

A Management Strategy for Oneida Lake and its Watershed



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Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board
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The Oneida Lake Watershed

If you live in the area outlined on this map, you are in the Oneida Lake watershed. A watershed is the total land area that drains into a stream, river, or lake. Spanning 872,722 acres (or 1,364 square miles), the Oneida Lake watershed encompasses six counties and 69 cities, towns, and villages. All the surface and ground water from precipitation and snowmelt within the entire region drains into Oneida Lake. Decisions regarding land use within the watershed have a direct influence on the water quality and aquatic biology in the lake. The protection of Oneida Lake involves all land, lakes and streams throughout the entire region.



Figure 1: Oneida Lake Watershed

Municipalities in the Oneida Lake Watershed

CORTLAND COUNTY

Town of Cuyler*
Town of Preble*
Town of Truxton*

LEWIS COUNTY

Town of Lewis
Town of Montague
Town of Martinsburg
Town of Osceola
Town of Turin
Town of West Turin

MADISON COUNTY

City of Oneida
Town of Cazenovia
Town of DeRuyter
Town of Eaton
Town of Fenner
Town of Lenox
Town of Lincoln
Town of Madison*
Town of Nelson
Town of Smithfield
Town of Stockbridge
Town of Sullivan
Village of Canastota
Village of Cazenovia
Village of Chittenango
Village of Munnsville
Village of Wampsville

ONEIDA COUNTY

City of Rome (inner and outer district)
City of Sherrill
Town of Annsville
Town of Augusta
Town of Ava
Town of Camden
Town of Florence

Town of Kirkland*
Town of Lee
Town of Marshall*
Town of Verona
Town of Veron
Town of Vienna
Town of Western*
Town of Westmoreland
Village of Camden
Village of Oneida Castle
Village of Sylvan Beach
Village of Vernon

ONONDAGA COUNTY

City of Syracuse
Town of Cicero
Town of Dewitt
Town of Fabius
Town of Lafayette
Town of Manlius
Town of Onondaga
Town of Pompey
Town of Tully
Village of East Syracuse
Village of Fayetteville
Village of Manlius
Village of Minoa

OSWEGO COUNTY

Town of Amboy
Town of Albion*
Town of Constantia
Town of Hastings
Town of Orwell*
Town of Parish
Town of Redfield
Town of West Monroe
Town of Williamstown
Village of Central Square
Village of Cleveland

** Indicates municipalities that have less than a one-half square mile (0.5 mi²) of land located within the watershed boundary. This list was compiled from data prepared by the Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency, April 2001*

Foreword

As Chairman of the Oneida Lake Watershed Advisory Council Board of Directors, I am pleased to present *A Management Strategy for Oneida Lake and its Watershed*. This report culminates almost four years of research, planning and coordination by the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board, the Watershed Advisory Council Board of Directors, and many additional watershed leaders. During this time, I have attended nearly 40 meetings addressing the complex political, economic, and environmental issues involved in lake and watershed management planning. The volunteers and professionals that have worked alongside me throughout this process have contributed countless hours of their time and a wealth of knowledge and experience to help preserve and protect our watershed. We hope additional volunteers will become involved. In doing so they will become stewards of a self-sustaining process in which the lake community takes an active role in setting goals and making decisions.

During the month of August, the watershed became a storm attractant. It seemed that every week we received one to two inches of rain. However, the last weekend of the month was the storm that added the proverbial “one drop too many.” Our creeks and storm systems were overwhelmed. The treatment plant that I manage was inundated and processed a one-day record amount of water. As I spent hour after hour with my staff keeping track of the collection system and treatment plant, I sought refuge in thoughts of what it would be like without these systems and the cooperative planning process they represent. The treatment plant is a perfect example of why watershed planning is important. There is power in cooperative stewardship. Rene Dubos, a Pasteur Institute Microbiologist and essayist, authored a book entitled the *Wooing of Earth*. His premise regarding the complex issues of environmental sustainability under pressures from human inhabitants is summed up within the concept of stewardship. *Wooing the Earth*, the romantic phrasing of the book, expresses this dynamic. In participating as a steward one becomes part of the communities’ self-determination. One must romance sustainability from the Earth. In order for us to do this we must place value in our surroundings. We do this through our choices with respect to our water and land based resources. This analysis is always done with a backdrop of both political and economic forces.

Watershed planning is the fundamental way in which to organize these dynamics. A watershed is a unit we can see and understand. For most of us it represents the obvious - streams, lakes, fish, forests and fields. For some of us it represents change - a camp to a year round house, a farm field to a new housing community, the slow subsidence of a stream bank into the creek. Many of these changes become rallying cries for people to stop and think about their actions and impacts on the watershed. A watershed plan allows for change to take place and provides information and knowledge to prepare for the impacts of those changes. The plan can also help us measure those impacts and guide us to better manage water resources in the future. I believe *A Management Strategy for Oneida Lake and its Watershed* represents an important step in creating the path to a sustainable Oneida Lake community. Our water and land resources are some of our most important assets. I hope this report and the others available on the website “*woo*” your romance for this watershed and the people that live here.

Thank you.

Dan Ramer, City of Oneida Sanitary Engineer
Chairman, Oneida Lake and Watershed Advisory Council

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Our gratitude and appreciation also goes to the additional agencies, non-profit organizations, municipal representatives, elected officials, homeowners, lake users, and other watershed stakeholders that have contributed time, expertise, and resources to this project over the past few years. Their assistance is greatly appreciated. Their immeasurable hard work, enthusiasm, and dedication serves as the backbone of this report and reflects on the remarkable level of watershed-wide cooperation.

And finally, a special thanks goes out to the hardworking members of the Oneida Lake Watershed Advisory Council Board of Directors who continue to provide leadership and guidance in the protection of our valuable water resources.

The following groups contributed staff time, information, facilities, and additional resources to this Project

Atlantic Salmon Fish Creek Club
Boating Industries Association
Certified Environmental Services, Inc.
CNY Boating Industry Association
CNY Regional Planning and
Development Board
CNY Waterways Association
Cornell Cooperative Extension
Cornell University
Cornell University Biological Field Station
Cornell University School of Industrial and
Labor Relations
County Departments of Transportation
County Health Departments: Madison,
Oneida, Onondaga, and Oswego Counties
County Tourism/Visitors Bureaus: Lewis,
Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, and Oswego
Counties
Eastern Ontario Anglers Association
Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning
Council
Hamilton College

Herkimer-Oneida Counties Comprehensive
Planning Program
Lewis County Chamber of Commerce
Lewis County Planning Department
Madison County Planning Department
Madison County Tourism Department
Municipal Highway Departments
Municipal Officials
New York Rural Water Association
New York Sea Grant
North Shore Council of Governments
Northern Oneida County Council of
Governments
NYS Assembly
NYS BASS Federation
NYS Canal Corporation
NYS Department of Health
NYS Department of Transportation
NYS Dept of Environmental Conservation
Regions 6 and 7 and the Albany office
NYS Emergency Management Office
NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and
Historic Preservation

NYS Office of Real Property Services
NYS Park Police
NYS Police
NYS Senate
NYS Soil and Water Conservation
Committee
NYS Tug Hill Commission
Oneida City Wastewater Treatment Plant
Oneida County Dept. of Public Works
Oneida County Environmental Mgt. Council
Oneida County Convention and Visitors
Bureau
Oneida County Sheriffs Department
Oneida Lake Association, Inc.
Oneida Lake Chamber of Commerce
Oneida Lake Fishing Charters
Oneida Lake Watershed Advisory Council
Oneida Lake Watershed Agriculture
Advisory Committee
Oneida Lake Watershed Agriculture
Program
Oneida Lake Watershed Task Force
Executive Committee
Oneida Lake Watershed Task Force Land
Use Committee
Oneida Shores County Park
Onondaga Community College
Onondaga County Department of Water
Environment Protection
Onondaga County Flood Advisory
Committee
Onondaga County Legislature
Onondaga County Office of the
Environment
Onondaga County Parks

Onondaga County Water Authority
Oswego County Department of Planning
and Community Development
Oswego County Department of Promotion
and Tourism
Oswego County Legislature
Oswego County Sheriffs Department
Project Watershed of CNY
Restaurant and Marina Owners
Salmo Enterprise
Salmon River Council of Governments
Salt City Bassmasters Club
Soil and Water Conservation Districts:
Cortland, Lewis, Madison, Oneida,
Onondaga, and Oswego Counties
South Shore Association
SUNY Brockport
SUNY College of Environmental Science
and Forestry
Syracuse Convention and Visitors Bureau
Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning
Agency
The Great Swamp Conservancy
Tug Hill Resources Investment for
Tomorrow
Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Geological Survey
USDA-Natural Resource Conservation
Service
Water Quality Coordinating Committees:
Lewis, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga and
Oswego Counties

Acronyms

AAC	Agricultural Advisory Committee	NYSAM	New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets
AEM	Agricultural Environmental Management	NYSCC	New York State Canal Corporation
AFS	American Fisheries Society	NYS DEC	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
AI	Academic Institutions (Hamilton College, Cornell University, SUNY ESF, and others)	NYS DOS	New York State Department of State
APHIS	Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service	NYS DOT	New York State Department of Transportation
ASFCC	Atlantic Salmon Fish Creek Club	NY SEMO	New York State Emergency Management Office
BASS	Salt City Bassmasters Club	NYS FOLA	New York State Federation of Lake Associations
CBFS	Cornell Biological Field Station	NYSG	New York Sea Grant
CCE	Cornell Cooperative Extension	NYS OPRHP	New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
CDS	County Drainage and Sanitation	OLA	Oneida Lake Association
CEO	Code Enforcement Officer	OLWAC	Oneida Lake Watershed Advisory Council
CGA	Coast Guard Auxiliary	OLWAP	Oneida Lake Watershed Agricultural Program
CIRIS	Cornell Institute for Research Information Systems	OMNR	Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources
CNMP	Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan	ORPS	Office of Real Property Services
CNY RPDB	Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board	OTN	New York State Onsite Wastewater Treatment Training Network
CU	Cornell University	Parks	Parks Department (local/county/state)
DFO	Department of Fisheries and Oceans (Canada)	PC	Private Consultant
EEB	Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, Cornell University	Planning	County Planning Departments
EL	Environmental Lobbying Organizations	Police	State Police/Local Police/Sheriffs Departments
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency	POLW	Project Oneida Lake Watershed
FL-LOWPA	Finger Lakes-Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance	PWC	Personal Watercraft
FSA	Farm Service Agency	RPB	Regional Planning Boards
GLFC	Great Lakes Fisheries Commission	SOLWR	State of the Lake and Watershed Report (Oneida Lake)
Health	County/State Health Departments	SSPS	Syracuse Sail and Power Squadron
Highway	County Highway Departments	SWCD	Soil and Water Conservation Districts
HO	Homeowners	TKN	Total Kjeldahl Nitrogen
HOCCPP	Herkimer-Oneida Counties Comprehensive Planning Program	TSP	Technical Service Provider
LA	Lake Association	USACOE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
LO	Land Owner	USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
LSU	Louisiana State University	USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
M	Municipalities	USEPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
MS4	Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System	USGS	United States Geological Survey
MVWA	Mohawk Valley Water Authority	WQCC	Water Quality Coordinating Committee (County)
NRCS	Natural Resource Conservation Service		
NWS	National Weather Service		