

## **Town of DeWitt, Onondaga County**

DeWitt is an eastern suburb of Syracuse and is situated in the southwest portion of the Oneida Lake watershed. The Shoppingtown Mall, major manufacturing plants, office and industrial parks are located along Erie Boulevard and throughout the town. DeWitt encompasses 33.9 square miles of land area, with no section bordering Oneida Lake. 65% of the town is located within the Oneida Lake watershed. According to the Census, the Town contained 24,071 people in 2000 and had experienced a 4% population decline between 1990 and 2000. The median age in 2000 was 41 years and the average household size was 2.3 persons. Median household income was \$46,795. There were 10,694 housing units in the town, 4.4% of which had been built between 1990 and 2000.

DeWitt and other municipalities throughout the Syracuse area rely primarily on Skaneateles Lake for their water supply. The City of Syracuse Department of Water provides retail water service to the entire City of Syracuse. The City's water supply is occasionally augmented with water from the Metropolitan Water Board, which is supplied by Lake Ontario waters. The Onondaga County Water Authority (OCWA) has also contracted to provide water services in parts of Onondaga County. Within the Oneida Lake watershed OCWA's wholesale and retail service area includes the Towns of Cicero, Dewitt, Manlius, Onondaga, Lafayette, Pompey, and the Villages of East Syracuse, Minoa, Fayetteville and Manlius.

As a result of influences from Lake Ontario, Syracuse and its neighboring towns and villages have the largest annual snowfall of any metropolitan area in the United States with a population over 200,000. Precipitation from DeWitt drains to Oneida Lake via Butternut Creek which flows north through the Jamesville Reservoir and under an Erie Canal aqueduct in the Town of Dewitt. Butternut joins the north flowing Limestone Creek approximately 1.5 miles north of the Village of Minoa in Onondaga County. Within less than a mile, the stream then joins Chittenango Creek in the northern portion of the Town of Manlius and flows into Oneida Lake six miles farther north near Bridgeport. The CNY RPDB and the NYS DEC's RIBS program have conducted water quality monitoring, biological monitoring, and erosion surveys on Butternut Creek.

## **Assessment Results**

DeWitt is an active participant in the Phase II Stormwater Program and effectively addresses soil erosion and sedimentation issues. It follows State and Federal flooding/flood plain requirements of the national flood insurance program. DeWitt requires construction of riparian corridors and is addressing streambank erosion and flooding in Butternut Creek. The Army Corps of Engineers conducted a flooding study along Butternut Creek several years ago and determined that public works construction options were infeasible to mitigate flooding problems.

The Highway Department operates a stream and drainage embankment program. Areas are cleared of sediment, which is then spread over the embankment, seeded, and mowed. Seeding and mowing prevent soil from eroding back into the bed. The mowing also allows sunlight exposure to the surface water, thereby reducing the spread of mosquitoes. The Highway Department is also responsible for installation and maintenance of the public storm drainage systems, which include underground storm-water pipes, catch basins, yard inlets and outlets, drainage ditches, and some holding ponds. Storm drainage systems are cleared

of obstructions on a regular basis with critical areas inspected and cleared before and after major storms.

The Town of DeWitt has several laws in place that help to regulate the water quality of Oneida Lake including zoning, subdivision regulations (with references to stormwater regulations and cluster development), and site plan review. Chapter 83 of the DeWitt Town code provides guidelines on the formation of water, sewer, or drainage districts, zoning changes, and information on site plan reviews. Portions of this chapter are based on the New York Codes, Rules, and Regulations.

A Comprehensive Plan, adopted by the DeWitt Planning Board in May 2002, promotes a greater protection of environmental and cultural resources than prior plans. It includes guidelines for ground and surface water quality, erosion, and flooding.

In 1972, the DeWitt Town Board created a volunteer-based DeWitt Advisory Conservation Commission in order to encourage unified action on environmental problems. The Commission is charged with advising the Town Board on matters affecting the preservation, development and use of the natural and man-made features and conditions of the Town of DeWitt insofar as beauty, quality, biologic integrity and other environmental factors are concerned. The Commission also informs the Board of major threats posed to environmental quality.

<b>Town of Dewitt</b>	<b>Full or Partial Implementation</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
1. Development - total	37 of 42 (88%)	0
1a. Existing	15 of 20 (75%)	0
1b. New and substantial redevelopment	22 of 22 (100%)	0
2. Forestry / Agriculture - total	1 of 12 (08%)	11
2a. Forestry	1 of 10 (10%)	9
2b. Agriculture	0 of 2 (0%)	2
3. Waterways / Wetlands - total	15 of 16 (94%)	1
3a. Modified waterways	9 of 10 (90%)	1
3b. Wetlands and Riparian Area Mgmt/Restoration	6 of 6 (100%)	0
4. Marinas - total	0 of 48 (0%)	0
4a. Existing Marinas	0 of 20 (0%)	0
4b. New Marinas	0 of 18 (0%)	0
4c. Existing and New Marinas	0 of 10 (0%)	0
5. Roads and Bridges - total	24 of 26 (92%)	2
5a. New Roads and Bridges	6 of 6 (100%)	1
5b. Existing Roads and Bridges	12 of 13 (91%)	0
5c. New & Existing Roads & Bridges	6 of 7 (86%)	1
OWTS	6 of 7(86%)	0

## **Summary and Recommendations**

A few areas in the southern portion of the DeWitt (Jamesville area) experience occasional problems associated with failing on-site wastewater treatment systems. Local control for onsite system management is not addressed in current zoning or subdivision laws and municipal officials lack the authority to enforce maintenance and inspection practices necessary to ensure adequate septic function. The review process goes through the Onondaga County Department of Health. The county is also responsible for investigating septic complaints and calls that the town receives are referred to the county for further investigation.

New York State and the Onondaga County Health Department are responsible for on-site sanitary treatment laws and enforcement but municipalities have the authority to offer an additional level of regulation for routine inspections and maintenance. Based on the assessment process, the CNY RPDB recommends that existing local zoning laws be amended to include additional guidelines for on-site wastewater systems in the Jamesville area. The complete Onsite Wastewater System Model Law can be found in Appendix G. Additional information is available in the Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council publication called, "Protecting Water Resources Through Local Controls and Practices: An Assessment Manual for New York Municipalities."

Municipalities have authority and primary responsibility for local roadway, bridge, and drainage maintenance. The CNY RPDB recommends that municipalities continue to implement stormwater controls and provide educational opportunities to update highway and public works department staff on current road, bridge, and drainage BMPs. Additional recommendations are found in a section titled "Road, Drainage Way, and Bridge Recommendations" (IV B) of the introductory narrative.

## **Municipal Contacts**

- Jim Conlon, Town Code Enforcement Officer
- Andrew Worden, Deputy Code Enforcement Officer
- Brian Maxwell, Superintendent of Highways
- Mark Parish, Engineer, O'Brien and Gere

## **Local Laws Reviewed**

- Code of the Town of DeWitt (Environmental Quality Review Act, Chapter 83)
- Zoning Ordinance of the Town of DeWitt
- Town of DeWitt Subdivision Regulations of 1971
- Zoning maps
- Comprehensive Plan (2002)
- Flood Damage Protection Ordinance