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Water Quality Study of the Finger Lakes

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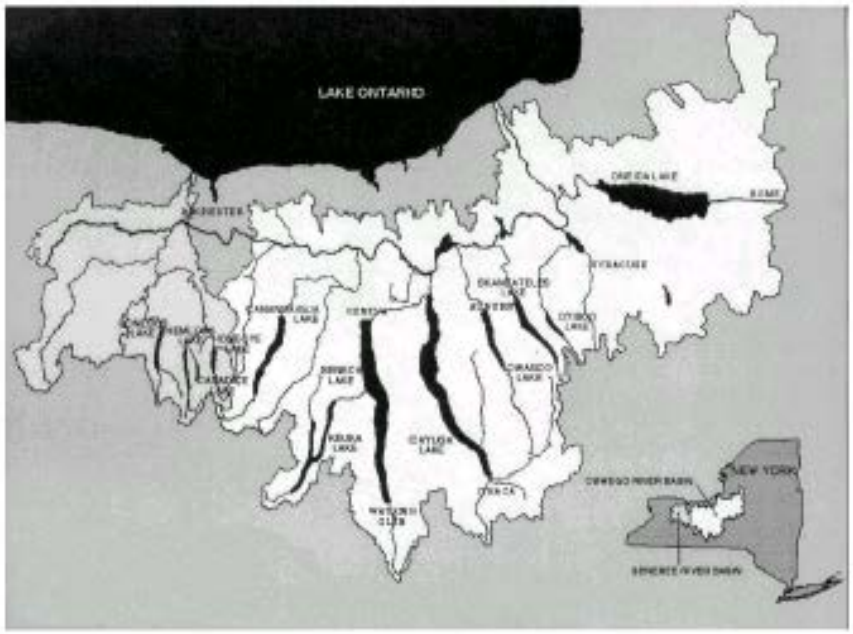

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

George E. Pataki, *Governor*

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Acknowledgements

As is often the case in a study such as this, certain hurdles must be overcome if the project is to be successful. This study was certainly no exception to the rule. Most notable of these hurdles was the coincidence of the later portion of the sediment coring investigation with one of the largest tornado outbreaks in New York State history. On June 2, 1998 while sampling Canadice Lake the field crew came within a mere few miles of one of these storms. In fact, severe thunderstorm activity in the area resulted in the loss of our initial sediment core from Canadice Lake when a significant wind gust toppled the core as it rested on shore.

The Sediment Core Investigation would not have been possible without the significant efforts of Bruce Garabedian and Chandler Rowell of the NYSDEC, Hank Mullins and Chris Lajewski from Syracuse University, Ron Pause of the NYSDOH, and Mike Perry from Columbia Analytical Services. I would also like to extend my appreciation to Dick Draper, Frank Esterbrooks, Ron Sloan, and Karen Woodfield from the NYSDEC, as well as John Halfman from Hobart and William Smith College, Fred Luckey of the USEPA, and Dick Yager of the USGS for their assistance in this portion of the project.

The Synoptic Water Quality Investigation was also not immune to the erratic nature of weather in this picturesque part of New York State. While Skaneateles Lake is one of the most majestic waterbodies in the Empire State, it's weather patterns can be down right confounding. We have been forced to seek safe harbor during several of our sampling excursions on Skaneateles Lake. Most notable of these episodes occurred on August 8, 1996, when an intense thunderstorm, of approximately 3-4 hours duration, stalled over the northern end of Skaneateles Lake and caused us to beat a hasty, and premature, retreat from the lake. My advise to all who venture onto this magnificent body of water is to always keep an eye to the sky.

The Synoptic Water Quality Investigation, which is continuing at present, is a collaborative effort, and would not be possible without the considerable efforts of Scott Cook and Matt Romocki from NYSDEC Region 7 Water, Denise Richardson, Web Pearsol, Gene Lane, and Dan Mulhul form NYSDEC Region 8 Fisheries, and Steve Effler, Carol Brooks, Bruce Wagner, and Nicholas Ohrazda of the Upstate Freshwater Institute – who provided significant assistance with the inception of this study. I would also like to thank Bill Abraham, Jay Bloomfield, Robert Bauer, Steve Eidt, Ricardo Lopez-Torrijos, Chris O'Connor, Tom Pearson, Howard Pike, and Les Wedge, of the NYSDEC, Ed Bugliosi, Dave Eckhardt, and Bill Kappel of the USGS, Ed Mills of the Cornell Biological Field Station, Larry Eichler from the Darrin Freshwater Institute, and Terry Faber of the USEPA for their assistance in this investigation.

Finally, I would like to thank my daughters, Nora and Caitlin, and my wife Amy for there insightful questions during the writing of this report. Their insistence on a recitation of the days events, and a clear explanation of findings, prompted significant thought and revision of this report. For example, the glossary for this report is largely an outgrowth of their inquiries.

Front Cover: NASA 1991 Landsat Infrared Image

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