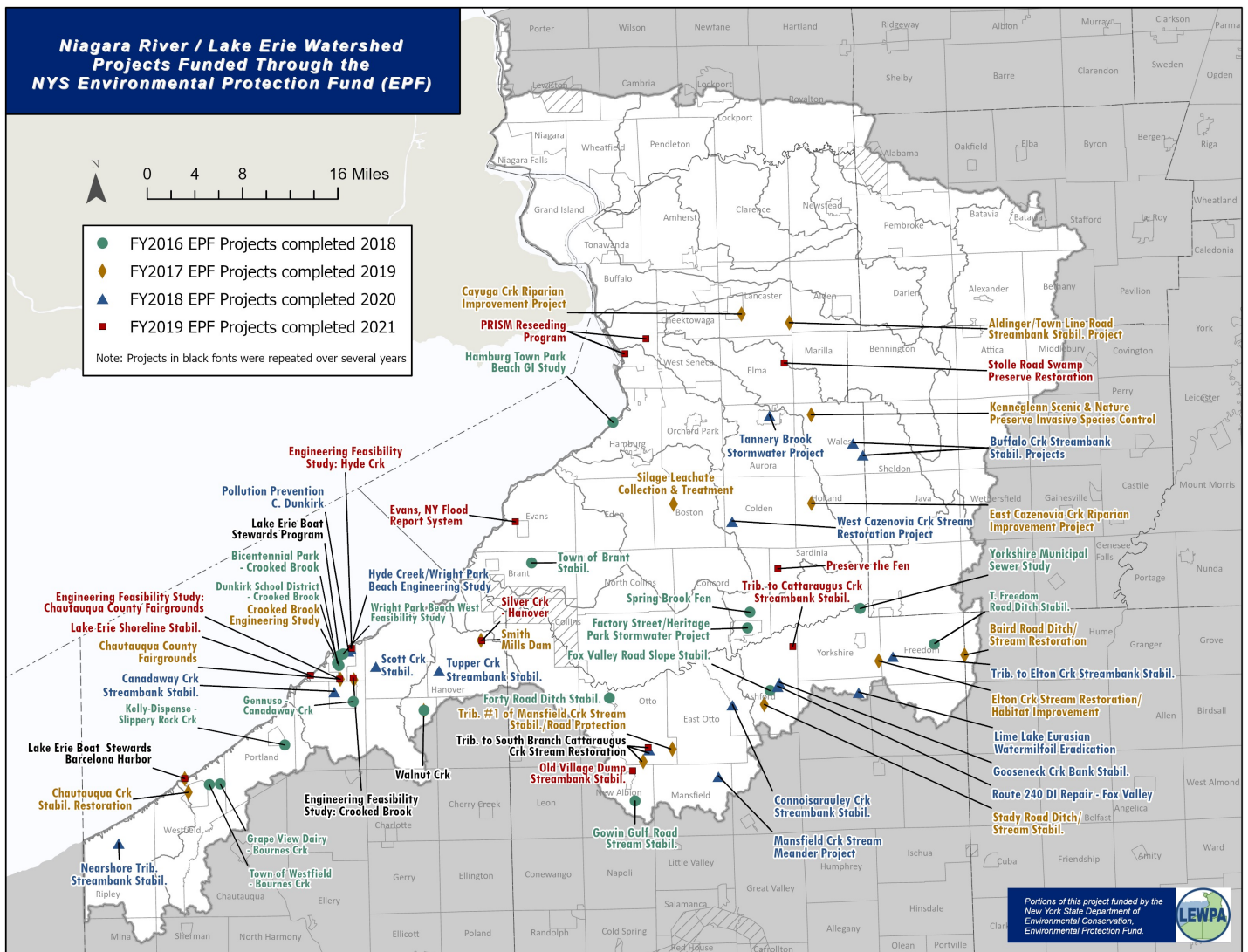


# Annual Report of the Lake Erie Watershed Protection Alliance—2023



The Lake Erie Watershed Protection Alliance (LEWPA) formed in 2012 as an alliance of municipal officials and concerned stakeholders working together within the Niagara River/Lake Erie Watershed including Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, and Erie counties. The mission of LEWPA is to foster collaboration and partnerships within the watershed to address regional water quality and quantity concerns, and in doing so, protect and enhance our Lake Erie resource. [Tinyurl.com/LEWPANY](http://Tinyurl.com/LEWPANY)

**Over four years of funding, LEWPA has partnered on over \$2.6 million in environmental projects to protect and enhance water quality in the region!**



**Portions of these projects were funded by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, Environmental Protection Fund (EPF)**

# NYS EPF Project Highlights

## Village of Cattaraugus

### Landfill Stabilization

Erosion had caused an old agricultural landfill to spill into the creek



## Town of Hanover

### Smith Mills Dam

Funding assisted with the larger project removing the dam to restore fish habitat, stabilize the streambank, and construct a wetland for stormwater detention



## City of Buffalo

### Habitat Restoration

Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management planted seed mixes after removing invasive species



## Cumulative Results of First Four Years of EPF Project Results



## Lake Erie Watershed Protection Alliance Environmental Protection Fund Cumulative Project Results

**242,540** lbs of nutrients    **80,488** tons of sediment

 prevented from entering waterways 

**10,630 ft** stream and road bank stabilized

**100** acres hydroseeded

**\$847,800** investment leveraged **\$1,818,348** additional funds

stormwater treated on **240** acres



**16** feasibility studies or technical assistance reports



**6,575 ft** streamside buffers planted

**96 acres** invasive species management



**5,191** boats inspected for aquatic invasive species

**54,000** people educated

Cumulative results from projects funded by NYSDEC fiscal years 2016, 2017, 2018 & 2019 funding through NYS Environmental Protection Fund



# U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Funding

LEWPA has coordinated another \$1+ million in USEPA funding to assist with two more Lake Erie nearshore projects. One is underway in Chautauqua County at Wright Park Beach and Main Street Beach in Dunkirk and the other is just beginning in Erie County along Muddy Creek in Evans.



## Dunkirk, NY

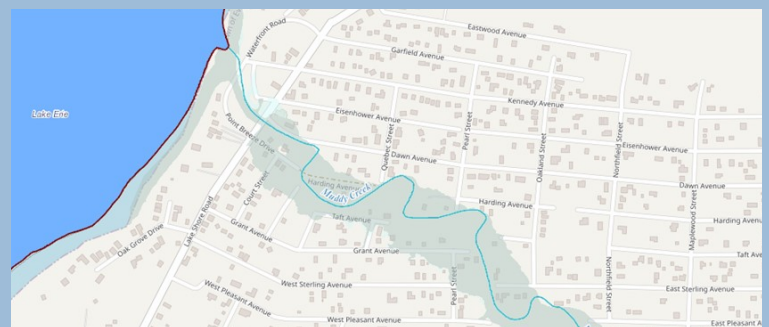
Chautauqua County's Lake Erie beaches often have high indicator bacteria levels, which results in summertime beach closures and an increased risk to public safety, potential loss of summer income, and indicate overall poor water quality in Lake Erie. This project focuses on priority locations along Hyde Creek, which empties onto Wright Park Beach and Main Street Beach in the City of Dunkirk.

The project addresses polluted stormwater runoff from Hyde Creek and a stormwater outfall. It will construct green infrastructure solutions including a shoreline engineered wetland and floodplain benches (pictured with high and low water) to treat approximately 47 million gallons of stormwater runoff annually.

## Evans, NY

There are multiple sections of Muddy Creek that are experiencing severe streambank erosion due to stormwater inflows from the surrounding neighborhood. Work will consist of excavating and sloping areas where streambank erosion is present. It will also remove vegetative debris from the stream channel and invasive species from the stream banks. Both hard engineering and nature-based solutions will be employed.

Plantings will consist of native plants that are appropriate for a riparian habitat, capable of establishing quickly, and have relatively deep, stable roots that will provide protection against soil erosion during high energy channel flows. The anticipated results include improving downstream water quality at the Lake Erie Beach public swimming area (e.g. turbidity, dissolved oxygen, nitrate, phosphate, and fecal coliform); the restoration of critical riparian habitat; and a reduction in localized flooding along the Muddy Creek watershed.



## Upstream Heroes!

In each newsletter, LEWPA will recognize a municipality that is working to protect or restore our water resources. We are all upstream of someone and we all need to do our part to manage our ecosystem resources wisely.

### Eden NY

The Town of Eden was ahead of the curve when the Eden Conservation Advisory Board (ECAB) developed a Natural Resource Inventory and Open Space Index back in 1999. In addition, the Conservation ECAB has received an award from the NYS Association of Conservation Commissions for formulating a Conservation Easement Law. The 2018 Town Comprehensive Plan Update also mentions a creekside open space overlay zone in place with additional protections and site development restrictions to help protect waterways in Eden and downstream.



## Septic Smart for Lake Erie



The objective of this project was to reduce waste at the source by promoting proper maintenance of septic systems in the Niagara River/Lake Erie Watershed through outreach and education.

LEWPA conducted four in-person workshops throughout the three counties and one virtual workshop, which is posted along with maintenance tips at [www.tinyurl.com/septicmart4LE](http://www.tinyurl.com/septicmart4LE). The over 175 attendees were offered a \$30 rebate off a septic tank

pump-out for attending a workshop. Participants of in-person workshops also received goodies such as water conservation kits donated by National Grid, door prizes donated by local pumpers, and magnets reminding them when they are due for a tank pump-out.

Funding was provided by the Environmental Protection Fund as administered by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. Any opinions, findings, and/or interpretations of data contained herein are the responsibility of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the opinions, interpretations, or policy of Rochester Institute of Technology and its NYS Pollution Prevention Institute or the State.

