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COUNTY EXECUTIVE UNVEILS MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT FOR CHAUTAUQUA LAKE CONSENSUS STRATEGY

**MOA Helps Lake Stakeholders Effectively Work Together
to Manage Weeds in Chautauqua Lake**

Major Lake Stakeholders Encouraged to Sign MOA



Pictured above from left to right: Mark Geise, Deputy County Executive for Economic Development; George Borrello, Chautauqua County Executive; Dave McCoy, County Watershed Coordinator; Pierre Chagnon, County Legislator and Chairman of the Chautauqua Lake and Watershed Management Alliance; and Tom Heins, P.E., Principal of Ecology & Environment, Inc.



Pictured above, Borrello ceremoniously signs the Chautauque Lake Weed Management Consensus Strategy Memorandum of Agreement on behalf of Chautauque County.

MAYVILLE, N.Y.:-- Chautauque County Executive George Borrello recently unveiled the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for the Chautauque Lake Weed Management Consensus Strategy. The agreement brings together lake agencies and organizations, as well as the municipalities located around Chautauque Lake, so they can more effectively work together to manage invasive aquatic plants, nuisance native vegetation, and hazardous algal blooms on the lake while being considerate of man's uses and the environment.

"There are many agencies and stakeholders around Chautauque Lake that are committed to improving the quality and usability of the lake," said Borrello. "The differences of opinion regarding how this should be done have resulted in a contentious environment where little forward progress can be made. This consensus strategy will help bring everyone together as we work toward our common goals of addressing and controlling the weeds in Chautauque Lake while protecting its ecology."

The consensus strategy was developed through a collaboration of the County Executive's Office, Chautauque County Department of Planning & Development, representatives from the

Chautauqua Lake & Watershed Management Alliance, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC), and the consulting firm, Ecology and Environment, Inc. (E&E). E&E, which is headquartered in Lancaster, N.Y., facilitated three meetings earlier this year, where it met with key lake stakeholders to discuss their key issues and concerns surrounding the management of weeds in Chautauqua Lake. These stakeholders included representatives from the Chautauqua Fishing Alliance, Chautauqua Institution, Chautauqua Lake Association, Chautauqua Lake Fishing Association, Chautauqua Lake Partnership, Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy, Town of Busti, Town of Chautauqua, Town of Ellery, Town of Ellicott, Town of North Harmony, Village of Celoron, and Village of Lakewood. Other input, which was also considered in the development of the MOA, was communicated to the county executive during informal meetings and in written form.

“Working closely with E&E, we were able to identify essential issues and concerns of the primary stakeholders associated with weed management in Chautauqua Lake,” said Mark Geise, Deputy County Executive for Economic Development. “With this input, we identified key topics, as well as consensus positions for each of these themes, which are important to these stakeholders. These essentially became the 24 tenets of the strategy’s MOA, which will help guide future weed management initiatives.”

These tenets include:

- **Creation of a Centralized Lake Authority**, which will define responsibilities, funding priorities, and an organizational structure for the creation and implementation of a Comprehensive Lake Management Strategy (CLMS).
- **Development of a Consensus Strategy Memorandum of Agreement**, which will be a two-year agreement that will be re-evaluated annually for renewal purposes.
- **Promotion of Transparency**, which calls for an independent, qualified, third party entity to monitor any aquatic plant management techniques used on the lake.
- **Utilization of Science-based Decisions**, which will ensure weed management decisions are based on science with pre, inter and post-sampling and monitoring, and will be carried out in accordance with the Chautauqua Lake Macrophyte Management Strategy (MMS) as a guidance tool.
- **Control of Algae**, which will ensure algal monitoring and management decisions are considered in the development of the CLMS.

- **Protection of Fish Habitat**, which will ensure aquatic plant management methods employed will mitigate, to the extent possible, negative impacts to fish and fish habitat.
- **Integration of Management Methods**, which will offer and prescribe a coordinated approach in the CLMS using herbicides and harvesting in accordance with the MMS as a guidance tool.
- **Utilization of Herbicides as a Management Tool**, which will restrict herbicide use to 25 percent or less of the littoral zone South of Long Point only.
- **Management of Nutrients through Aquatic Plant Management**, which will focus on reducing plant biomass and phosphorus.
- **Completion of a Pilot Study/Environmental Review to Determine Impacts of Aquatic Plant Management Methods**, which will be a pilot project developed under the oversight of the Alliance, with results to be evaluated by a third party entity. This monitoring program will test for direct and incidental impacts, as well as the efficacy of both mechanical and chemical treatment techniques employed.
- **Utilization of Plant Surveys to Determine Treatments**, which will ensure all aquatic plant management activities, such as plant surveys, are planned, evaluated, and monitored by an independent third party entity, and are evaluated and updated annually to keep the MMS current.
- **Implementation of Monitoring Treatments**, which will require that all aquatic plant management activities, such as monitoring treatments, are planned, evaluated, and monitored by a qualified, third party entity, and are evaluated and updated annually to keep the MMS current.
- **Management of Curly Leaf Pondweed**, which ensures that treatment of this macrophyte occurs early in the growing season.
- **Improvement of the Effectiveness of Treatment Methods**, which, with proper funding, will employ more skimmers to collect aquatic plant fragments to help reduce their spread within the lake and on the shorelines.
- **Treatment of Invasive vs. Naturalized Status of Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM) and Curly Leaf Pondweed**, which will ensure the CLMS has, as a primary goal, the reduction

in the densities and abundance of “nuisance-level” aquatic weeds in zones where they conflict with public uses, regardless of whether the weeds are invasive or not.

- **Utilization of Herbicides and Internal Loading of Phosphorus**, which will ensure aquatic plant management techniques are selected, in part, based on reducing plant biomass and available phosphorus.
- **Selection of Herbicides for Use**, which provides that the herbicides used will be evaluated by a third party entity to determine their effectiveness and impacts to non-target organisms.
- **Timing of Herbicide Treatments**, which will ensure herbicides are applied so they have the least impact on spawning fish.
- **Litigation Avoidance**, which provides that all parties who sign the MOA will not pursue litigation against any other party to the MOA who is not in violation of its tenets.
- **Management of Weed Fragmentation**, which ensures a Weed Fragmentation and Clean-up Policy is a part of the CLMS to address fragments caused by harvesters, boat propellers, and natural processes.
- **Implementation of Annual Assessments and Subsequent Treatment Recommendations**, which will provide annual assessments through an established monitoring and reporting program in order to review the evidence and make a determination for subsequent treatment recommendations.
- **Cost of Treatments**, which will develop and provide detailed cost estimates for all potential weed management techniques.
- **Utilization of Global Positioning Systems (GPS)**, which will assist in tracking all weed management activities.

Promotion of Drinking Water Safety, which provides that the county will partner with entities that draw drinking water from Chautauqua Lake to perform a feasibility study aimed at providing alternative municipal water supply connections as an emergency backup, and eventually as a primary source of drinking water.

“We are very grateful for County Executive Borrello taking the initiative to develop a consensus strategy for the management of macrophytes in Chautauqua Lake,” said Pierre Chagnon, County Legislator and Chair of the Chautauqua Lake and Watershed Management Alliance. “His excellent leadership in seeking consensus and developing the strategy was essential in accomplishing this historic undertaking.”

Borrello has already signed the MOA on behalf of Chautauqua County, and the agreement is currently being circulated to the key lake groups and municipalities for their review and signatures.

“This strategy is important to the future health of Chautauqua Lake and to the economic future of Chautauqua County,” said Borrello. “I strongly encourage our major stakeholders to support and participate in this agreement.”

A copy of the MOA is available on the County Executive’s website at www.co.chautauqua.ny.us/186/County-Executive .

For more information about the Chautauqua Lake Management Consensus Strategy/ Memorandum of Agreement, contact the Chautauqua County Executive’s Office at (716) 753-4211.

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