

July 26, 2018

Skano (Peace and greetings)

This letter is to give the Cayuga Nation's support for the DEC Wetland Restoration grant. I am writing as one of the ten sachems (chiefs) of the Cayuga Nation. I have been honored to get to know the New Roots School staff and students and their commitment to the environment with projects like the Wetlands Restoration Project. As a Sachem, I am a member of the Haudenosaunee Environmental Task Force (HETF) which works to address environmental degradation in Haudenosaunee communities by developing culturally appropriate environmental education, restoration, and protection strategies developed by the Haudenosaunee traditional way of life. The HETF includes our beliefs in the cyclical and interrelated nature of reality. The Cayuga Nation is dedicated to conserve, preserve, protect, and restore the environmental, natural and cultural resources; to promote the health and survival for future generations; and to fulfill our responsibilities to the natural world as our Creator instructed without jeopardizing peace, sovereignty, or treaty obligations. We are the original environmentalists.

The project they are proposing will be to expand the planting of cattail, arrowhead, and calamus to watershed/inlet areas feeding into the southern end of Cayuga Lake. This will help filter the water before it ever hits the southern shoreline and reduces harmful Algae blooms. This is especially important now because as of July 24th The Tompkins County Health Department urges visitors of Cayuga Lake to be aware of the algae blooms with their harmful toxins to people and animals while taking part in water activities this summer.

New Roots School also wishes to create a program that removes oil-based paved roads and propose road construction that is more natural, such as gravel with vehicle weight distribution metal grates under the gravel to support cars. This will reduce the amount of oil runoff getting into key waters systems like Fall Creek, Six Mile Creek, and Cascadilla Creek. Farming runoff, construction runoff, oil and other environmental pollutants create pollution that hurts Cayuga Lake, which has already been labeled by the DEC as an impaired body of water.

This project not only captures revitalization of Cayuga Lake, but creates an opportunity for the students to form a building of personal relations with nature's traditional way of life. It will create essential ways of knowing and being for humankind to have healthy relationships with each other and with the environment. Their active continual engagement in the stewardship of culture and the environment will help them in their future.

Oneh,

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