

To the Chautauqua County Legislature  
Second Privilege of the Floor  
Wednesday, November 20, 2024

FINAL

Good evening.

I'm Jim Wehrfritz, 4433 Lakeside Drive, Bemus Point, NY, President of the Chautauqua Lake Property Owners Association, the CLPOA. The CLPOA is a 501c3 non-profit corporation supporting the interests of property and business owners and lake users in and near to Chautauqua Lake.

I wish to thank Legislators Chagnon, Proctor, Heiser, Gustafson, Vanstrom, Penhollow, and Scudder for sponsoring, the Planning & Economic Development Committee for endorsing, and the Legislature for approving Resolution No. 290-24 last month. A letter to Governor Hochul "Requesting Governor Hochul Delay the Implementation of the New Proposed NYSDEC Wetland Regulations Until All Issues Can Be Fully Understood and Addressed" followed.

The Chautauqua Lake and Watershed Management Alliance on whose board County Executive Wendell, Legislature Chairperson Chagnon, and Legislator Proctor sit, approved a resolution with identical wording last week. They are in good company. Our Congressman, State Senator, Assemblyman, and his recently elected replacement, all but one lakeside municipality boards, the CLPOA and the Chautauqua Lake Partnership, have publicly opposed the flawed, incomplete, and harmful regulations. Only the Chautauqua Conewango Consortium and the Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy support them. The Town of Chautauqua and the Chautauqua Lake Association have remained silent and are assumed to be supportive as well.

We hope the Governor will act prior to the regulations' planned implementation on January 1, 2025. In the meantime we'll be gathering resources and preparing for litigation to protect property and business owner and lake user interests when the NYSDEC begins enforcement of the regulations.

**Our request to you: attend "Wetlands" Public Meeting #6, Saturday, November 23, 9:30-11:00 am at The Lawson Center in Bemus Point, to learn more about how this will occur, what's being done about it, and how you can assist.**

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Changing gears and on a much more hopeful note...

Many Chautauqua Lake studies have been completed over the last 50 years. In fact, "Chautauqua Lake studies", typically lacking actionable recommendations, with

recommendations “watered down” to gain consensus, or with recommendations not fully implemented, are a recurring disappointment among year round and seasonal residents and lake users. However, we now have **two excellent opportunities** which could result in significant lake improvement and facilitate more well organized and appropriate County involvement, improving the lake and maintaining the County’ tax base to the benefit all in the County.

**First is the recently announced US Army Corps of Engineers “Chautauqua Lake Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Study”.** The Corps’ project experience and approach, with a clear focus on actionable recommendations, differentiates it from the many other studies which have been and are being conducted on the Lake. We’re guardedly optimistic. As such we see this Corps study as truly the **“Last and Best Hope for Chautauqua Lake”**, a study which must be effectively supported by the County.

In last month’s Legislature meeting and in a subsequent letter to the Legislature Chairperson and County Executive, we identified five requests of the County necessary for a successful Army Corps of Engineers result. We’re awaiting responses to our requests to meet with Mr. Chagnon and Mr. Wendell to discuss. In support of one the requests, the CLPOA developed and provided the Corps a list of 65 previous Chautauqua Lake studies.

Second, at the urging of the NYSDEC and the Chautauqua Lake Partnership, the Chautauqua Lake and Watershed Management Alliance, in early 2023, funded the development of the **“Long Term Management Plan for Submersed Aquatic Vegetation at Chautauqua Lake.”** The was completed and issued by the North Carolina State University Aquatic Plant Management Team and Dr. Rob Richardson highly-respected leaderS in lake management, in June 2024. It is professional, complete, with a balanced science and technology-base, and of a quality never seen before on our Lake.

Credit for the Plan’s concept and proposal goes to the Chautauqua Lake Partnership and to the Alliance which funded it. The CLPOA claims no credit for it but is committed to its use on behalf of property and business owners and lake users.

**Our request to you: familiarize yourself with the Plan on the Chautauqua Lake Partnership or Alliance website, consider its adoption, and encourage the Alliance and the nine lakeside municipalities to do the same.**

Thank you for your consideration.