



## 2025 Annual Report

Presented at the May Member Meeting

May 14, 2026



*"Water is the driving force of all nature."*

*-Leonardo da Vinci*

# May Member Meeting Agenda

May 14, 2026 at 4:30 P.M.

*The Lawson Center, 73 Lakeside Drive, Bemus Point, NY 14712 & via Zoom*

- a. Call to Order
- b. Approval of May 2025 Annual Member Meeting Minutes
- c. Secretary’s Report on Notification and Quorum
- d. Presentation of 2025 Annual Report
- e. Member Comments
- f. Adjourn

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## Origin of an Alliance

The Chautauqua Lake & Watershed Management Alliance (Alliance) evolved from the Chautauqua Lake Management Commission (CLMC) in late 2014. Since its inception in 2005 and pursuant to its core mission, the CLMC was a major contributor to the development of the *Chautauqua Lake Watershed Management Plan* and initiated work on the *Chautauqua Lake Macrophyte Management Strategy (MMS)*, which sets forth specific recommendations for the proper management of our precious natural resources. The CLMC was an advisory committee to the Chautauqua County Legislature and having accomplished its core mission, it was determined that the CLMC would sunset in 2014 in order to evolve into a new Alliance.

The Alliance framework was developed through a series of stakeholder meetings, significant research, and forward-thinking innovation. The Alliance is a non-profit 501(c)3 charitable organization and was established in order to secure funding to implement the recommendations contained within Chautauqua Lake and watershed guidance documents. The Alliance also aims to strengthen existing relationships among Member organizations engaged in important lake and watershed activities, and to promote a comprehensive and coordinated effort to ensure the sustained health, ecology, and uses of Chautauqua Lake and its watershed.

Our Mission is as follows: The Chautauqua Lake & Watershed Management Alliance, working in collaboration with lake and watershed-related organizations, municipalities and other stakeholders, will promote and facilitate implementation of recommendations from the *Chautauqua Lake Watershed Management Plan* and the *Chautauqua Lake Macrophyte Management Strategy* by prioritizing projects, securing funding and allocating resources.

The Alliance is honored to be comprised of Member organizations that understand the incredible asset Chautauqua Lake and its watershed are to the County and the entire region, and we are proud to have partnered with each of the nine Lake municipalities, the County, and numerous other Members to develop impactful projects, secure funding, manage implementation, and ensure project completion. By working in collaboration with as many stakeholders as possible, we deepen our collective focus, strength, and leveraging capabilities, for the benefit of Chautauqua Lake, its watershed, and ultimately our community. The Alliance would like to thank everyone – our Members, local Foundations, the County of Chautauqua government, and other lake and watershed stakeholders – for their support and passion over the past 10-plus years, as we look forward to another great year in 2026.

## **A Brief Note on 2025**

Growth, guided by reflection, was the theme of 2025. Of course, we continue to look back with appreciation on the nearly 140 Alliance-partnered projects valued at \$13.5 million since our inception – many of which continue to pay dividends as long-term watershed solutions to lake impairments. As well, we must also diagnose the challenging lower lake conditions felt in 2025 by businesses, residents, and users and evaluate how best to prepare for 2026 with a more adaptive and collaborative management approach.

Driven by this reflection, 2025 was notable for our forward progress, which was led by our Board of Directors and leaders from across our Membership, and marked by the belief that we can accomplish more for the lake with timely communication and collaboration. This year we prepared to usher in an expanded Board structure that brings even more leaders from around the lake to sit around our table. We also evolved outward in 2025, introducing an independent lake advisor – GEI Consultants. This partnership has immediately bolstered our local passion and experience with new outside perspectives and expertise.

Alliance-partnered projects continue to apply a balanced approach blending lake maintenance, watershed projects, and research. Local dollars, primarily aimed at year-to-year lake needs, are maximized by seeking outside dollars that typically fund long-term watershed-based protections (with fewer funding chances for in-lake work). Past, current, and future successes of this Alliance, working collaboratively toward an economically and environmentally healthy Chautauqua Lake, are made possible through the dedicated work of our Members and generosity of our funders. We thank all those involved. We also invite you to please learn more about our Members' efforts and accomplishments in the pages that follow – and by visiting our website, as well as those of our Members. Thank you to all who work in service for Chautauqua Lake.

## 2025 Members

- Chautauqua – Cattaraugus Board of Realtors
- Chautauqua County Visitors Bureau
- Chautauqua Institution
- Chautauqua Lake Association
- Chautauqua Lake Fishing Association
- Chautauqua Lake Partnership
- Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy
- County of Chautauqua
- Jamestown Board of Public Utilities
- North Chautauqua Lake Sewer District
- South & Center Chautauqua Lake Sewer Districts
- The Lenna Foundation
- Town of Busti
- Town of Chautauqua
- Town of Ellery
- Town of Ellicott
- Town of North Harmony
- Village of Bemus Point
- Village of Celoron
- Village of Lakewood
- Village of Mayville

## 2025 Alliance-Partnered Project Summaries

*This report includes information on projects that were open during 2025. For information on past projects, please review our prior Annual Reports on the Alliance website.*

### Town of Chautauqua, NYSDEC Water Quality Improvement Project (WQIP), Chautauqua Elmwood Road Stream Culvert Replacement Project

**Description:** This project would replace an existing aged box culvert on Elmwood Road with a new precast concrete box culvert in order to reduce water quality impacts and improve road safety. This culvert replacement will also improve stream function and reduce the negative impacts of storm events, ensuring climate resilience.

**Projected budget:** Total: \$513,446 | State: \$410,757 | Local: \$102,689

**Grantee:** Town of Chautauqua

**Alliance Role:** Grant writing and administration; project management/coordination

**Funding Overview:** The majority of the project cost is funded by the Environmental Protection Fund administered by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation through the Water Quality Improvement Project program. Local matching funds are expected to be provided by the Town in the form of cash.



Pictured above is a photo of the Elmwood culvert outlet showing deteriorated concrete with spalling, cracking and exposed rebar. Photo by EcoStrategies Engineering & Surveying.

## **Town of Chautauqua, NYSDEC Water Quality Improvement Project (WQIP), Chautauqua Wright Road Stream Culvert Replacement Project**

**Description:** This project would replace an aged steel pipe culvert with an aluminized steel corrugated arch pipe on Wright Road in order to reduce water quality impacts and improve road safety. This culvert replacement will also improve stream function and reduce the negative impacts of storm events, ensuring climate resilience.

**Projected budget:** Total: \$635,454 | State: \$508,363 | Local: \$127,091

**Grantee:** Town of Chautauqua

**Alliance Role:** Grant writing and administration; project management/coordination

**Funding Overview:** The majority of the project cost is funded by the Environmental Protection Fund administered by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation through the Water Quality Improvement Project program. The remaining share is expected to be provided by the Town via in-kind local match from construction labor and equipment provided by Town Highway Department personnel, as well as cash.



Pictured above is a photo of the Wright Road culvert inlet showing trapped debris and sediment. Photo by EcoStrategies Engineering & Surveying.

## **Town of North Harmony, NYSDEC Non-Agricultural Nonpoint Source Planning and MS4 Mapping Grant (NPG) Grant, Cedar Avenue Stream Culvert Assessment**

**Description:** The Town of North Harmony’s Stream Culvert Assessment is expected to generate an engineering design report to address erosion concerns resulting from a potentially inadequately sized and/or failing stream culvert located along Cedar Avenue. The existing culvert is an approximately 8-foot-wide, 40-foot-long corrugated steel pipe that is degraded, is beginning to fold upward in the streambed, and appears to be getting undermined by the stream.

**Projected budget:** Total: \$48,000 | State: \$ 43,636 | Local: \$ 4,364

**Grantee:** Town of North Harmony

**Alliance Role:** Grant writing and administration; project management/coordination; local match via Alliance/Foundation Match Fund

**Funding Overview:** The majority of the project cost is funded by the NYSDEC Non-Agricultural Nonpoint Source Planning and MS4 Mapping Grant (NPG) Grant program. Local matching funds are expected to be provided by the Town and the Alliance/Foundation Match Fund supported by the Chautauqua Region Community Foundation, The Lenna Foundation, and the Holmberg Foundation.

## **County of Chautauqua, NYSDEC Non-Agricultural Nonpoint Source Planning and MS4 Mapping Grant (NPG) Grant, Bemus Creek Sediment and Debris Management Plan**

**Description:** This project will produce a stream sediment and debris management plan for a section of Bemus Creek in the Town of Ellery and Village of Bemus Point, which will identify areas in the stream basin that contribute to flood risk and erosion. It will develop recommendations to reduce the risk of future flooding, erosion, and debris jams to benefit the overall function of the creek and protect homes and infrastructure in the area. The focus area of this study will be the lower sections of the creek, including areas near the Shore Acres community that have suffered from flooding in recent years. The grant is expected to be closed out in 2026.

**Projected budget:** Total: \$55,000 | State: \$50,000 | Local: \$5,000

**Grantee:** County of Chautauqua

**Alliance Role:** Grant writing and administration; project management/coordination

**Funding Overview:** The majority of the project cost is funded by the NYSDEC Non-Agricultural Nonpoint Source Planning and MS4 Mapping Grant (NPG) Grant program. Local matching funds will be provided by Chautauqua County.

**Village of Lakewood, NYSDEC Water Quality Improvement Project (WQIP), Village of Lakewood Fairmount Avenue Constructed Wetland Project**

**Description:** This project will construct a new wetland pond system to capture and treat stormwater from a 109-acre area. The project will use native seed mixes, live stakes, shrubs and trees to increase flood resiliency and reduce sediment and nutrient conveyance to Chautauqua Lake. The project area is near the business corridor of Fairmount Avenue, which has been subjected to flooding during storm events in recent years.

**Projected budget:** Total: \$306,095 | State: \$244,876 | Local: \$61,219

**Grantee:** Village of Lakewood

**Other Involved Member Partners:** Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy, County of Chautauqua

**Alliance Role:** Grant writing and administration; project management/coordination; local match via Alliance/Foundation Match Fund

**Funding Overview:** The majority of the project cost is funded by the Environmental Protection Fund administered by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation through the Water Quality Improvement Project program. Local matching funds are expected to be provided by the Village through a County 2% Waterways grant and the Alliance/Foundation Match Fund supported by the Chautauqua Region Community Foundation, The Lenna Foundation, and the Holmberg Foundation.



Pictured above is a view of the Fairmount Avenue site looking west from the east side of basin. Note excess sediment accumulation on western side of basin near main flow channel.

## **Town of North Harmony, NYSDEC Water Quality Improvement Project (WQIP), Town of North Harmony Carpenter-Pringle Road Stream Culvert Replacement**

**Description:** The Town of North Harmony intends to replace an aged stream culvert with a new larger arch pipe, and install bank protection at the project site in order to reduce erosion and protect road infrastructure. This culvert replacement will also improve stream function and reduce the negative impacts of storm events, ensuring climate resilience.

**Projected budget:** Total: \$273,500 | State: \$218,800 | Local: \$54,700

**Grantee:** Town of North Harmony

**Alliance Role:** Grant writing and administration; project management/coordination

**Funding Overview:** The majority of the project cost is funded by the Environmental Protection Fund administered by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation through the Water Quality Improvement Project program. Matching funds are expected to be provided by the Town in the form of in-kind construction services.

## **Town of North Harmony, NYSDEC Invasive Species Grant, Chautauqua Lake Ashville Bay Starry Stonewort Control Project**

**Description:** The Town of North Harmony’s Chautauqua Lake Ashville Bay Starry Stonewort Control Project will manage a monoculture of invasive algae using diver assisted suction harvesting (DASH). Starry stonewort is an invasive macroalgae which spreads easily via fragmentation, and can impair recreation and crowd out native species. The DASH management technique is intended to limit impacts on native plant and animal species while addressing the algae growing in the water column as well as the lake bottom.

**Projected budget:** Total: \$125,000 | State: \$100,000 | Local: \$25,000

**Grantee:** Town of North Harmony

**Other Involved Member Partners:** Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy; Chautauqua Lake Association; Town of Chautauqua; County of Chautauqua

**Alliance Role:** Grant writing and administration; project management/coordination; local match via Alliance Lake Maintenance Operations and Capital Fund

**Funding Overview:** The majority of the project cost is funded by the Environmental Protection Fund administered by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation through the Invasive Species Grant Program. The local match is expected to come from the Alliance Lake Maintenance Operations and Capital Fund supported by the County of Chautauqua.



Pictured above is a photo of Integrated Lakes Management staff staging their DASH boat at Ashville Bay. Working alongside ILM are staff and equipment from the Town of Chautauqua and CLA (their work funded via local grants).

## Town of Chautauqua, NYSDEC Invasive Species Grant, Chautauqua Lake Prendergast Point Starry Stonewort Control Project

**Description:** The Town of Chautauqua’s Chautauqua Lake Prendergast Point Starry Stonewort Control Project will manage a monoculture of invasive algae using diver assisted suction harvesting (DASH). Starry stonewort is an invasive macroalgae which spreads easily via fragmentation, and can impair recreation and crowd out native species. The DASH management technique is intended to limit impacts on native plant and animal species while addressing the algae growing in the water column as well as the lake bottom.

**Projected budget:** Total: \$125,000 | State: \$100,000 | Local: \$25,000

**Grantee:** Town of Chautauqua

**Other Involved Member Partners:** Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy; Chautauqua Lake Association; Town of North Harmony; County of Chautauqua

**Alliance Role:** Grant writing and administration; project management/coordination; local match via Alliance Lake Maintenance Operations and Capital Fund

**Funding Overview:** The majority of the project cost is funded by the Environmental Protection Fund administered by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation through the Invasive Species Grant Program. The local match is expected to come from the Alliance Lake Maintenance Operations and Capital Fund supported by the County of Chautauqua.



Pictured above Integrated Lakes Management crews deploy a diver assisted suction hose at Prendergast Point.

## **Town of Chautauqua, NYSDEC Non-Agricultural Nonpoint Source Planning Grant, Town of Chautauqua Stream Culverts Assessments**

**Description:** The Town of Chautauqua’s Stream Culvert Assessments generated an engineering design report to address erosion concerns resulting from two inadequately sized and/or failing stream culverts located along Wright Road and Elmwood Road. The Elmwood Road stream culvert is an old concrete open bottom culvert that is actively decaying, is in need of replacement and potential resizing, and is likely causing bank erosion directly upstream of the culvert. The Wright Road culvert is an approximately 42-inch-wide galvanized pipe that conveys a class C stream that is likely undersized and misaligned, which is likely contributing to bank erosion both upstream and downstream (significant expansion scour present) of the culvert. The Stream Culvert Assessments Study produced an engineering design report that utilizes the North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative framework to identify erosion issues, potential barriers to aquatic connectivity, and repair/replacement options. The grant was closed out in 2025.

**Projected budget:** Total: \$33,000 | State: \$30,000 | Local: \$3,000

**Grantee:** Town of Chautauqua

**Alliance Role:** Grant writing and administration; project management/coordination; local match via Alliance/Foundation Match Fund

**Funding Overview:** The majority of the project cost is funded by the Environmental Protection Fund administered by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation through the Non-Agricultural Nonpoint Source Planning Grant program. The local match is expected to come from the Town and the Alliance/Foundation Match Fund supported by the Chautauqua Region Community Foundation, The Lenna Foundation, and the Holmberg Foundation.

## **Village of Lakewood, NYSDEC Non-Agricultural Nonpoint Source Planning Grant, Village of Lakewood Commercial Corridor Stormwater Engineering Study-Mall Boulevard**

**Description:** This project produced a stormwater engineering study to recommend actions to improve water quality, mitigate flooding, improve public safety, and encourage redevelopment within a targeted area of Mall Boulevard. Mall Blvd., which bisects Route 394 and Hunt Road, has at times experienced severe flooding that has posed safety risks to the general public and has damaged infrastructure. This flooding

has also contributed to water quality impairments in Chautauqua Lake's south basin. Flood risk is also a factor for businesses considering settling in the impacted area, which has several areas that are being considered for redevelopment. The Village hired a professional engineer to prepare a report recommending stormwater improvements to address these concerns. The grant was closed out in 2025.

**Projected budget:** Total: \$33,000 | State: \$30,000 | Local: \$3,000

**Grantee:** Village of Lakewood

**Alliance Role:** Grant writing and administration; project management/coordination; local match via Alliance/Foundation Match Fund

**Funding Overview:** The majority of the project cost is funded by the Environmental Protection Fund administered by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation through the Non-Agricultural Nonpoint Source Planning Grant program. The local match is expected to be provided by the Village and the Alliance/Foundation Match Fund supported by the Chautauqua Region Community Foundation, The Lenna Foundation, and the Holmberg Foundation.

### **Town of North Harmony, NYSDEC Non-Agricultural Nonpoint Source Planning Grant, North Harmony Ball Creek Stabilization Engineering Study Phase I**

**Description:** The Town of North Harmony's Ball Creek Stabilization Engineering Study assessed approximately 2,640 linear feet of stream corridor along Ball Creek from Route 394 to Chautauqua Lake. Within the study area, there are several locations that have severely eroded banks and are in need of bank and/or channel stabilization. The Town retained the services of a licensed professional engineer to assess the stream corridor and provide an engineering design report to identify areas of erosion and stream instability and suggest potential management actions that could be implemented at these locations to reduce sediment and nutrient loading to Chautauqua Lake. The grant was closed out in 2025.

**Projected budget:** Total: \$33,000 | State: \$30,000 | Local: \$3,000

**Grantee:** Town of North Harmony

**Alliance Role:** Grant writing and administration; project management/coordination

**Funding Overview:** The majority of the project cost is funded by the Environmental Protection Fund administered by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation through the Non-Agricultural Nonpoint Source Planning Grant program. The local match is expected to be provided by the Town.

### **Town of North Harmony, NYSDEC Water Quality Improvement Project (WQIP), Ball Creek Stabilization Project**

**Description:** This project was done to improve stream stability (grade control), stabilize two severely eroding streambanks, reduce sediment and nutrient loading, and protect highway infrastructure along approximately 400 linear feet of Ball Creek. It provided ~2,200 feet of stream corridor improvements. Best management practices (BMPs) were incorporated to reduce ongoing channel and bank erosion, reduce water velocities, promote infiltration and bio-filtration, enhance biodiversity and habitat for birds and pollinators, and improve aesthetics. These included rock bank protection, willow live stakes and native plantings, hydro seeding, log veins, and the construction of a riparian buffer. A local grant from the Alliance’s Consolidated Foundation Grant program was used to complete the first phase of the project and leverage this State grant. The grant was awarded in late 2021. The majority of construction was completed in late 2023, with project monitoring in 2024. Final work was completed and the grant was closed out in 2025.

**Projected budget:** Total: \$219,390 | State: \$175,512 | Local: \$43,878

**Grantee:** Town of North Harmony

**Alliance Role:** Grant writing and administration; project management/coordination; local match via an Alliance Consolidated Local Grant and Alliance/Foundation Match Fund

**Other Involved Member Partners:** Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy; County of Chautauqua (in-kind construction)

**Funding Overview:** The majority of the project cost is funded by the Environmental Protection Fund administered by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation through the Water Quality Improvement Project program. The local match is expected to come from the Alliance/Foundation Match Fund supported by the Chautauqua Region Community Foundation, The Lenna Foundation, and the Holmberg Foundation, and a portion of a 2021 Alliance Consolidated Foundation Grant

with funding provided by The Lenna Foundation, the Ralph C. Sheldon Foundation, and the Chautauqua Region Community Foundation.



Photo 1. Ball Creek Tri-James bend 7/21/2021 before construction.



Photo 2. Ball Creek 10/11/23 after construction.



Pictured above is the Stow Road bend of Ball Creek prior to construction.



Pictured above is the Stow Road Bend after substantial completion, including a bendway weir pictured at the bottom right of frame.

## **Town of Chautauqua, NYSDEC Water Quality Improvement Project (WQIP), Chautauqua Roadside Swales Stabilization Project**

**Description:** This project will implement swale improvements at approximately 11 sites within the Town of Chautauqua, stabilizing ~16,600 linear feet of roadside ditches. Through the construction of check dams, introduction of deep rooted vegetation, and

channel stabilization these priority swales sites will help to reduce stormwater velocity, promote infiltration and biofiltration, and improve water quality in Chautauqua Lake. The grant was awarded in late 2021. The Town's Highway Department will perform construction on the project as the local match. The engineer, Barton and Loguidice is finalizing the design for some remaining sites, and construction by the Town Highway Department began in 2024, achieving about 50% substantial completion by the end of the year. Final construction and grant closeout is expected in 2026.

**Projected budget:** Total: \$342,985 | State: \$213,057 | Local: \$129,928

**Grantee:** Town of Chautauqua

**Alliance Role:** Grant writing and administration; project management/coordination

**Funding Overview:** The majority of the project cost is funded by the Environmental Protection Fund administered by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation through the Water Quality Improvement Project program. The remaining share is expected to be provided by the Town via in-kind local match from construction labor and equipment provided by Town Highway Department personnel.



Photo of final plantings and grass-seeding work can be seen at Floral Avenue (Photo by Town Highway Department).



Photo of swale construction can be seen at Burdick Road.

## Village of Lakewood, NYSDEC Water Quality Improvement Project (WQIP), Grandview Stormwater Management Project

**Description:** This project will improve water quality in the lake and watershed through nutrient and sediment reduction, enhance the aesthetics of the area, and reduce flooding impacts along Route 394 through the construction of engineered wetlands. Approximately 100,000 cubic feet of stormwater detention have been added to the eastern portion of the Grandview subdivision via the installation of two main stormwater detention ponds connected by cascading swales. Best management practices from the New York State Stormwater Management Design Manual were used, including native plantings. Project features also include a natural trail, public access points and educational signage. The grant was awarded in late 2021. Construction achieved substantial completion in 2023-2024 and was finished in 2025.

**Projected budget:** Total: \$312,580 | State: \$250,064 | Local: \$62,516

**Grantee:** Village of Lakewood

**Other Involved Member Partners:** Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy; County of Chautauqua

**Alliance Role:** Grant writing and administration; project management/coordination; local match via an Alliance Consolidated Local Grant and Alliance/Foundation Match Fund



Photo of the western wetland pond after construction. A turtle basking log can be seen center frame.



Photo of the Grandview Project's informational sign, provided by the Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy.

**Funding Overview:** The majority of the project cost is funded by the Environmental Protection Fund administered by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation through the Water Quality Improvement Project program. The local match is expected to come from the Alliance/Foundation Match Fund supported by the Chautauqua Region Community Foundation, The Lenna Foundation, and the Holmberg Foundation, a County Occupancy Tax 2% Lakes and Waterways Grant to the Village of Lakewood, and a portion of a 2020 Alliance Consolidated Foundation Grant with funding provided by The Lenna Foundation, the Ralph C. Sheldon Foundation, and the Chautauqua Region Community Foundation.

## Other 2025 Alliance Projects & Programs

### 2024-2025 Alliance Consolidated Local Funding Program

In 2024, the Alliance renewed for a seventh consecutive year its partnership with the Ralph C. Sheldon Foundation, The Lenna Foundation, and the Chautauqua Region Community Foundation, to offer 2025 local funding assistance opportunities to its Members via our local grant application process to identify, prioritize, and fund projects and programs to protect and improve water quality in Chautauqua Lake and its watershed. Funding applications, which were available exclusively to Alliance Members, were distributed on July 10, 2024 and due on September 5, 2024. The Alliance received 16 applications from Members totaling ~\$2.2 million in requests. Applications were subject to technical review by staff and volunteer Alliance Committee members using our Multi-Criteria Analysis (MCA) Tool. The Alliance Board prioritized the candidate projects and assigned funding recommendations summarized in the list below. The funding recommendations were made by the Alliance Board of Directors to the partner Foundations in late 2024 with final decisions made in early 2025. Member projects funded in 2025 are listed below.

- Chautauqua Lake Partnership: 2025 Chautauqua Lake Herbicide Program – on behalf of Towns of Ellery, Ellicott, Busti, and North Harmony, and Villages of Bemus Point, Celoron, and Lakewood (Combined grant, contingent on 2025 NYSDEC permits)
- Town of Chautauqua: Mobitrac (Operations)
- Chautauqua Lake Association: 2025 All Inclusive Operational Support
- Chautauqua Lake Partnership: Lake Surveys
- Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy: 2025 Chautauqua Lake Aquatic Invasive Species Early Detection Volunteer Taskforce
- Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy: 2025 Chautauqua Lake Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Native Plant Nursery Pilot Program
- Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy: Watershed Technical Assistance and Stormwater Management Program
- Chautauqua Lake Association: Mobitrac Joint Operations Support
- Chautauqua Lake Partnership: Update NC State lake management plan

**Total Member Grants Awarded for '25: ~\$745,751**

**Alliance Role:** Grantee; Grant management

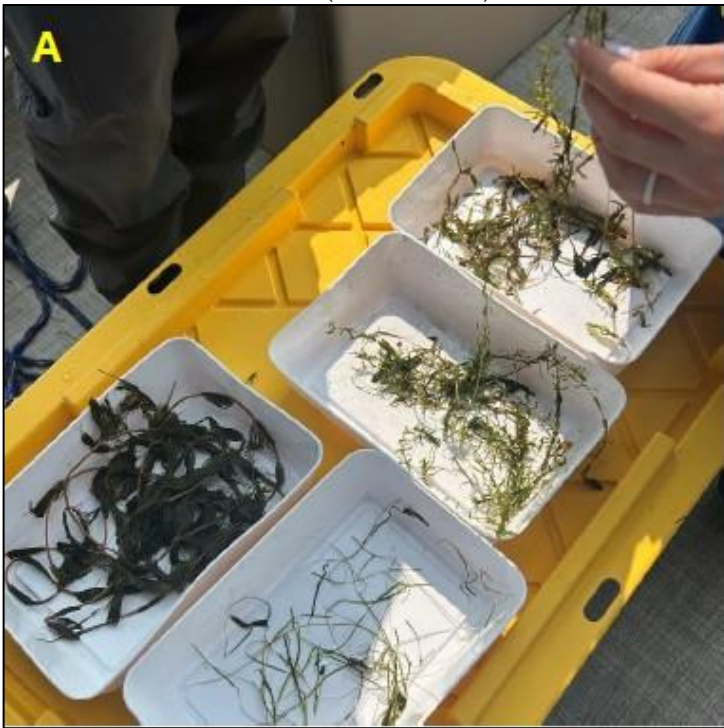
**Funding Overview:** Funding was provided by the Ralph C. Sheldon Foundation, The Lenna Foundation, the Chautauqua Region Community Foundation, the Hultquist Foundation, and Chautauqua County in the form of grants to the Alliance, which will subsequently be distributed for Member projects.



A CWC Watershed Technical Assistance and Stormwater Management Program public outreach event is pictured above. (Source CWC).



Chautauqua Lake Association machinery is pictured near the I-86 bridge. (Source: CLA).



A photo of plant material being sorted and identified during the Chautauqua Lake Partnership Lake surveys. (Source North Carolina State University).



Photo of invasive starry stonewort algae collected during a CWC Invasive Species Early Detection and Rapid Response kayak paddle. (Source: CWC).

## 2025-2026 Alliance Consolidated Local Funding Program

In 2025, the Alliance renewed for an eighth consecutive year its partnership with the Ralph C. Sheldon Foundation, The Lenna Foundation, and the Chautauqua Region Community Foundation, to offer 2026 local funding assistance opportunities to its Members via our local grant application process to identify, prioritize, and fund projects and programs to protect and improve water quality in Chautauqua Lake and its watershed. Funding applications, which were available exclusively to Alliance Members, were distributed on July 9, 2025 and due on September 4, 2025. The Alliance received 10 applications from Members totaling ~\$2.8 million in requests. Applications were subject to technical review by GEI Consultants, and were screened by staff using our Multi-Criteria Analysis (MCA) Tool. The Alliance Board worked alongside GEI to prioritize the candidate projects and assigned funding recommendations summarized in the list below. The funding recommendations were made by the Alliance Board of Directors to the partner Foundations in late 2025 with final decisions made in early 2026. Member projects planned for 2026 are listed below.

- Chautauqua Lake Association: 2026 All Inclusive Operational Support
- Chautauqua Lake Partnership: Chautauqua Lake South Basin Herbicide Application
- Town of Chautauqua: Mobitrac near shore cleanup
- Chautauqua Lake Partnership: Lake Surveys
- Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy: 2026 Chautauqua Lake Aquatic Invasive Species Early Detection & Rapid Response Program
- Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy: Watershed Technical Assistance and Stormwater Management Program

**Total projected budget (Awarded YTD '26):** At least \$650,000 awarded through the date of this report

**Alliance Role:** Grantee; Grant management

**Funding Overview:** Funding was provided by the Ralph C. Sheldon Foundation, The Lenna Foundation, the Chautauqua Region Community Foundation, the Hultquist Foundation, and Chautauqua County in the form of grants to the Alliance, which will subsequently be distributed for Member projects.

## **Alliance Introduces GEI Consultants to Help Chautauqua Lake Efforts**

In late 2024 the Alliance Board undertook a comprehensive search for an independent lake consultant to provide interpretations of scientific data and management recommendations, amongst other advisement. In the spring of 2025, GEI was selected as the Board's new advisory firm, led by project lead and certified lake manager AJ Reyes. Reyes and his team, who work on a wide range of lakes and watersheds around the state and beyond, immediately began addressing multiple priority tasks for Chautauqua following their selection. Keys to GEI's first year of work were interviewing stakeholders and service providers, background document review, attending Alliance Board meetings, assessing current and past management practices, and providing funding recommendations to the Board. GEI's workplan included meeting with CLA about the lake's harvesting program, CLP about its herbicide treatments, CWC about their invasive species and watershed work, and DEC about permitting and regulation. They also spent time on the water, to see what the lake's plants and algae look like, and to view firsthand our lake's features and management in action. They used this information and their expertise to advise the Alliance Board throughout the year, assisting the funding and management planning process in real-time and for 2026.

GEI's refined scope for 2026 will include several new ventures tackling the top recommendations from 2025, as well as continuity in working with our local service providers. In particular, future tasks will focus on assessing the difficult conditions experienced in Burtis Bay in 2025, and working directly with the Alliance Members who care for the lake to help increase preparation, collaboration, and responsiveness to changing (and often unpredictable) lake conditions. In 2026, GEI is also tasked directly with advising the ongoing management of invasive starry stonewort, and helping improve public communication of lake conditions. Updates about GEI's work have been provided via multiple channels, including the County Executive's 2026 Lake Symposium, the Alliance's May 2025 and 2026 Annual Meetings, newspaper articles, and website resources.



Pictured above is GEI Consultants project lead and certified lake manager AJ Reyes. Reyes spoke publicly at the County's 2026 Lake Symposium, which can be viewed on the County Executive's webpage and the County YouTube Page.

## Alliance Committees

The Alliance extends its thanks to its many volunteers serving on its committees.

1. *Data Analysis and Research (DAR) Committee*

In 2020, the Alliance transitioned the former Scientific Review and Advisory Committee into a Data Analysis and Research (DAR) Committee. The DAR Committee is populated with individuals who have backgrounds in research, the natural sciences, engineering, data analysis, and/or other related technical fields and experience with the environmental factors impacting the health of Chautauqua Lake and its watershed. The purpose of the Committee is to provide scientific and technical input to the Board of Directors and Executive Director.

2. *Lake Management Committee*

*Chair: Mike LaTone*

The Lake Management Committee was formed with the purpose of coordinating in-lake maintenance, harmful algal bloom mitigation efforts, and potential future dredging efforts. This Committee is populated with key County personnel, municipal leaders, and executive directors and presidents of local lake managing organizations. These meetings bring together many of the stakeholders involved with lake maintenance in order to share information and plan and coordinate work.

3. *Watershed Management Committee*

*Chair: Rob Yates*

The Watershed Management Committee was also formed in late 2019 with the purpose of providing guidance and feedback regarding potential Alliance partnered watershed projects and to recommend watershed project ideas for grant submission that attempt to reduce the flow of nutrients and sediments from the watershed into Chautauqua Lake. The Committee is populated with local municipal leaders, highway and department of public works superintendents, and representatives from the Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy, Soil and Water Conservation District, County Watershed Coordinator, and County Health Department.

## Board of Directors Serving in 2025

Note: A maximum of 9 directors comprised the board of directors in 2025. Those listed below served for all or some portion of 2025. The first 9 directors listed in bold comprised the Alliance Board as of 12/31/2025. On 2/1/26, the board expanded to 18 directors (not shown on the table below). For a list of the current board, please visit the Alliance website at: <http://www.chautauquaalliance.org/board/>

<u>Director</u>	<u>Member Affiliation</u>
<b>Pierre Chagnon -Chair</b>	County of Chautauqua/ South & Center Chautauqua Lake Sewer Districts
<b>Mike LaTone - Vice Chair</b>	Chautauqua Lake Partnership
<b>Jim Andrews - Treasurer</b>	Town of Busti
<b>JoDee Johnson - Secretary</b>	Chautauqua Lake Partnership
<b>Don Emhardt - Past Chair</b>	Town of Chautauqua/ Chautauqua Lake Association
<b>Martin Proctor</b>	County of Chautauqua
<b>Paul (P.J.) Wendel, Jr.</b>	County of Chautauqua ( <i>Ex officio</i> )
<b>Larry Anderson</b>	Town of Ellery
<b>Andrew Goodell</b>	Chautauqua Lake Partnership
Ellen Barnes - Past Treasurer	Village of Lakewood
Janis Bowman - Past Secretary	Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy

## Special Recognitions

The Alliance wishes to recognize that we as a community stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us. Special appreciation to all those listed below and to many more.

**CLMC participants:** Linda Barber, Chuck Battaglia, Bill Boria, Craig Butler, Sally Carlson, Pierre Chagnon, Doug Champ, Jane Conroe, Rick Constantino, Fred Croscut, Bill Daily, Jeff Diers, Tom Erlandson, Mark Geise, Tom Geisler, Lyle Hajdu, Vince Horrigan, John Jablonski, Joe Johnson, Don McCord, Wade Morse, Debbie Naybor, Andrew Nixon, Karen Rine, Kevin Sanvidge, Kim Sherwood, Mark Stow, Art Webster, Dave Wilson, Tad Wright and Chris Yates

**Leading the evolution from CLMC to an Alliance:** Linda Barber, Pierre Chagnon, Don Emhardt, Mark Geise, Lyle Hajdu, Vince Horrigan, Don McCord, Dave McCoy, Randy Sweeney and Tad Wright.

**Funders:** The Lenna Foundation, Ralph C. Sheldon Foundation, Chautauqua Region Community Foundation, Gebbie Foundation, Holmberg Foundation, Hultquist Foundation, County of Chautauqua, and Private Contributors.

# **Appendix A**

## **2025 May Member Meeting Minutes**

Thursday, May 8, 2025 at 4:30 PM ET at The Lawson Center, 73 Lakeside Drive, Bemus Point, NY 14712 & via Zoom

Directors Present: JoDee Johnson, Janis Bowman (Zoom), Don Emhardt, Martin Proctor, Jim Andrews, Paul Wendel Jr., Mike LaTone, Pierre Chagnon.

Directors Absent: Ellen Barnes

Staff in Attendance: Randall Perry - Alliance Executive Director and Jay Young - Alliance Communications Coordinator

Others in Attendance: Craig Butler; Jim Wehrfritz, Karl Sparn Jr. - Chautauqua Lake Property Owners Association; Doug Champ; Jane Conroe - Chautauqua Conewango Consortium; Mike and Peggy Newell; AJ Reyes - GEI Consultants; Linda Swanson - Ralph C. Sheldon Foundation; Sharon and RG Withey.

Member Representatives in Attendance: John Jablonski, Becky Nystrom - Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy; John Ford, Bruce Erickson, Doug Conroe- Chautauqua Lake Association; Dave McCoy - County of Chautauqua; Louise Ortman - Town of North Harmony; Jeff Molnar- Village of Bemus Point; Frank Nicotra, Mary Hutchings, Jackie Damore, Andy Goodell - Chautauqua Lake Partnership; John Shedd, Claire Johnson Baker - Chautauqua Institution; Karen Rine - South and Center Sewer District; Larry Anderson - Town of Ellery.

### **I. Call to Order**

D. Emhardt called the Annual May Member Meeting of the Chautauqua Lake and Watershed Management Alliance (Alliance) to order at 4:33 pm. A quorum of seven out of nine Board members were present at the start of the meeting.

### **II. Approval of the 2024 May Member Meeting Minutes**

P. Wendel made a motion to approve the 2024 May Member Meeting Minutes. M. LaTone seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

### **III. Secretary's Report on Notification and Quorum**

J. Bowman indicated that notification of the Annual Meeting was provided to Members on 2/26/25, 4/9/25, 4/30/25, and 5/2/25.

J. Bowman indicated that ballots were sent to all 21 current Alliance Members on 5/2/25, upon conclusion of the Member Nomination Window.

J. Bowman indicated that 19 ballots have been received, which constitutes a quorum per the Alliance By-Laws.

J. Bowman indicated that the results have been tallied and independently checked by Alliance Staff.

### **IV. Election of Directors - Ballot Canvass and Report**

D. Emhardt asked if there were any additional ballots to be submitted by Members. None were noted. D. Emhardt declared that voting is now closed and thanked all Members for their participation.

R. Perry thanked all of the nominating agencies, nominees, and voters. R. Perry indicated that Martin Proctor will serve a new three year term after his re-appointment to the Board as a representative of the County Legislature. R. Perry indicated that the nominees for the municipal seat included Larry Anderson, Supervisor of the Town of Ellery, and Ellen Barnes, Trustee for the Village of Lakewood. R. Perry indicated that the nominees for the two at-large seats included Bruce Erickson, representing the Chautauqua Lake Association; Andy Goodell, representing the Chautauqua Lake Partnership; Mike LaTone, representing the Chautauqua Lake Partnership; and Janis Bowman, representing the Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy.

R. Perry indicated that based on the final vote counts, L. Anderson, M. LaTone, and A. Goodell, were elected to the Board.

D. Emhardt thanked J. Bowman and E. Barnes for all their work as Alliance Board members.

### **V. Presentation of 2024 Annual Report**

R. Perry presented on the Alliance's 2024 Annual Report. R. Perry thanked The Lawson Center for offering to host the Alliance's Annual Meeting, and thanked the Board,

County, Foundations, Alliance Members, and all those involved for their support. A copy of the report and presentation is available on the Alliance's website.

A special thank you and round of applause was delivered to Linda Swanson, who will be retiring from the Ralph C. Sheldon Foundation in June.

P. Wendel indicated that the Army Corps of Engineers is very pleased with the amount of data that has already been collected on the lake and in the watershed. P. Wendel indicated that there is a good working relationship between the Army Corps and the Department of Environmental Conservation, and that local governmental leaders recently had a productive visit to Washington, D.C. to further lake and watershed initiatives.

#### **VI. Member Open Discussion**

D. Champ asked for clarification regarding the 31 founding Alliance member organizations listed on the Alliance website and the current Alliance membership. D. Champ asked what Alliance membership dues are.

R. Perry indicated that the founding members are represented on the website due to all the work that went in to the creation of the Alliance. R. Perry indicated that each year's Annual Report reflects changes in membership for individual organization over the years. R. Perry indicated that the Alliance has not changed its original structure of membership dues for member organizations. R. Perry indicated that a large amount of work went into determining the dues structure, which assigns different rates for municipalities, not-for-profits, and other types of organizations etc.

D. Champ asked what the return on investment is for Alliance Membership dues, and if the structure is sustainable.

R. Perry indicated that the organization has changed and evolved over time, and that the work done by Alliance members is made possible by our funders.

J. Jablonski asked if a yearly financial report was available for the Alliance.

R. Perry indicated that the most recent Form 990 is available online or upon request.

J. Jablonski asked the Board if they would consider listing active Alliance Members on the website.

R. Perry indicated that each Annual Report lists active Members, and those reports are posted on the Alliance website.

J. Jablonski thanked J. Bowman for all her work on the Alliance Board, and indicated that losing her as a director leaves a gap in ecological leadership.

**VII. Adjourn Annual Member Meeting**

M. LaTone made a motion to adjourn the May Member Meeting. P. Wendel seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 5:06 pm.

*The Alliance Board of Directors passed a motion to approve these 5/8/25 Meeting Minutes on 5/14/26.*