Cayuga Lake is not forever. We need to protect it better.

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Sustainability Perspectives
Wells College, Aurora NY

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Cayuga Lake Watershed Network
Mission Statement
The Cayuga Lake Watershed Network identifies key threats to Cayuga Lake and its watershed, and it advocates for solutions that support a healthy environment and vibrant communities.
It takes a Network to protect a watershed.

What is a Network?

What is a watershed?
Network: everyone who cares about and wants to protect the lake and creeks and water quality.

Who is “everyone”?

Well, you of course.

And community groups – church groups, Scouts, schools, environmental groups.

And government agencies and government itself.

And businesses.

And farms.

And people who live along the lake.
The Cayuga Lake Watershed is.....
......all the land that drains to the lake.
PLUS the streams, creeks and lake.
870 square miles of land, creeks and lake.
The Oswego River/Finger Lakes drainage basin.....
(Karl Musser, USGS)
The big picture:
The Finger Lakes & Lake Ontario
It’s a challenge to unify a watershed that includes:

• Three counties on the lakeshore - six total.  
  • 45 municipalities.
• Numerous regional, state and federal agencies.
Municipal and county boundaries.
Lake and creek waters are used for:

• Drinking water
• Farming, wine-making, cheeses, beers, liquors
  • Recreation
  • Industrial and waste-water treatment
  • Home and business uses
  • Natural habitat for critters and plants
  • More!

We all share and benefit from the lake and creeks.
We all need to share the responsibility of protecting this common resource.
What are the main problems facing Cayuga Lake and its creeks?
Top threats 2016
Based on 302 respondents to an online survey, which included Professor O’Leary’s class last winter.

In your opinion, which are the pollutants that most affect Cayuga Lake? Please select up to four. (302 respondents)

1 - Fertilizers, including phosphorus and nitrogen. 77% of all respondents.

2 - Invasive species - pests, weeds, exotic species, such as hydrilla, zebra mussels. 71% of all respondents.

3 - Pesticides, used in farms, homes and gardens, and on roadsides. 64%.

4 - Sediment, including soil, sand and gravel. 44%.

5 - Salts, such as the de-icer and brine used on roads in the winter; and from other sources. 39%.
6 - Pharmaceuticals and personal care products, such as drugs, caffeine, microbeads. 27%.

7 - Heavy metals, such as zinc and copper; metals from road runoff, coal storage and combustion waste, other sources. 27%.

8 - Organic compounds, such as petroleum products; from pavement runoff, other sources. 26%.

9 - Pathogens – disease-carrying microorganisms, such as coliform bacteria, fungi and viruses. 16%.

10 – Warm water. 9%.
What can be done to solve these problems?

TOP #1 ANSWER: WORK TOGETHER. ACROSS THOSE county and town boundaries.
Please choose the top five actions that could most effectively protect or restore the watershed. (302 respondents)

1 - Improving farming practices to reduce runoff and erosion. 75% of all 302 respondents.

2 - Improving protection of wetlands and riparian corridors/buffers (land along the lake, creeks and streams). 65%.

3 - Improving stormwater management and erosion control. 62%.

4 - Improving control of invasive species. 51%.

5 - Fostering stewardship through education and citizen engagement. 44%.
6 - Improving communications, collaboration and partnerships across municipal and agency boundaries. 42%.

7 - Improving private wastewater systems (septic systems). 39%.

8 - Improving public wastewater systems management. 38%.

9 - Providing lawn care education to reduce erosion and lawn chemicals runoff. 27%.

10 - Improving forestry management. 10%.
Crossing all the boundaries is the Cayuga Lake Watershed Restoration & Protection Plan.

Being updated right now.
2016 Update
Cayuga Lake Watershed Restoration and Protection Plan

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Water Quality Status
Water Quality Issues
Geographic Areas of Concern
Action Categories for Watershed Protection
with Strategies, Recommendations, and Management Options.

Public participation
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