

2015-J3828

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commemorating the 20th Anniversary of the Finger Lakes - Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that the continuing welfare of the citizens of the State of New York is greatly enriched and reliably served by the purposeful endeavors of organizations which are committed to the preservation of our natural environment and the enhancement of the appreciation of the distinctive features of our surroundings, and to the economic well-being of the areas in which they exist; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize that the quality and character of life in the communities across New York State are reflective of the concerned and dedicated efforts of those organizations and individuals who would devote themselves to the welfare of the community and its citizenry; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, it is the intent of this Legislative Body to commemorate the 20th Anniversary of the Finger Lakes - Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance, and to recognize the important role it plays in its community; and

WHEREAS, Originally started in 1984, as the Aquatic Vegetation Control Program, by the 1990s the program became more broadly focused to address a myriad of water quality issues and included work in 18 counties; and

WHEREAS, In 1994, a proposal was developed by the member counties to more explicitly identify holistic, grassroots watershed management as the primary focus of the existing program; this proposal was implemented during 1996, resulting in a new program name, the Finger Lakes - Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance (FOLLOWPA), and a membership including 25 New York State counties wholly or partially located within

the Lake Ontario watershed; and

WHEREAS, Today, FLOWPA continues to be an effective and efficient organization partnering with local stakeholders and both State and Federal agencies to promote agriculture, tourism, recreation, economic development and natural resource conservation in New York State; and WHEREAS, Since 2000, FLOWPA has cost-shared and provided technical assistance on hundreds of water quality improvement projects based on documented need; working with more than 175 partners across the Lake Ontario Basin, over \$15 million has been leveraged in addition to FLOWPA funding to address water quality concerns relating to agriculture, septic systems, erosion and stormwater, invasive species, habitat protection, drinking water and more; and

WHEREAS, For 16 years, FLOWPA has provided support to the agriculture industry by providing complete comprehensive nutrient management plans for 155 CAFO operators so they could comply with federal CAFO regulations and reduce agricultural pollutants from over 52,975 farm acres; and installed hundreds of Best Management Practices on farms to reduce nutrients, pathogens and pesticides from reaching our waterways; and WHEREAS, Moreover, FLOWPA has managed the septic system by inspecting 8,828 septic systems, fixing 747 failing systems, consulting with 1,564 rural homeowners, and training 285 professional inspectors/code enforcement officers; and

WHEREAS, FLOWPA also helped steady the watershed by stabilizing 522 miles of road bank and 59,612 linear feet of stream bank; in addition, this vital organization constructed 37 artificial wetlands covering 669 acres to filter stormwater, and hydroseeded 1,300 critical acres; and

WHEREAS, In 2003, Federal stormwater regulations called for stormwater plans and erosion control measures in populous "MS4" communities and for every construction project disturbing an acre or more of soil; and

WHEREAS, To comply with the regulations, FLOWPA provided technical assistance to over 65 "MS4" communities preparing mandated stormwater

management plans, conducted 110 stormwater workshops, serving 3,916 stakeholders, and worked on 485 site visits; 393 consultations with contractors, developers, or private parties and 440 consultations with municipalities; and

WHEREAS, FFLOWPA has also been instrumental in removing 30,475 tons of invasive aquatic vegetation within the Finger Lakes, Fulton Chain of Lakes, Lake Ontario, Oneida Lake/Three Rivers Area, Madison County Reservoirs, and Tully Lakes; and

WHEREAS, FFLOWPA assesses water quality in 150 lakes and streams at over 1,230 sampling locations annually; data is used to identify pollutant sources, prioritize management actions and evaluate efficacy, document trends, update DEC's statewide Waterbody Inventory and educate citizens and local governments; and

WHEREAS, As part of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), FFLOWPA was awarded \$231,000 in September of 2012 to administer three projects which will help to improve fish populations in Central New York by mitigating barriers to reconnect habitat, to restore ecosystem function, and to improve brook trout and lake sturgeon populations in the Lake Ontario watershed; and

WHEREAS, In 2014, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Lower Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office and the US Geological Survey created three spawning beds equal to 21,600 square feet in the Seneca River adjacent to the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in Seneca County to provide new habitat for species that require clean rock reefs for spawning, especially Lake Sturgeon; and

WHEREAS, During subsequent spawning seasons the effectiveness of the spawning beds will be evaluated; this milestone in collaborative native fish restoration was reached in partnership with the Montezuma NWR, the USFWS Region 5 Office, the Finger Lakes - Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC), and the New York State Canal Corporation; and

WHEREAS, The Great Lakes Basin Project is funded by the Great Lakes

Commission (GLC) through funds provided by the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Conservation Service in conjunction with the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative; the GLC is an interstate compact agency which promotes the orderly, integrated and comprehensive development, use and conservation of water and related natural resources of the

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Great Lakes Basin and the St. Lawrence River; and

WHEREAS, In October of 2012, FLOWPA was awarded \$207,790 by the GLC for the Critical Area Stabilization in the Lake Ontario Watershed

Project; grant funds were used by Cayuga, Onondaga, and Cortland County, in a collaborative effort with units of local government and landowners in New York State to implement hydroseeding and streambank stabilization projects to reduce sediment loading and soil erosion; and

WHEREAS, The Cayuga FLOWPA program addresses several priorities of concern included in the Cayuga County Water Quality Management Strategy such as water quality monitoring, invasive species control, the review and update of watershed rules and regulations, septic system management, streambank stabilization, and education; and

WHEREAS, Funding was used to continue watershed inspections and enforcement of the Cayuga County Sanitary Code, conduct educational programs and implement control measures for invasive and nuisance species including mechanical harvesting of aquatic plants and geese

management at Emerson Park (public beach), continue sediment and nutrient monitoring programs on Owasco Lake tributaries and support local lake association participation in the Citizens Statewide Lake Assessment Program (CSLAP), continue phosphorus education and sampling programs, support the process of updating the Owasco Lake Watershed Rules and Regulations, conduct streambank stabilization work on a priority tributary to Owasco Lake, and coordinate Project WET workshops in Cayuga County and hold a Project WET festival to kick off water education in schools, as well as support interpretive exhibits at Sterling Nature

Center and print materials on shoreline erosion and prevention techniques; and

WHEREAS, Onondaga County's FLOWPA program is guided by the County's Water Quality Strategy which focuses on priority waterbodies and drinking water protection, invasive species control, agricultural best management practices, water quality monitoring, and stormwater management; and

WHEREAS, FLOWPA funding is used to collaborate with Cayuga, Madison, and Oswego Counties and citizen groups on a multifaceted water chestnut control program in the Oneida Lake/Three Rivers system, expand the native plant restoration program where water chestnut has been eliminated, continue to control aquatic plants in Tully Lake, Dertryter Reservoir and Skaneateles Lake, install agricultural best management practices in the Oneida Lake, Otisco Lake, Tully Lake, West Tioughnioga, and Seneca River watersheds, and reduce stormwater runoff and water quality pollution by educating the public (and constructing) rain gardens and other techniques; and

WHEREAS, Cortland County's FLOWPA program continues to be guided by the County's Water Quality Strategy and focuses on identifying and mitigating sources of nonpoint pollution, groundwater resource protection, and educating the public on the importance and vulnerability of the county's water resources; and

WHEREAS, FLOWPA funding is used to provide technical assistance to Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) and other farms by implementing Best Management Practices identified under whole farm planning, hydroseed approximately two miles of road ditches or other disturbed areas, improve road drainage programs for municipalities, assist the Little York Lake Improvement Society and the Tully Lake Association with implementing their management plans, continue collaborating with Tompkins County and the Fall Creek Watershed Committee to monitor the Fall Creek and Virgil Creek watersheds, continue to work with communities, developers, contractors, and consultants to address Phase II Stormwater

regulations for construction activities, provide technical materials to help involved parties better understand responsibilities and requirements and provide technical review of stormwater plans, and continue public awareness programs to encourage local stewardship of water resources including Conservation Field Days, River Cleanup, Rural Landowners' Workshop, Envirothon, Water Festival and Water week; and WHEREAS, 2016 marks the 20th year the Finger Lakes - Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance has effectively and continuously furthered the environmental management and preservation of its lakes and its watershed; and

WHEREAS, It is incumbent upon all citizens to recognize and applaud the efforts of organizations such as the Finger Lakes - Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance which work tirelessly on behalf of protecting our natural surroundings for the benefit of present and future generations of New Yorkers; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 20th Anniversary of the Finger Lakes - Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the Finger Lakes - Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance.