

Guide to the Finger Lakes Ecology Association Collection

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COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

Environmental activism in Tompkins County and the greater Finger Lakes area often centers on the health and well-being of our stunning lakes. Founded in Geneva, New York in 1995, the Finger Lakes Ecology Association was concerned with water levels on Cayuga and Seneca Lakes. The mission of this small non-profit was “to engage in non-partisan analysis, study, and/or research of those factors that have an impact on the ecology of the Oswego River basin (including without limitation Seneca and Cayuga Lakes) in the state of New York.” Regarding the lakes’ levels, the group advocated that they be treated as a “system” instead of separate entities, and that their watershed be considered one unit. They maintained that there should be a “scientifically valid understanding of the complexities of the hydrology and ecology of this vast system” and that people understand and appreciate “how watersheds and floodplain function as holistic partners.”

The group recommended careful adherence to sustainable water levels in both lakes that would enable recreational use to be maintained as well as protection for local wildlife and lakeside home owners. They did their work from 1995 until they were disbanded in 2011.

This collection contains the organization’s by-laws as well as numerous informational pieces that introduce researchers to their work. The Executive Summary to the Oswego River Basin Study served as the basis for much of their plan for Cayuga Lake water level management.

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