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# Oneida Lake and Watershed

## Management Planning and Implementation Project



**2003 Year in Review /  
2004 Planning Strategy**



# Oneida Lake and Watershed Management Planning and Implementation Project

## 2003 Year In Review

Compiled by the  
Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board

### **Report Preparation**

*“State of the Lake and Watershed Report” (SOLWR)*

*“A Management Strategy for Oneida Lake and its Watershed”*

The SOLWR was finalized and received final endorsement by the Watershed Advisory Council, the DEC, and the EPA last spring. Approximately 100 color copies were distributed to agencies, organizations, libraries, non-profit groups, and Watershed Advisory Council Board members.

Seven Working Groups were then formed to develop recommendations for the high priority problem areas throughout the lake and watershed. CNY RPDB distributed meeting announcements to Council Board members and to municipalities, agencies and organizations throughout the watershed. Meeting announcements are also placed on the Oneida Lake Management Plan website. CNY RPDB was responsible for helping with meeting agendas, finding meeting locations, taking minutes, running the meetings, maintaining mailing and e-mail contact lists, handling communications, reporting to the Watershed Advisory Council, and ensuring that the process stays on schedule. Working Groups are developing recommendations for Flooding & Water Level Management, Erosion & Sedimentation, On-Site Septic Systems, Road Deicing and Salt Storage, Fisheries, Exotic Species, and Boating. Through a contract agreement with CNY RPDB, Cooperative Extension of Onondaga County took responsibility for the Boating Working Group and also contributed to the Road Deicing and Salt Storage Working Group.

Final recommendations from the Working Groups are currently being presented to the Watershed Advisory Council for endorsement and public meetings will be scheduled to encourage homeowner and lake user feedback. All recommendations will then be presented in a report titled, “A Management Strategy for Oneida Lake and its Watershed” that is scheduled for distribution in the fall of 2004. The “Strategy” will also contain an Executive Summary of the SOLWR. The draft for the Executive Summary has been written and is available for review by Advisory Council members.

### **Education, Outreach, and Public Participation Programs**

42 people attended the Stream and Floodplain Restoration Forum on March 26. Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) organized the program with funding and assistance provided by CNY RPDB. Presentations and a luncheon were held at a restaurant in Cazenovia, followed by a bus tour of the watershed in the afternoon. CNY RPDB joined the CCE, SWCD, and Planning Department staff, and a consultant from Connecticut on visits to several water resource problem sites.

CNY RPDB gave presentations (PowerPoint and other) about the Oneida Lake Watershed Management Plan at the annual NYS Wetlands Forum, the NYS AWRA annual meeting, numerous County Water Quality Coordinating Committees (WQCC), the Oneida County EMC/WQCC, the Oneida Lake Association, the Madison County Board of Supervisors (with assistance from D. Ramer), and monthly CNY RPDB Environmental Management Committee meetings. Educational material was distributed at all events.

CNY RPDB continues to distribute press releases to all regional newspapers in order to highlight project milestones. A meeting was held with CNY RPDB, D. Ramer, and a staff writer from the Syracuse Newspaper in August to encourage greater press coverage for Oneida Lake projects.

A new tabletop display was created and educational handouts were prepared for the Oneida Lake Association annual meeting. A new watershed management planning program brochure was also developed for general promotional purposes.

Assistance was provided to the Finger Lake – Lake Ontario Watershed Planning Alliance (FL-LOWPA) in preparations for their June 27<sup>th</sup> meeting. CNY RPDB continues to write letters of support for FL-LOWPA funding requests.

"Sensitive Areas and Development Suitability" maps were prepared for several Oneida Lake shoreline communities. Letters were also sent to Madison, Onondaga, Oneida, and Oswego Counties to offer GIS mapping services. The maps illustrate data features that can assist municipalities with development decisions and display existing land use, generalized areas prone to flooding, regulated wetlands, and population.

CNY RPDB participated in a meeting sponsored by the Army Corps of Engineers that addressed flooding problems in the Town of DeWitt and also participated in a roundtable discussion at Wells College to discuss New York State watershed initiatives.

Six presentations were held for the "Know Your Lake" lecture series during the summer months. Cornell Cooperative Extension spearheaded this project with funding and assistance from the CNY RPDB and the Watershed Advisory Council. Over two hundred people from the Oneida Lake community learned about topics such as salmon restoration, the history of tourism, aquatic plants, and lake water levels.

Program newsletters were sent to approximately 500 elected representatives and stakeholders. The Oneida Lake management plan website is also maintained on a regular basis. A restricted website was developed to improve communication and the availability of the Working Group recommendations.

Cooperative Extension (lead agency), CNY RPDB, the Watershed Advisory Council, and several other groups are preparing for a regional conference on septic waste management scheduled in February 2004.

CNY RPDB continues to maintain ties and facilitate outreach efforts with County Water Quality Coordinating Committees and other significant organizations throughout the watershed.

### **Watershed Advisory Council**

Meetings of the Watershed Advisory Council Board of Directors are held each month. CNY RPDB works with D. Ramer (Chairman) to compile background information, handle meeting preparations, make arrangements for guest speakers, maintain mailing lists, and set meeting agendas. A Municipal Resolution to support the Oneida Lake watershed management planning process was sent to the 65 watershed municipalities. Formal documentation of municipal endorsement will be used for grant applications.

### **Task Force Committees**

The Executive Committee was disbanded as soon as the Watershed Advisory Council was established. The Technical Committee met on several occasions to discuss the monitoring program and the distribution of grant funding. The Education Committee didn't meet formally during 2003 but members were consulted by phone and e-mail when educational events were planned. Land Use, Education, and Technical Committee members have been active participants on the Working Groups.

### **Baseline and Storm-Event Monitoring**

A two-year baseline and storm-event sampling program on primary Oneida Lake tributaries was successfully completed in 2003. The laboratory analyses were done at Life Science Laboratories. CNY RPDB served as the program coordinator and worked with the sampling teams from four counties to ensure staff and equipment availability and uniform field procedures throughout the region. J. Makarewicz (SUNY Brockport) summarized the water chemistry results and prepared a final report that was presented to the Task Force Technical Committee and at the FL-LOWPA conference in June. The final report was then distributed to Technical Committee members and was added to the Oneida Lake management plan website.

Certificates of Appreciation were sent to the County partners that assisted with this phase of the tributary monitoring program. An inventory was also conducted of all CNY RPDB watershed monitoring equipment, and County groups were notified that it was available for their use on a loan basis.

The Technical Committee selected Oneida Creek for future sampling based on high levels of sediment loading. CNY RPDB and J. Makarewicz planned a Segment Analysis sampling program and prepared a quality assurance form to document the procedures. The Technical Committee, the NYS DEC, and the EPA approved this report. CNY RPDB worked with Technical Committee members to develop maps and compile recommendations for sampling locations. County groups (Planning and SWCDs) were consulted and encouraged to help with homeowner notification and site access on private property. Two sampling sessions for the Segment Analysis took place in 2003, during which a CNY RPDB sampling team collected samples at 18 sites during storm event and baseline conditions. Samples were sent to SUNY Brockport for analysis. The sampling team also investigated and photographed upstream sites to identify potential sources of sediment loading.

### **Chemical Application for Plant Control**

A permit was granted by the DEC to chemically treat eight acres in Oneida Lake with the granular form of Aqua-Kleen for the control of water chestnut. The CNY RPDB, the Watershed Advisory Council, and the Oneida Lake Association participated in the application process and assisted with the distribution of homeowner notification letters.

### **Watershed Improvement Projects**

Grant funding was provided to several projects in 2003 in support of the Oneida Lake watershed management plan. CNY RPDB handled administrative responsibilities for these projects and funding was provided by the NYS DEC using dollars from the Environmental Protection Fund. The projects are briefly summarized below. Technical reports and additional information is also found on the website.

- Oneida Lake Shoreline Restoration Project (grant recipient: Madison County Planning Department; Status: completed)
- Oneida Creek Sanitary Non-Point Source Pollution Control Evaluation / Implementation Plan (grant recipient: the City of Oneida on behalf of the Oneida Creek Water Quality Improvement Task Force; Status: report submitted and currently under technical review)
- Analysis of the Oneida Creek Delta in South Bay, Oneida Lake (grant recipient: Hamilton College in cooperation with the Madison County Planning Department; Status: in progress)
- Watershed Agricultural Project (grant recipient Oneida County SWCD on behalf of the SWCD managers in the five watershed counties; Status: in progress). The agriculture program has continued as a four-county cooperative venture to reduce nonpoint source pollution loading to Oneida Lake and its tributaries from agricultural land.

### **Subcontracts**

In support of the watershed management plan, CNY RPDB has maintained subcontracts with the City of Oneida, Hamilton College, the Madison County Planning Department, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Onondaga County, Cornell Biological Field Station, Herkimer County Comprehensive Planning Program, Oneida County SWCD, Life Science Laboratories, SUNY Research Foundation, Joe Makarewicz (SUNT Brockport), and Ron Seeber (Cornell).

### **Program Funding**

A Watershed Advisory Council Finance Committee was created and is responsible for reviewing grant opportunities. CNY RPDB worked with the Advisory Council and several watershed groups (Oneida Lake Association, Cornell University, Cooperative Extension, Planning Departments, Soil and Water Conservation Districts) to define goals and budget specifics for grant proposals and funding requests. A grant was submitted to the NYS Department of State in June 2003. Many additional groups contributed endorsement letters and provided assistance. As of December, grant awards had not yet been announced. Several organizations were also consulted to determine funding needs for the next two years. This information was included in a funding request that was submitted to Congressman Walsh.

CNY RPDB worked with D. Ramer and C. Gray of the Advisory Council to develop a PowerPoint presentation for the Council Board of Directors to generate discussion on lobbying and grant opportunities for continued funding. A summary of state and federal grants relevant to water resource projects was compiled.

**CNY RPDB - MEETINGS AND EVENTS in 2003**

1/9	SOLWR meeting with printer	7/29	Army Corps of Engineers
1/14	Madison County WQCC	8/5	Board EMC
1/15	Water Program	8/11	F/WLM Working Group
1/16	Land Use Committee	8/11	OLA Annual picnic
1/22	Water Chestnut meeting with OLA	8/20	Madison County WQCC
1/24	Ramer Gray Watershed Advisory Council	8/26	Watershed Advisory Council Board
1/28	Watershed Advisory Council Board	8/26	Press coverage, Syracuse Newspaper
2/4	CNY RPDB Environmental Management	9/2	Local law
2/5	Cooperative Extension / education Com.	9/3	Website
2/13	Phase II satellite videoconference	9/8	Oneida Lake Association Board of Directors
2/26	Working Group committee	9/15	Flooding and Water Level Management
2/27	Watershed Advisory Council Board	9/16	Boating Working Group
3/10	J. Mastriano (Working Group meeting)	9/18	Local law
3/11	NYS Wetlands Forum	9/22	Baseline sampling, Segment Analysis
3/12	Funding strategy	9/23	Erosion and Sedimentation Working Group
3/13	Working Group	9/23	Flooding and Water Level Management
3/18	Madison County WQCC	9/23	Advisory Council Board of Directors
3/18	Oneida County EMC/WQCC	9/28	Storm event sampling, Segment Analysis
3/18	Water quality sampling event #5	9/30	Exotic Species Working Group
3/20	Water Chestnut mtg with OLA	10/2	F/WLM meeting w/ Eidt and Seeber
3/24	Field work with Jim McBroon Chittenango/Limestone Creeks	10/2	Local law meeting
3/25	Flood and Water Level Management	10/9	Cooperative Extension conference planning
3/25	SOLWR	10/9	Water quality monitoring - baseline
3/26	Stream and Floodplain Workshop	10/14	Madison County Board of Supervisors
3/27	Watershed Advisory Council Board	10/15	CNY RPDB Board
3/31	Flooding and Water Level management meeting with R. Seeber (Cornell)	10/15	Water quality monitoring - event sampling
4/1	Baseline tributary sampling	10/16	Local law meeting
4/3	Flooding and Water Level Management	10/21	Boating Working Group
4/4	Finance Strategy	10/23	NPS Strategy meeting
4/8	SWCD Managers	10/23	F/WLM Working Group
4/9	GIS mapping	10/28	DOS round-table forum
4/11	NYS AWRA annual	10/28	Watershed Advisory Council Board
4/16	Working Group- sediment and erosion	10/31	Fisheries Working Group
4/22	Baseline sampling #6	11/4	Board EMC
4/22	Watershed Advisory Council Board	11/6	NYS Floodplain & Stormwater Managers Association - annual conference
4/23	Oneida Lake Association Annual Meeting	11/24	F/WLM Working Group
5/6	Board Environmental Management Comm.	12/5	Fisheries Working Group
5/7	Flooding Working Group	12/9	Watershed Advisory Council Board
5/12	EPF Grant information meeting (DOS)	12/10	CNY RPDB Annual Board meeting
5/15	Meeting with HOCCPP	12/16	Flooding and Water Level Management
5/16	Grants meeting		
5/27	Watershed Advisory Council Board		
5/30	Program strategy meeting		
6/5	Meeting with Ron Seeber		
6/16	Flooding / Water Level Management		
6/19	Technical Committee		
7/14	F&WLM Working Group		
7/22	Watershed Advisory Council Board		
7/25	F/WLM strategy (Cornell)		
7/29	Cooperative Extension of Onondaga County		

# Oneida Lake and Watershed Management Planning and Implementation Project

## GOALS for January 1 to September 2004

Throughout 2003, municipal and county representatives, agencies and organizations, homeowners, and other decision-makers have participated on Working Groups to develop recommendations for the primary water resource issues of concern throughout Oneida Lake and its watershed. A significant goal for 2004 will be the completion of a final document titled, “A Management Strategy for Oneida Lake and Its Watershed” that will contain the collection of recommendations from all eight Working Groups.

Investing in regional partnerships takes time and effort, but by working together, we pool our resources and talents, improve our efficiency, and strengthen our probability for success. This is important because protecting and improving local water resources will enhance recreational opportunities and the biological diversity in the lake and streams, while expanding the region’s economic potential and improving the quality of life for all watershed residents. Maintaining regional partnerships in protection and improvement projects, therefore, remains a worthwhile goal for 2004.

Program funding (currently supplied by the U.S. EPA and NYS DEC and administered by the CNY Regional Planning and Development Board) will run out in September and our financial future is uncertain. Our greatest challenge is to maintain our momentum and locate the necessary funds for the implementation of Working Group recommendations. In order to maintain a clear vision of our objectives as we continue along this challenging path, additional program goals for the first three quarters of 2004 are summarized below.

### **“A MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR ONEIDA LAKE AND ITS WATERSHED”**

This report will be written, reviewed, and distributed as a group effort between the Task Force Committees, the Watershed Advisory Council Board, and the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board (RPDB). It will present a plan of action for the areas of concern identified in the State of the Lake and Watershed Report (SOLWR) and will contain an Executive Summary for the SOLWR.

RPDB, Coop. Ext. and the Advisory Council will hold six public meetings. Educational presentations will be scheduled, and the public will be encouraged to submit their comments and suggestions on the recommendations. All written comments will be documented.

RPDB will print and distribute the final report.

### **WATERSHED ADVISORY COUNCIL AND WORKING GROUPS**

Board members will provide advice and guidance for all aspects of the Oneida Lake Watershed Management Plan.

Working Groups will finalize the background information and recommendations for each problem area.

The Watershed Advisory Council will review, comment on, and eventually endorse the Working Group recommendations;

Board elections will be held and the Advisory Council by-laws will be updated.

Vacant Board positions will be filled.

Board members will assist in the planning of public meetings and other outreach initiatives.

## **EDUCATION**

The conference titled, “Everything You Need To Know About Septics: The Use and Economics of Septic Systems in Changing Communities” will be held on February 26, 2004.

Project newsletters and watershed fact sheets will be distributed (RPDB, Coop. Ext.).

RPDB and Coop. Ext. will continue to participate in the Water Chestnut Task Force.

## **OUTREACH**

CNY RPDB will distribute press releases to all local newspapers to announce notable milestones.

Assistance with the review of local laws will be provided to municipalities (RPDB).

Presentations will be made at conferences and meetings, educational handouts will be distributed to the public, and tabletop displays will be set up (RPDB, Coop. Ext. and the Advisory Council).

RPDB will maintain the Oneida Lake Watershed website.

Meetings will be held with code enforcement officers and County emergency management personnel in order to discuss the Working Group recommendations.

## **TRIBUTARY WATER QUALITY MONITORING**

Oneida Creek monitoring will continue as a partnership between CNY RPDB and the SUNY Research Foundation. The sampling program is designed to analyze land use practices and identify specific areas that contribute the greatest amount of sediment to the lake. All DEC and EPA quality assurance requirements for the laboratory and fieldwork will be met. The selection of sampling sites is based on a review of erosion surveys, water monitoring data, and land use.

Funding will be provided for “Project Oneida Lake Watershed”. Through this program, high school students in several schools throughout the watershed will have an opportunity to participate in water sample collection and analysis, and the identification of invertebrates to help determine the health of local streams.

## **MUNICIPAL ASSISTANCE AND GIS MAPPING**

Assistance will be provided to shoreline municipalities in the review of local laws as they relate to the Working Group recommendations. GIS maps will be created for municipal projects such as urban planning and the identification of environmentally sensitive land. Maps will also be developed for the Oneida Creek monitoring program.

## **WATERSHED IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS**

Oneida Creek sediment research (Hamilton College and Madison County Planning Department) will continue, including work on bathymetric surveying, water sampling, benthic grab sampling for grain size and sediment composition, field dig and coring, water column profiles, assessment of suspended sediment transport, seismic profiling, sidescan sonar, and ground penetrating radar.

CNY RPDB will distribute a draft technical report of this research project to the Technical Committee and Advisory Council for review.

CNY RPDB will distribute the “Oneida Creek Sub-Basin Sewer System Evaluations” report to the Technical Committee and other stakeholders for review. The report will be added to the Oneida Lake management plan website.

### **AGRICULTURAL PROGRAM**

The Oneida Lake Watershed Agricultural Program (OLWAP) will implement Best Management Practices on 14 priority farms in the watershed using funds from the Agricultural Nonpoint Source Abatement and Control Program.

The OLWAP will submit a funding proposal to the EPA in an effort to obtain funds to complete Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans on priority farms.

Farm data will be gathered through the Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) and work will continue on the completion of AEM Tier IIs on watershed farms;

Educational opportunities will continue for Agricultural Advisory Committee members.

CNY RPDB will continue to fund the position of Agricultural Watershed Resource Specialist (J. Faulkner). She will promote farm bill programs such as EQIP and CREP to farmers and will continue to support agriculture within the Oneida Lake Watershed via newsletters and presentations. J. Faulkner will assist with the development of a Management Strategy for the Oneida Lake watershed and will research additional funding opportunities.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE – CNY RPDB**

CNY RPDB will continue to handle all aspects of subcontract negotiations with Cooperative Extension of Onondaga County, the SUNY Research Foundation, R. Seeber (Cornell University), Oneida County SWCD, the City of Oneida, and Hamilton College. Reports and claims from all sub-contracts will be compiled and coordinated.

All reporting requirements for the NYS DEC and the U.S. EPA will be met.

Strategies to secure program funding will be explored.

Staff support will be provided for the Watershed Advisory Council, the Working Groups, and the Technical Committee.

RPDB will respond to all phone and e-mail inquires.

Participation on County Water Quality Coordinating Committees will continue.

- END -