

# LAKEWATCH

SPRING 2024



## IN THIS EDITION:

Hemlock Health in the Seneca Lake Watershed - 1

Leap into the Lake! Photo Contest - 4

Padua Mine Gravel Pit Expansion - 5

Seneca Lake Wine Trail Wine & Experience Auction - 7

Do you know of an SNPR Project? - 8

CELEBRATE Seneca Gala Save the Date - 10

Education & Outreach - 11

NYS Lake Level Study - 13

In Memoriam - 15

Board of Directors - 17

## HEMLOCK WOOLLY ADELGID THREATENS SENECA LAKE WATERSHED

BY JIM MCGINNIS

**More broadly**, Hemlocks are being attacked from Georgia to Maine resulting in the defoliation and eventual death of these trees. The Pure Waters Invasive Species Committee sponsored an illuminating webinar last month on the invasive insect Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA). The speaker is an expert on the management of these invasives. Caroline (Carri) Marschner is a member of the NYS Hemlock Initiative (NYSHI) in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY. She provided a wide-ranging presentation on the details of the HWA, its introduction in the United States, location, life cycle, tips for identifying hemlocks and current HWA infestations. Her talk concluded with a potential path forward for management of HWA in our watershed.

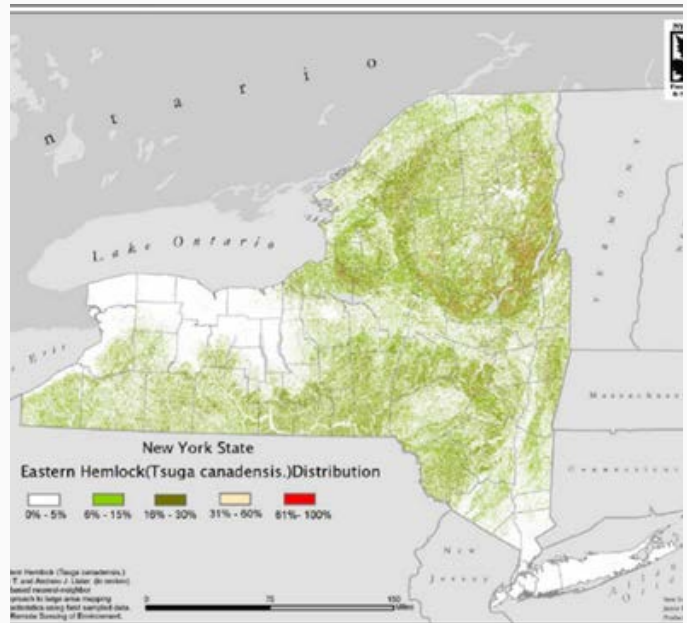


Hemlocks are valuable to our watershed because they reduce erosion and filter nutrients in storm runoff. They can live 500 years and grow to 70 to 100 feet. In large stands of trees, they provide dense shade to cool streams and improve the environment for fish in streams. They are adapted to shade and thus grow well in the gorges of the Finger Lakes region.

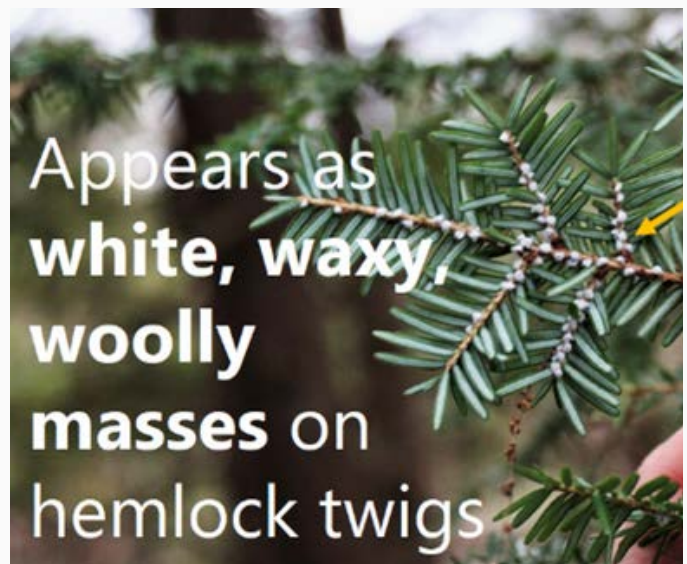
### HWA Background

Carri provided an excellent overview of the history of the HWA in the United States and the extent of the infestation. HWA came into New York in the 1980's with no natural predators and continues to spread to this day. They appear as white woolly masses on the underside of branches at the base of the needles. Interestingly, HWA are all females and have two generations per year. This information is critical to making identification and in treatment.

HWA Treatment Methods consist of chemical treatment with dinotefuran (short term) imidacloprid (longer term) that in most cases must be applied by trained personnel. The cost for treatment is typically \$200 per tree and lasts from one to several years.

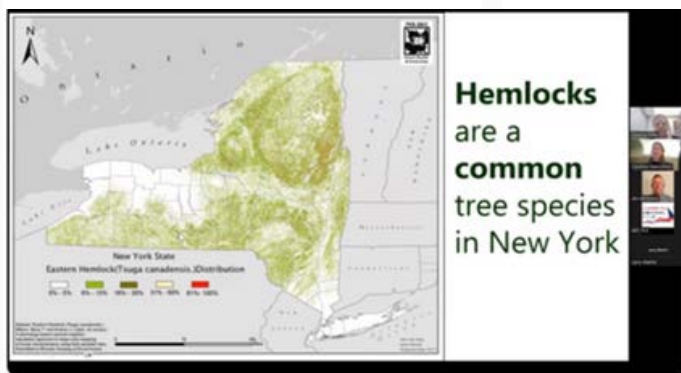


Eastern Hemlock distribution in New York State





HWA infestations are easily recognizable by the appearance of tiny “cotton balls” at the base of hemlock needles



Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Webinar with Caroline Marschner

**WATCH THE WEBINAR HERE!**



Control of HWA in the longer term can be achieved through the introduction of biocontrols or predators that feed on the HWA or their eggs. This activity was started in 2009 at Glenora and Watkins Glen and has resulted in permanent populations of the beetles in our watershed. The biocontrols are a research activity of New York State Hemlock Initiative (and several other organizations) and continue to evolve in the ability to manage the HWA in the Hemlock population. The goal is to conserve the Hemlock forests in the short term and achieve a stable Hemlock population in the long term.

### **Seneca Lake Pure Waters Association Potential Path Forward**

In summary, Carri presented a path forward consisting of 3 stages: Survey and Plan, Hemlock Conservation (chemical treatment) and Biocontrols. We would like to thank Carri for her time and inspiration for our organization. If you would like to participate in our efforts to address the HWA please contact [Emily DeBolt](#) or [Jim McGinnis](#) with the Invasive Species Committee.



**WINNER!**

# LEAP INTO THE LAKE! PHOTO CONTEST

We had a tough time choosing a winner of the **Pure Waters Leap Day Photo Contest**. After much back and forth, we landed on this fantastic photo submitted by Kate Johnson of her grandchildren jumping into Seneca Lake this past summer!

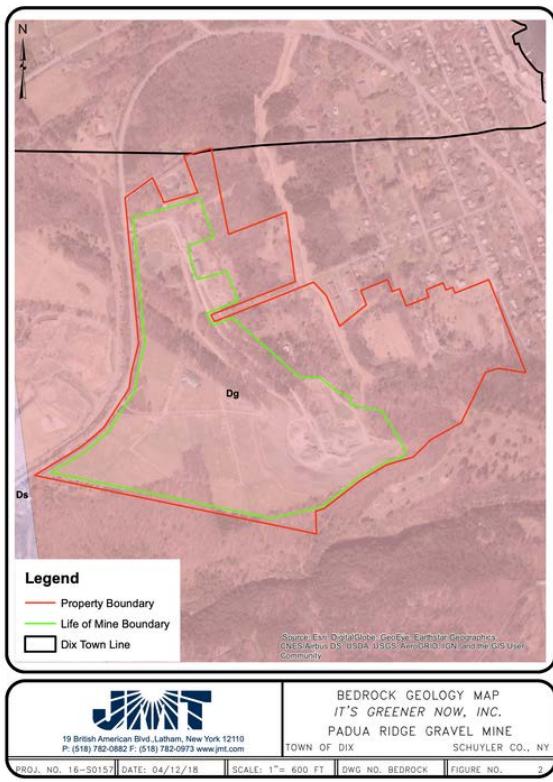
Thanks to all who submitted photos - we can't wait to see you all out on the lake this summer! Honorable mention goes to Barbara Oddi Davie's 'Seneca Lake Christmas Eve 2023 polar plunge!' (top right) and to Allyson Guild's 'Family at Sunset' (top left)

# SENECA LAKE PURE WATERS PROVIDES PADUA GRAVEL PIT PUBLIC COMMENTS

BY BILL ROEGE



The Padua Gravel Pit was the topic of a legislative public comment hearing in February



**In January**, the New York Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) released a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for public comment concerning a proposed expansion of an existing gravel mining operation adjacent to Watkins Glen State Park. A virtual and in person session were held on February 12th and 13th with written comments due by February 28, 2024.

The action took local officials and residents by surprise as they were unaware the DEIS was in the works. Obviously, the proposal has caused a lot of concern with local residents and officials.

Pure Waters had a representative at the virtual meeting. Board member and SNPR lead Ron Klinczar reviewed the DEIS document and drafted comments for the organization. These comments were submitted before the February 28th deadline. You can read the comments submitted by Ron Klinczar on behalf of Pure Waters [HERE](#).

Pure Waters is primarily concerned with potential impacts on water quality. Most water quality issues would stem from storm water events, where water either overflows or mixes with ground water. Pure Waters provided a few suggestions (comments) that would mitigate these risks as well as ensure that the pace of operations does not increase over time.

Pure Waters, along with many others, asked for an extension to the public comment period to provide the public more time to understand the document and provide meaningful input. (The DEC has already announced an extension.) Pure Waters will continue to monitor the situation and provide input strongly encouraging DEC to ensure the operation has no adverse impact on water quality.



Do you Follow us on Social Media?



Stay up to date with Pure Waters on Facebook, Instagram and Youtube!

# MARK YOUR CALENDARS!



SENECA LAKE  
**wine**  
& EXPERIENCE AUCTION

From library and collector wines to incredible, one-of-a-kind experiences, the 2nd Annual Seneca Lake Wine and Experience Auction has it all!

*Bidding open March 22 - March 24*

A portion of proceeds will be shared with Seneca Lake Pure Waters Association

> [CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE](#) <

*We hope you'll join us!*

WE'RE THRILLED THAT THE [SENECA LAKE WINE TRAIL](#) HAS CHOSEN PURE WATERS AS THEIR CHARITY PARTNER FOR THE 2024 SENECA LAKE WINE & EXPERIENCE AUCTION!

PREVIEW THE ITEMS [HERE!](#)



# DO YOU KNOW OF A LANDSIDE PROJECT THAT NEEDS A JUMP START?

BY RON KLINCZAR

**Seneca Lake Pure Waters** SNPR has had a third season of success assisting in the implementation of projects to reduce sediments, nutrients, and pollutants that enter Seneca Lake from within the watershed. This has included providing funding for both Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and our Seneca Watershed Intermunicipal Organization (SWIO).

Projects we have supported through the generosity of our donors and members have included Water and Sediment Control Basins (WaSCoBs), Ditch Stabilization measures, and Cover Crop planting. Together, we have now funded twelve projects that will contribute to the improvement of our watershed quality.

Many times, projects cannot get started because there is a need for early “concept” engineering to take place. This engineering costs money, which property owners are not likely to be able to invest in. This concept engineering is necessary to prove that the problem can be solved by the investment of infrastructure dollars.

## Article Keywords:

**SNPR:** the wing of Seneca Lake Pure Waters Association known as the *Sediment, Nutrient, and Pollution Reduction Program*. This team is responsible for taking actions to reduce pollutant discharges into Seneca Lake through project action.

**Soil and Water Conservation Districts:** These are county agencies that are responsible for the protection of land and water natural resources. Each county has a SWCD.

**SWIO:** The organization that consists of counties and municipalities surrounding our watershed that work together to maintain our lake waters.





Pure Waters is currently partnering with Seneca County SWCD on a project in Lodi, NY. A new water and sediment control basin is being installed with an underground outlet that will capture and convey water to a basin. Projects like these make farmland more adaptive and resilient to the increased storm events we keep having.

If you know of a problem related to soil erosion that might be corrected by a project, you can contact Pure Waters and we can assist you. Sometimes a problem is spotted and there is not an apparent solution, and that is where our team can guide you as to courses of action. We can make the proper contacts with your SWCD to obtain their feedback and thoughts on action. Here are types of problems that would be of interest to us and to the Districts:

- A ditch which erodes on a regular basis, carrying soil downstream
- Embankments which are losing soil into adjacent waterways on a regular basis
- Crop Fields that are losing valuable topsoil
- Walls or other retaining structures that are failing, causing soil to slide into streams.



Workers install a culvert at Tommy Creek in Lodi



A local embankment loses soil to a waterway

There are other problems that may be related. We are pleased to be able to speak with you if necessary. Contact us at [info@senecalake.org](mailto:info@senecalake.org).



CELEBRATE  
*Seneca*

GALA & AUCTION

SAVE THE DATE

THURSDAY **25** JULY  
2024

Watkins Glen Harbor Hotel  
**DETAILS TO COME!**



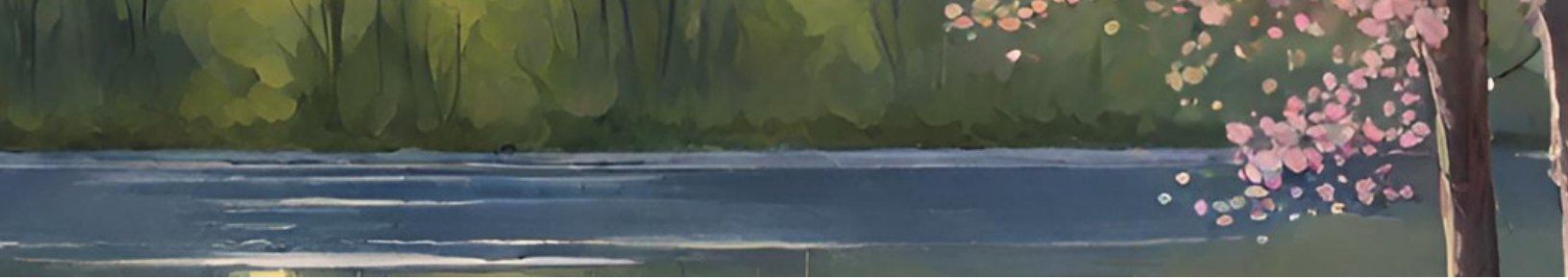
Seneca Lake **PURE WATERS** Association

## DID YOU KNOW?

ON AIR

Each month, Seneca Pure Waters joins Ted Baker on the **FLX Morning Podcast** to discuss current topics regarding Seneca Lake water quality. Check out Ted's most recent interview with Pure Waters Association Director, Emily DeBolt and Executive Director of the Seneca Lake Wine Trail, Brittany Gibson [HERE!](#)





# Education & Outreach Happenings

BY EMILY DEBOLT

**Well, I can't believe it is already March!** We have been so busy here at Pure Waters that the summer will be here before we know it. This time of year we are hard at work planning lots of great programs and events for this upcoming year.

At the end of January I attended the Finger Lakes Research Conference at Hobart and William Smith. While the whole Finger Lakes Region is covered, we were lucky this year with multiple great presentations addressing Seneca Lake. We are hoping to bring one of these exciting presentations to our Annual Meeting for our members - so stay tuned!

The following month in February I had the chance to attend a Soil Health Workshop. A very different audience at this event than January's - and another very interesting day of learning. Yes - Pure Waters puts on our own Educational Events for our members - but we are constantly learning ourselves as well so we can pass along all that we learn to our members!



At the end of last month Pure Waters was a sponsor and attended the Soil Health Workshop held over at the Benton Fire Hall in Penn Yan. The room was packed with farmers learning about soil health best management practices, drainage tile, cover crops, manure regulations, and much more.

SENECA LAKE ORDER of BREWERS

**SPRING Fling**

SATURDAY, APRIL 27  
1PM - 5PM  
BEER, FOOD & LIVE MUSIC

BIG aLICE BREWING  
FINGER LAKES  
4180 NY-14, GENEVA, NY

PRIZE RAFFLE TO BENEFIT

Seneca Lake PURE WATERS Association



Volunteers pull submerged aquatic vegetation up from the lake bottom to survey as part of the FL PRISM's Macrophyte Survey Program.



The Hemlock Conservation webinar already discussed at the beginning of this issue is just the beginning of our invasive species efforts for this year. The Pure Waters Invasive Species Committee is working on some ideas for activities during New York State's Invasive Species Awareness Week held each summer in early June.

We are also going to be working to recruit some additional volunteers for the [Finger Lakes PRISM's Macrophyte Survey Program](#) for this summer as well. So if you are interested in learning more about the plants found in Seneca Lake - stay tuned for more information soon!

Coming up at the end of May will be the 60th anniversary of the [National Lake Trout Derby](#) on Seneca Lake. This will be our 3rd year of participating in the Trout Derby at the Stivers and Watkins Glen weigh stations to support the Lake Trout Derby along with our partner Finger Lakes Institute. FLI and Pure Waters will be onsite collecting flesh samples for mercury and PFAS testing, as well as stomachs for food chain analysis.

Speaking of the fishery, we are also working to schedule a program this spring with DEC Fisheries staff for an update about the Seneca Lake fishery for our members.

If there is another topic you are interested in learning more about - reach out and let me know. Chances are if you are interested - you aren't the only one!

# NY Task Force Completes Study of Lake Water Level and Oswego River Basin Flood Mitigation

BY TIM JOHNSON

**Concerns about Seneca Lake** water levels consistently emerge as an issue to members of the SLPWA. In 2011, 2014, and 2021 there were periods when the lake level increased between one and two feet within about a week. In early-November 2021 the lake level exceeded the “minor flooding” stage for the first time in more than 25 years. Flooding can be costly. The Upstate Flood Mitigation Task Force [estimates](#) flood damage in the four counties surrounding Seneca Lake to total around \$3.3 million per year. Many docks on the lake were damaged in the 2021 event.



A flooded dock on Seneca Lake in 2021

Controlling the level of Seneca Lake is challenging. Seneca Lake and nine other Finger Lakes drain into the Oswego River, which then empties into Lake Ontario. The drop from Seneca Lake to the Erie Canal is a respectable 63 feet over less than 10 miles, but the drop from there to the Oswego River is only 20 feet over more than 40 miles, and seven other lakes drain into this rather flat flood plain. Cayuga, Cross, Onondaga, and Oneida lakes are especially prone to flooding as they have very little drop to the river. Any excessive flow of water from the higher six lakes will have flooding consequences to these lakes. Further, there are only four control points (designated as “CS” in the figure), with three of them between Seneca and Cayuga lakes, and one between Cayuga and Cross lakes, and these control points are independently managed and not coordinated.




In July 2021 NY state reauthorized the Upstate Flood Mitigation Task Force to identify and recommend reasonable measures to reduce flooding along the New York Canal System. The task force completed its work one year later.

Recommendations most pertinent to Seneca Lake and SLPWA are:

- Consider using under-utilized storage in Seneca Lake during flooding events. Control levels for Seneca Lake are more than a foot below levels of flood damage on the lake. Flooding downstream from Seneca Lake can be mitigated by increasing Seneca Lake levels above the control level during these periods. Of course, in the case of extraordinary events (2011, 2014, 2021) this leaves little buffer for Seneca Lake. Of lesser consequence, consider extending the lower winter control levels from March into April or May.
- Consolidate flood management duties under a Flood Mitigation Standing Committee comprising water control entities, community stakeholders (lake associations), and government. Currently, there is no authoritative body to oversee the various control functions.
- Develop better tools, such as a watershed model that predicts lake and river responses to weather events. For example, during periods of high water saturation of the soil, the lake levels could be dropped when a heavy rainy period is forecasted.


Of these recommendations, perhaps the most potential for flood mitigation is the watershed model. To make an effective model, an accurate database of rainfall in the Seneca Lake Watershed is needed. For those interested in helping, the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail, & Snow Network (CoCoRaHS) has rain gauges for volunteers, and a reporting mechanism to help develop the database.



**HALFMAN  
AERIAL  
PHOTOS, LLC**

Aerial Photos by Drone  
Photos of Your  
House, Barn, Business,  
Construction Site,  
or Lake Access

**Portion Proceeds  
Donated to SLPWA**



Contact: John Halfman  
John.D.Halfman@gmail.com  
(315) 759-3997  
Rates: \$200/hr plus mileage  
FAA Certified

# *In Memoriam*

---

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all those who have chosen to honor their loved ones' memories through generous donations. Your thoughtful contributions not only commemorate the lives of those dear to you but also make a meaningful impact in our mission.



*Generous contributions have recently  
been made in memory of:*

Neil Chaffie

David Diehl

Donna Gelder

John Thomas

# LAKEWATCH

## ADVERTISING

To purchase a quarter page banner advertisement in the LAKEWATCH Newsletter, print this page and mail to Seneca Pure Waters

Distribution: 1700 contacts, four times per year  
Dimensions: 6.5" width x 2.25" height  
\$200

FIRST NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
LAST NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_  
BUSINESS \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY \_\_\_\_\_  
STATE \_\_\_\_\_  
ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to:

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

[CLICK HERE](#)  
[TO MAKE YOUR](#)  
[PAYMENT ONLINE!](#)

All of the funds raised by Seneca Pure Waters supports projects and programs that benefit the Seneca Lake watershed, the drinking water for residents, the economic value for business owners, and the quality of life for all who encounter it.



## Board of Directors:

### President:

**William Roege - Penn Yan**

### Vice President:

**Mark Petzold - Geneva**

### Treasurer:

**Jill Ritter - Geneva**

### Secretary:

**Ronald Klinczar - Hector**

**Steve Bromka - Romulus**

**Thomas Burrall - Geneva**

**Dan Corbett - Himrod**

**Kelly Coughlin - Geneva**

**Frank DiOrio - Himrod**

**Peggy Focarino - Penn Yan**

**Charles Fausold - Valois**

**Mark Gibson - Himrod**

**Timothy Johnson - Corning**

**Jim McGinnis - Watkins Glen**

**Lawrence Martin - Penn Yan**

**William McAdoo - Geneva**

**Stuart Messur - Geneva**

**Mark Swinnerton - Hector**

**Jody Tyler - Keuka Park**

**Jacob Welch - Himrod**

### Staff:

**Association Director**

**Emily DeBolt**

**Communications Coordinator**

**Deanna Fello**

## Become a Pure Waters Volunteer!

It takes many hands to build and manage Pure Waters' programs. It also takes many hands to manage our overall organization.

That's where your skills come in.

We need your help supporting our organization as we work to deliver on our mission to Preserve, Protect, and Promote Seneca Lake water quality.

No matter what skills you have,  
we can put them to good use!

**CLICK HERE to learn more about becoming a volunteer!**

## The Finger Lakes PRISM is Seeking Volunteers!

The Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA) is a destructive invasive insect that is threatening the eastern hemlock, one of our region's most important tree species. The FL PRISM HWA survey is a volunteer-based program that aims to prevent the spread of these tiny pests, and you can help!

Either survey on your own, or attend an upcoming hands-on workshop to learn directly from experts how to survey, identify, and report HWA!

**GET OUTDOORS THIS WINTER AND HELP THE FINGER LAKES PRISM PROTECT OUR HEMLOCKS!**



Scan or follow the link to view the schedule and sign up!



<https://forms.gle/ZpCZXUrBc5iCiAsS8>

Visit the Finger Lakes PRISM website for more information:  
[fingerlakesinvasives.org/invasive-survey/](https://fingerlakesinvasives.org/invasive-survey/)