

Ref 9

## Flood Control Channel & Cayuga Inlet Jurisdiction & Responsibility

### **Ownership:**

Army Corp: Flood Control Channel (From outlet at Cayuga Lake south to the end of the Channel, excluding Cayuga Inlet)

DEC: none

Canal Corporation: Cayuga Inlet, from the Lookout Point to Buffalo Street

City of Ithaca: All creeks from upstream outlet

### **Maintenance Responsibility**

Army Corp: none

DEC: for flooding only - all parts of the Flood Control Channel owned by Army Corp

Canal Corporation: for navigation only – Cayuga Inlet from Buffalo Street Bridge to lighthouse

City of Ithaca: all creeks from upstream outlets. All marinas

### **Permitting Authority**

Army Corp: spoil sites

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DEC: all work on all waterways

Canal Corporation: all work from Buffalo Street to Lookout Point in Inlet (east of island)

City of Ithaca: none

The scope of dredging the Cayuga Inlet crosses political boundaries and includes issues that affect economic development, recreational uses, and environmental concerns. Cayuga Lake and Cayuga Inlet are part of the New York State Canal system. It is the responsibility of the Canal Corporation, a

subsidiary of the NYS Thruway Authority, to conduct periodic dredging operations along the canal system to maintain navigability. The last time the southern end of Cayuga Lake was dredged was in 1982. The dredge spoils were deposited in Allen H. Treman State Marine Park. The spoils were dewatered on site, graded, and seeded. This area is now valued for the habitat it provides for nesting birds. According to the Army Corp of Engineers, the Inlet should be dredged every ten years, indicating that the Cayuga Inlet is twenty-four years **overdue** for sedimentation removal. The prolonged period between dredging activities is impacting the economic and recreational value of our waterways, specifically businesses located along the Inlet. .

The need to dredge our waterways has been expressed as a primary concern among area boaters and area marina operators. The Army Corp of Engineers coordinated the dredging of the Flood Control Channel between the Fish Ladder and the State Street/Route 79 Bridge in the summer of 1999. More than 75,000 cubic yards of spoil material was excavated and dewatered on barges and trucked to an approved dredge spoil site in the Town of Ithaca. The dredge spoils from the Flood Control Channel were tested in 1997 by the NYSDEC and found to be clean, Class A materials. Recently, the Army Corps of Engineers has expressed concern that the accumulation of debris in the Cayuga Inlet is beginning to create a bottleneck and raise flood levels in the Inlet south of the Flood Control Channel by several inches. Thus, dredging is not only important for navigation but also critical to the proper functioning of the Army Corp's flood control system in Ithaca.

The DEC tested the sediment quality of the dredge spoil materials during the summer of 2001. Areas of testing were in the Cayuga Inlet, in Six Mile Creek, and in Cascadilla Creek. The creeks are of concerns because of the industrial facilities that were located near the creeks. According to the DEC, if the sediments are clean, Class A materials, they can be hydraulically dredged to a spoil site(s) for dewatering. If the materials are toxic and rated Class B or C, they will most likely have to be mechanically dredged and trucked off site to an approved site.

From soundings done by the Canal Corporation in the summer of 2001, it is anticipated that approximately 400,000 cubic yards of dredge spoils will be removed. According to the Canal Corporation, one or more dewatering sites totaling 20 to 30 acres in size, will need to be secured for this operation.

Additionally, the sites must be within 1 to 1 ½ miles of the Inlet to be within range of the Canal Corporation's hydraulic dredging equipment. Containment areas will be needed for the spoils for about two years, then the dewatered material can be moved.

In order to secure sites for the dredge spoils, it is important that the City, Town, County, and State work together cooperatively to identify suitable sites. This must be a coordinated effort since resources are very limited. The goal is to find a permanent site that can be used repeatedly as the need for dredging arises. This does not preclude the possibility of using some of the dredge spoils for one time uses if feasible. It has been determined that the shoreline of Cass Park has eroded about six feet, so one idea is to use spoils to stabilize that shoreline.

Senator Winner's office is committed to helping see this project come to fruition. We have been meeting on a regular basis with representatives from Finger Lakes State Parks, Senator Winner's office, the Canal Corp., the thruway authority, and the DEC. A member item has been submitted to cover the costs of a topo survey of the city owned festival lands and the previously approved dredge spoil site in Allen H. Treman Marina.