.3 million dollars, including construction of a concrete tank (135' x 142' x 17'), a compost barn (120' x 60'), and a utility barn (42' x 62'). The project has been supported by grants awarded through the Cayuga County Soil and Water District, New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, and US Department of Agriculture Rural Development. The Pattersons will be hosting an open house and tour in September. Contact the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network at (607) 532-4104 for more details.

Connie Tallcot

## Preserving Farmland in Cayuga County

In New York State, the Department of Agriculture and Markets has operated a purchase of development rights (PDR) program for the past several years. Under the land conservation program, counties and local governments with Agricultural Protection Plans approved by the Department of Agriculture and Markets can sponsor individual farms seeking grant funds for their development rights. Cayuga County has sponsored three successful applications that have secured nearly \$3 million in State funds, to be distributed among the DeGroff Farm, Spruce Haven Farm and the Culver Farm.

The participating farms have all been located within the Owasco Lake watershed in the Town of Fleming. All are experiencing suburban development pressure and all have demonstrated that they are viable farm operations likely to be sustained for the foreseeable future.

Annually the Cayuga County Department of Planning and Development and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County hold an informational meeting where local farmers can learn about the program. The Planning Department then accepts preliminary applications from interested farmers and presents the preliminary applications to the County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board. Due to limited funding, the Board selects the three proposals they deem most likely to be successful and submits them to the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets for consideration.

For more information, contact the Cayuga County Planning Department at (315) 253-1276.

Dave Miller, Director  
Cayuga County Planning and Development  
[www.co.cayuga.ny.us/planning](http://www.co.cayuga.ny.us/planning)

## Local Laws to Protect Finger Lakes Water Quality Project

The Local Laws to Protect Finger Lakes Water Quality Project seeks to help municipalities improve their local regulatory controls on land development in order to ultimately help protect the water resources of the Finger Lakes region. Within the region, watershed protection plans have been completed for Canandaigua, Cayuga, and Conesus Lakes. Preparation of each plan has been undertaken in partnership with the NYS Department of State, financed through grants from the Environmental Protection Fund Local Waterfront Revitalization Program, and overseen by an inter-municipal organization comprised of the local governments and organizations involved in watershed protection.

Building on these watershed protection plans, the Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (G/FLRPC) is in the process of revising or developing local land use control tools and laws for local governments within the Canandaigua, Cayuga, and Conesus Lake watersheds. The project is a multi-year effort and is divided into three distinct phases: assessment, law development, and education and outreach.

For more information contact Jason Haremza at (585) 454-0190 ext. 15.

Jason Haremza, Senior Planner  
Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council  
[www.gflrpc.org](http://www.gflrpc.org)

## Finger Lakes Institute Expands Research Efforts

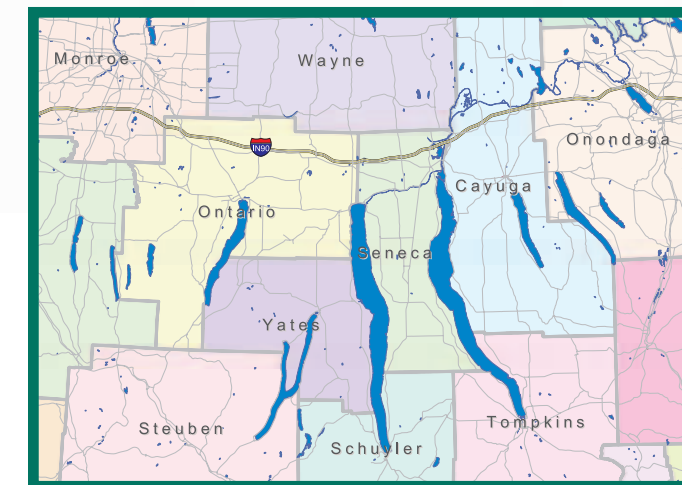
The Finger Lakes Institute at Hobart and William Smith Colleges is expanding its research efforts on all eleven of the Finger Lakes. This new approach will be interdisciplinary and focus on issues such as hydrogeochemistry, limnology, exotic species, and land use impacts.

- Professor John Halfman (Geoscience) and his students will analyze bacteria, nutrients, and chlorophyll-a concentrations. In addition, other parameters will be analyzed to determine if there is a correlation between water quality indicators and land use practices.
- Professor Tara Curtin (Geoscience) and her students will investigate the paleoclimatic record preserved in the sediments of Canandaigua and Keuka Lakes by collecting high-resolution seismic profiles of the sediments on the lake floor.
- Professor Jim Ryan (Biology) will investigate the consequences of several pharmaceutical and personal care products to determine long-range protective efforts for the Finger Lakes.

Sarah Meyer, Community Outreach Coordinator  
Finger Lakes Institute  
[fli.hws.edu](http://fli.hws.edu)

*We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.*

~Aldo Leopold



## The Finger Lakes Land Trust Expands Conservation Efforts

James and Gladys McConkey have donated a 168 acre conservation easement to the Finger Lakes Land Trust, resulting in the protection of rich farm and forestland within the Taughannock Creek Watershed, in the town of Enfield, Tompkins County. This property includes farmland, mature hardwood forests, several wetlands, and two tributaries to Taughannock Creek. "It is encouraging to see private landowners working with the Land Trust to protect agricultural land as well as other important natural features," says Tompkins County Planner Ed Marx. The McConkey gift is the 48th conservation easement acquired by the Land Trust and its second within the Taughannock Creek Watershed.

In the Western Finger Lakes region, representatives of the Land Trust and Ontario County have announced their intention to acquire 27 acres in Grimes Glen, a popular scenic gorge located in the town of Naples. The Glen's forests harbor an abundance of wildflowers and play an important role in maintaining water quality within the creek and Canandaigua Lake. The Finger Lakes Land Trust has secured a purchase option from landowner Don Braun and will assume lead responsibility for raising the funds needed to acquire the site. Once sufficient funds have been raised, the Land Trust will purchase the property and convey it to Ontario County as a gift and subject to a conservation easement.

Ontario County Executive Geoff Astles says "The Grimes Glen project is public/private cooperation at its finest, made possible by the public spirit of Mr. Braun and the support of the Finger Lakes Land Trust for the benefit of all."

For additional information, contact the Finger lakes Land Trust at (607) 275-9487.

Andrew Zepp, Executive Director, Finger Lakes Land Trust  
[www.fllt.org](http://www.fllt.org)

# Progress Report: Finger Lakes Water Resources, Agriculture and Open Lands Conservation Project's Municipal Outreach Program

## Town of Fleming

In 2004, the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board (CNY RPDB) and the Cayuga County Planning Department (CCPD) staff helped Fleming's planning board identify critical areas in need of protection. The planning board received aerial photos and maps that identified wetlands, floodplains, and soils that are suitable for basements and septic systems for specific areas in the town.



In 2005, the planning board requested additional technical assistance from the CNY RPDB for an area near Vaness Brook. The CNY RPDB provided maps of the topographic contours, wetlands, floodplains, and soils that are used to help the planning board determine the environmentally sensitive areas in need of special attention and consideration during the site plan review process. The CNY RPDB will continue to assist the Town as needed.

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## Emerson Park, Auburn

This is the location of the 1st and 2nd Annual Owasco Lake Watershed Symposiums. These fall mini-conferences are intended to bring local elected and appointed officials, agencies and organizations and concerned citizens together to discuss watershed issues and projects being conducted in the area. The 2nd Annual Symposium will be held on October 18, 2005 from 5:30 - 8:30 PM. Call Kristy LaManche at (315) 422-8276 for more information.



## Town of Owasco

In 2004, the CNY RPDB reviewed Owasco's Comprehensive Plan and suggested steps for implementing the Plan's recommendations to strengthen environmental protection and improve the quality of life in Owasco. The CNY RPDB and IAGT also assisted with the preliminary review of a proposed 300+ lot subdivision and identified ways to minimize the potential adverse



impacts of the development on the Town's water quality, infrastructure, and aesthetics. The planning board received maps that identified wetlands, floodplains, contours, aerial photography, tax parcels, and soils suitable for basements and septic systems. The CNY RPDB also helped the town identify potential funding sources for a sewer/water facilities study and recreation projects. The CNY RPDB continues to assist town officials as requested.



## Town of Scipio

In 2005, staff from the CNY RPDB, CCPD, and the Institute for the Application of Geospatial Technology (IAGT) met with the Scipio planning board to discuss changing land uses, development, and environmental degradation. The CNY RPDB, CCPD, and IAGT staff are available to assist the town as needed.



## Town of Niles

Staff from the CNY RPDB and CCPD met with members of the Town of Niles planning board in 2005 to discuss the Finger Lakes Project's goals and available services. The CNY RPDB and CCPD look forward to assisting the town in the future, as they are faced with difficult land use and development issues.

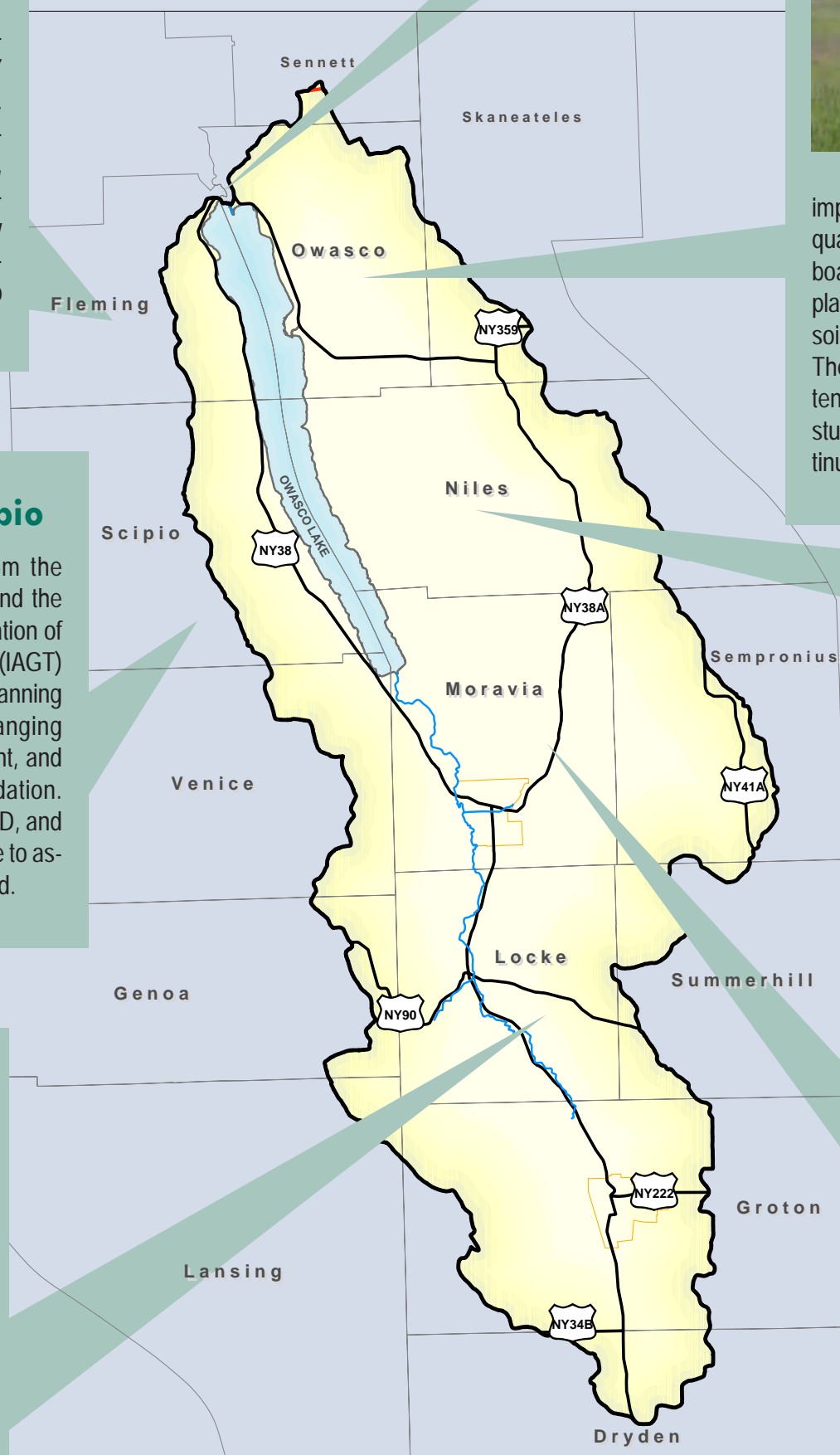


## Town of Moravia

The CNY RPDB staff reviewed the town's local laws and master plan to determine ways to help its planning board minimize the impacts of growth and new development in Moravia. In 2005, staff met with officials from the planning board to discuss land use and



environmental concerns and the tools and techniques that can be implemented to protect water quality, open lands, and agriculture throughout the Town of Moravia.



## Town of Locke

In 2005, the CNY RPDB began working with the Town of Locke planning board to finalize their Comprehensive Local Property Maintenance Law. In addition, the Town is seeking suggestions from the CNY RPDB to improve their Long-Term Plan to address development and conservation issues. The CNY RPDB is



also reviewing the Town's current land use controls and suggesting revisions to make them coincide with the Long-Term Plan. The CNY RPDB will continue to provide assistance to Locke officials.



## Congressman Walsh Plays Major Role in the Protection of the Finger Lakes

Congressman James T. Walsh was the catalyst for the creation of the Finger Lakes Water Resources, Agriculture and Open Lands Conservation Project, begun in 2002. Due to the Congressman's involvement in the project and his standing in Congress, he has been able to earmark federal money through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board, Cayuga County Planning Department and the Institute for the Application of Geospatial Technology to develop a program for addressing water quality degradation, the loss of scenic views and agricultural lands, changes in land use, and other issues that threaten the rural character and quality of the Finger Lakes region. Despite congressional committee appointment changes and a realignment of the congressional districts, Congressman Walsh was able to secure additional funding for collaboration with the Genesee - Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council and continuation of the project until 2009.

been a key participant in several of the project's meetings. For example, at the 1st Annual Owasco Lake Watershed Symposium Congressman Walsh participated in a panel discussion of issues relating to the lake and its watershed. "We need to work together, using the Skaneateles Lake Watershed Protection Plan as a model, to develop best management practices and whole farm plans to reduce erosion and sediment loading to our waterways," stated Congressman Walsh. He also encouraged lakefront homeowners to "inspect and monitor their septic systems more closely in order to minimize excessive nutrient loading into the watersheds throughout the Finger Lakes region."

Congressman Walsh and his staff have provided the project team with insight and advice throughout the stages of project planning and implementation. We look forward to continuing our partnership with the Congressman and would like to extend our sincerest thanks to him for his continued support of, and enthusiasm for, the Finger Lakes Project.



## What Services Are Available to You and Your Community?

- Community planning and development assistance
- Community visioning and public participation programs
- Comprehensive plan creation and updating
- Digital and paper mapping services
- Federal, state, and local funding assistance
- GIS information and data analysis and interpretation
- Grant writing assistance
- Intermunicipal and watershed-wide planning coordination
- Land use analysis and recommendations
- Land use control update assistance
- Natural resource identification and protection planning
- Open space preservation planning
- Other services based on community needs

### For More Information or to Get Involved...

**Contact:**  
 Kristy LaManche, Environmental Planner, Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board  
 (315) 422-8276 [klamanche@cnyrpdb.org](mailto:klamanche@cnyrpdb.org)  
 Amy D'Angelo, Planner, Cayuga County Planning Department  
 (315) 253-1276 [adangelo@co.cayuga.ny.us](mailto:adangelo@co.cayuga.ny.us)

Visit the project web site for more information: [www.cnyrpdb.org/](http://www.cnyrpdb.org/)

In addition to providing financial support, Congressman Walsh has