



2020 Annual Report

Tompkins County Water Resources Council

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<http://tompkinscounty.ny.gov/committees/wrc>

Introduction to the Water Resources Council

The Tompkins County Water Resources Council (WRC) advises the Tompkins County Legislature on matters related to water resources management and planning. The Council is also charged with identifying problems, proposing priorities, and promoting the coordination of activities in the management and protection of the County's water resources.

The WRC provides a public forum for local communities and stakeholder groups to address and discuss their concerns regarding water resources. It is the intent of the group to coordinate the water resources-related efforts of local governments, public and private institutions, and agencies and organizations throughout Tompkins County.

Frequently Asked Questions

The public is welcome to attend WRC meetings, which take place the third Monday of the month at 4:15pm with the exception of federal holidays. Tompkins County residents are invited to apply to become voting members.

WRC membership consists of 21 voting members appointed by the Tompkins County Legislature. These members represent various water-related interests and serve on a number of standing and special committees. There are also seats for non-voting ex-officio and associate members.

For more information, visit

2020 Members List

Chair

Cynthia Brock, Municipal Government

1st and 2nd Vice Chairs

Frank Proto, At-Large

Liz Cameron, TC Environmental Health

Voting Members

Sharon Anderson, CCETC

A. Fay Benson, Agriculture

Amanda Champion, Co. Government

Barry Goodrich, Watershed Organization

Ed Gottlieb, At-Large

Michelle Henry, EMC Representative

Marina Howarth, At-Large

Kristen Hychka, Municipal Government

Emelia "Mia" Jumbo, At-Large

Darby Kiley, TCDPS

Lynn Leopold, Municipal Government

Jon Negley, TCSWCD

Brian Rahm, Environment

Steve Riddle, Water Purveyor

Elizabeth Thomas, At-Large

Linda Wagenet, At-Large

Associate Members

Mara Alper

Anthony Arce

Annie Bastoni

Chris Bordlemay Padilla

Roxanna Johnston

Jose Lozano

Niamh O'Leary

Steve Penningroth

Elaine Quaroni

Marjory Rinaldo-Lee

Joanne Trutko

Tom Vawter

Executive Committee

Members: Cynthia Brock (Chair), Elizabeth Cameron (Second Vice Chair), Barry Goodrich, Frank Proto (First Vice Chair)

In 2020 the Executive Committee wrote several letters in support of WRC committee goals and objectives, as well as letters of support to County, State and Federal authorities.

In January, to further the work of the Water Withdrawals Committee and its objective to gather information about water withdrawal permit requests, the Executive Committee wrote to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation as well as the Susquehanna River Basin Committee, requesting that "notification of all major and minor water-withdrawal permit applications or modifications of an existing permit in Tompkins County, NY be sent to the Chair of the WRC via the TC Department of Planning and Sustainability."

In July, the Executive Committee wrote to the NYS Department of Health expressing its support for a statewide municipal wastewater coronavirus surveillance system. By tracking the levels of coronavirus RNA in New York's municipal wastewater, the committee argued, a surveillance system may be able to provide advanced warning of increasing coronavirus transmission in densely populated areas and subsequent surges in confirmed cases and hospitalizations. Conversely, a wastewater surveillance system may also help localities identify areas where the virus is waning or absent.

In September, the Executive Committee authorized a letter requesting the reinstatement of financial support to the greatest extent practicable for the Community Science Institute's (CSI) stream monitoring program. The WRC is charged with identifying problems, proposing priorities, and promoting the coordination of activities in the management and protection of the County's water resources. The services provided to the County by CSI are integral to the furtherance of our work.

2020 Presentations

Meetings often include presentations by guest speakers, as well as by WRC members. The following talks were given in 2020:

- Feb 24 – **Municipal Solutions for Flood Resilience**
– Jayme Thomann, Bergmann Associates
- May 18 – **Update: Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization**
– Elizabeth Thomas, WRC member
- July 20 – **SPDES MS4 Permit Annual Report**
– Angel Hinickle, TC Soil & Water Conservation District
- Oct. 19 – **Cargill's Clean Water Act Settlement: Reducing Salt Discharges to Cayuga Lake**
– John Dennis and Brian Eden, Cayuga Lake Environmental Action Now
- Nov. 16 – **Soil Health Educational Brochure**
– A. Fay Benson and Joseph Amsili, WRC Soil Health Committee
- Dec. 21 – **Summary of Owasco Lake Watershed Rules & Regulations Process**
– Steve Lynch, Cayuga County Department of Planning and Economic Development

2020 Resolutions

In 2020, the Water Resources Council passed two resolutions of support:

Resolution 2020-01: Approving a county water resource coordinator job description with the understanding that the description may be revised in the future to meet the contemporaneous water resource needs of Tompkins County.

Resolution 2020-02: Supporting the adoption of the revised Owasco Lake Watershed Rules & Regulations

Nominating & Membership Committee

Members: Jon Negley (Chair), Chris Bordlemay Padilla, Liz Thomas and Linda Wagenet

2020 Accomplishments

- Reviewed applications for voting and associate membership and presented recommendations to the full Water Resources. The recommendations for filling the voting seats went to the Council for approval then to the Tompkins County Planning, Energy, and Environmental Quality Committee and the Tompkins County Legislature for consideration and approval.
- Presented the 2021 slate of officers for nomination to the full WRC.

Soil Health Committee



2020 Accomplishments

- Completed [educational brochure](#) for farming community on improving soil health and water quality in the Cayuga Lake Watershed.

Members: A. Fay Benson (chair), Joseph Amsili, Barry Goodrich, Emelia "Mia" Jumbo, Jon Negley



Harmful Algal Blooms Committee

Members: Darby Kiley (chair), Sharon Anderson, Liz Cameron, Amanda Champion, Marina Howarth, Roxanna Johnston, Hilary Lambert, Nate Launer, Cedric Mason, Jon Negley, Steve Penningroth, Brian Rahm, Stephanie Redmond, Marcus Riehl, Liz Thomas

2020 Accomplishments

- Continued to meet the WQS action of establishing a regular meeting of groups working on HABs, added members of CLEAN to the committee.
- Shared information about HABs monitoring and outreach.
- Developed a list of about 20 actions, shared the list at the September WRC meeting, continued to revise actions list by considering timing, lead, and level of effort.

Monitoring Partnership Committee

Members: Roxy Johnston (chair), Michelle Henry, Marina Howarth, Darby Kiley, Jose Lozano, John Mawdsley, Niamh O'Leary, Steve Penningroth, Elaine Quaroni, Tom Vawter, and Linda Wagenet

2020 Accomplishments

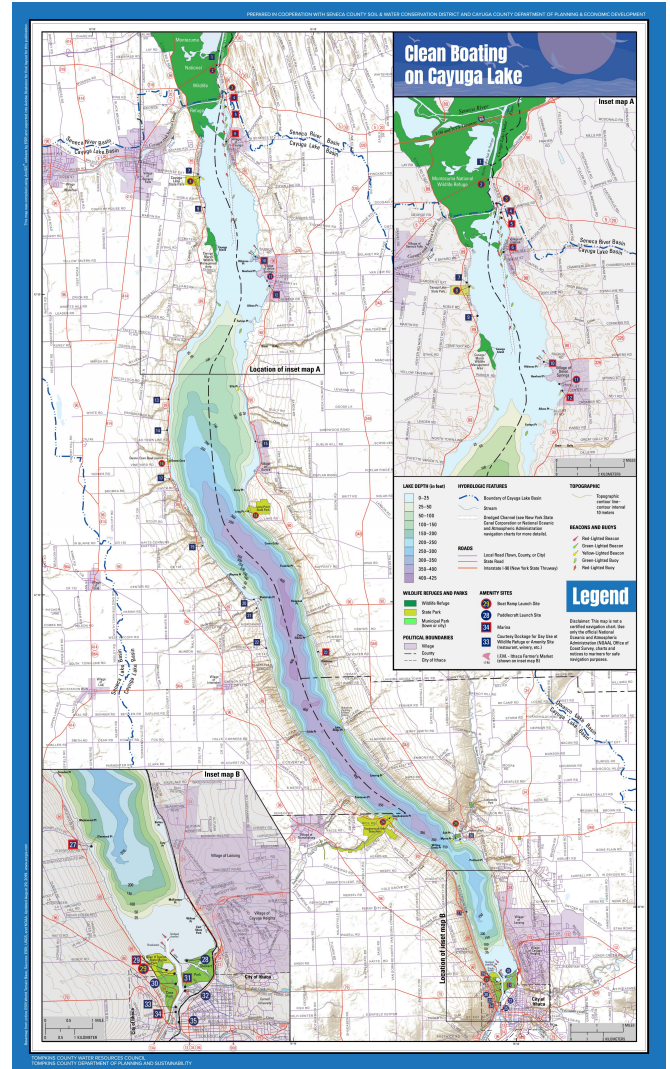
- Published [paper in open-source journal "Water" highlighting Dave Boudin's research](#) on soluble reactive phosphorous levels in Fall Creek and Cayuga Lake tributaries and implications for watershed management and monitoring.
- Submitted comments on Cornell University's lake source cooling new permit.
- Provide monthly venue to engage with NYS Department of Environmental Conservation on TMDL (total daily maximum load) status and Harmful Algal Blooms Action Plan topics.

Education & Outreach Committee

Members: Lynn Leopold (chair), Michelle Henry, Brian Rahm, Joanne Trutko

2020 Accomplishments

- Coordinated the design, printing, and distribution of the [Clean Boating guide to Cayuga Lake](#), (includes a detailed map of the lake; boating amenities around the lake that can help boaters dispose of waste; find fuel and launch sites; information on best management practices for boaters that will protect lake water quality; a basic guide to invasive species that threaten the lake and how to identify and report them.





Watershed Rules and Regulations Committee

Members: Roxanna Johnston (Chair), Annie Bastoni, Chris Bordlemay Padilla, Liz Cameron, Amanda Champion, Jon Negley, Brian Rahm, Steve Riddle, Liz Thomas

2020 Accomplishments

- In collaboration with the Cayuga Lake Intermunicipal Organization (IO), discussions held with Bolton Point, City of Ithaca, Cornell University, Tompkins County Departments of Health and Planning & Sustainability, Cayuga County Departments of Health and Planning.
- WRC heard an update on the Owasco Lake WRRs that were passed by the Town of Owasco and City of Auburn (and sent to NYS for review/approval).

Municipal Training Committee

Members: Kristen Hychka (Chair), Sharon Anderson, Annie Bastoni, Michelle Henry, Darby Kiley

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the committee was unable to hold any in-person workshops. However, the members collaborated virtually on plans to host a site visit-style training that will be held in 2021.