

# Project News Spring 2004



## The Oneida Lake and Watershed Management Plan

### The Oneida Lake *Know Your Lake and Watershed Series* is Back with a Twist

Back by popular demand, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Onondaga County and the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board (CNY RPDB) are pleased to announce the return of the *Know Your Lake and Watershed Series*. Similar to last year, the series features workshops for homeowners and lake users on a wide range of water resource topics such as lake levels, fisheries, and septic systems. This year, workshop participants will also have an opportunity to comment on a set of management recommendations about those topics.

Under the guidance of the Oneida Lake Watershed Advisory Council, representatives from many agencies, organizations, municipalities, non-profit groups, and other stakeholders have been meeting on a monthly basis as “Working Groups” to compile background information on each of the issues of concern, to identify short and long-term goals, and to develop recommendations on ways to reach these goals. This information will eventually form the basis of a final report titled, *A Management Strategy for Oneida Lake and Its Watershed*.

During the public discussion part of the *Know Your Lake and Watershed Series*, homeowners and other lake users will have an opportunity to comment on these goals and recommendations. Background information and recommendations for each of the topics will be printed in local newspapers prior to each meeting and will also be available at the following website: <http://www.cnyrpd.org/oneidalake/recommendations.asp>.

***Know Your Lake and Watershed Series - Topics, Dates and Locations – see Page 3***

## Collecting Water Quality Information on Oneida Creek

Dr. Joseph Makarewicz completed a technical report on the basin-wide Oneida Lake tributary monitoring program and presented the findings last fall to the Task Force Technical Committee, the CNY RPDB, the Watershed Advisory Council, and additional groups throughout the watershed. Sampling teams from four counties participated in this widespread monitoring program. Chemistry data and background information about the primary streams flowing into Oneida Lake is available on the



*Kristy LaManche (CNY RPDB) collects samples to determine sediment loading to Oneida Lake.*

“Publications” page of the Oneida Lake website at the follow address: <http://www.cnyrpd.org/oneidalake>.

Based on these monitoring results, the Technical Committee selected Oneida Creek for additional sampling. Dr. Makarewicz is now conducting segment analysis on the creek, with assistance provided by the CNY RPDB’s Kristy LaManche and Stephanie Harrington. Segment analysis is being conducted to

*(continued on page 3)*



# A Focus on Agriculture in the Oneida Lake Watershed

The Oneida Lake Watershed Agricultural Program (OLWAP) is designed to address agricultural nonpoint source pollution within the Oneida Lake watershed. There are 317 farms in the watershed, primarily located in the southern and eastern regions. Of these, 206 have completed AEM Tiers I and II, 19 have completed comprehensive nutrient management plans (CNMPs), and 6 farms have CNMPs in progress.

The majority of farms in the watershed are dairy operations with an average herd size of 170 animal units. Several additional farms are vegetable

growers operating on the mucklands of Madison County. Crop farms, and sheep, horse and beef operations are also active throughout the watershed.

OLWAP is one of several water quality initiatives guided by the Watershed Advisory Council as part of the Oneida Lake Watershed Management Plan. The OLWAP began in 2002 when the Land Use Committee recognized agriculture's prominent economic status and land coverage within the watershed. At that time, an agricultural sub-committee was assembled with the Soil and Water Conservation Districts of Madison, Oneida, Onondaga and Oswego Counties.

The OLWAP is dedicated to identifying and addressing agricultural nonpoint sources of pollution within the Oneida Lake watershed. The OLWAP's mission is "to complete a multi-phased inventory and analysis of the impact of agriculture upon water quality in the Oneida Lake watershed. This action will facilitate the future implementation of water quality improvement projects on priority farms in the Oneida Lake watershed." For additional information, contact Jo-Anne Faulkner, Agricultural Watershed Resource Specialist, (315) 736-3334.



*This Madison County farm is one of 317 farms in the Oneida Lake watershed.*

---

## Project Watershed Expands Hands-On Learning and Watershed Awareness Opportunities

This past November, a \$5000 grant was awarded by the CNY Community Foundation to develop Project Oneida Lake Watershed (POLW), a water quality monitoring program for two adult volunteer teams and high school students at five schools. This represents a significant boost in continuing efforts to promote hands-on learning and water quality awareness among students and homeowners living along the Oneida Lake tributaries. Partners in this endeavor are Project Watershed, the Great Swamp Conservancy, the Madison County Planning Department, and the CNY Regional Planning and Development Board (CNY RPDB).

Beginning in 1999, Project Watershed initiated monitoring on Oneida Lake tributaries with students at three high schools affli-



*High school students collect invertebrates from a local stream in the watershed.*

ated with the Oneida Lake and Watershed Protection Project. The program expanded over the years and in 2003, high school students were documenting water quality trends on Butternut, Limestone, Chittenango, Canaseraga, Cowaselon and Oneida Creeks.

Water quality data collected by POLW participants will be uploaded at [www.projectwatershed.org](http://www.projectwatershed.org), managed by Syracuse University's Living SchoolBook. The POLW Director is retired Chittenango High School biology teacher, Norm Webber.

For additional information about Project Watershed activities in Upstate New York, contact Bill Legg at (315) 677-5194 or [leggbill@dreamscape.com](mailto:leggbill@dreamscape.com).

# Know Your Lake and Watershed Series

## ***Nuisance Neighbors: Invasive Plants and Animals in Our Community***

March 29, 2004, 7 PM - 9 PM, Brewerton Public Library, 5437 Library Street

Find out how and why some species are considered to be “invasive” and what it means for lake users, native plants and animals.

## ***Losing Ground: When Property & Pollution Wash Out Into Local Waters***

April 8, 2004, 7 PM - 9 PM, Verona Town Hall, Germany Road

Whether it be rain, wave action, or storm gutters, moving water can erode soils and transport materials into our lakes and streams.

## ***Everything You Wanted to Know About Septic Systems but Were Afraid to Ask***

May 13, 2004, 7 PM - 9 PM, Canastota Village Hall, Court Room, 205 Route 13

Did you know the average life span of a septic system is 25 years? Can you remember the last time your tank was pumped? Learn the do's and don'ts of septic system maintenance.

## ***Recreational Review: Current News and Old Concerns Involving Fishing and Boating***

May 27, 2004, 7 PM - 9 PM, Sullivan Town Hall

Hear about the latest issues and recommendations concerning fisheries and recreational boating on Oneida Lake.

## ***The Highs and Lows of Managing Water Levels***

June 3, 2004, 7 PM - 9 PM, Sylvan Beach Village Hall

June 8, 2004, 7 PM - 9 PM, Arrowhead Lodge, Oneida Shores Park, Brewerton

Learn about the factors that influence water level fluctuations in the lake and what can be done to handle periods of flooding and protect property.

The Oneida Lake watershed covers portions of Lewis, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego and Cortland Counties. This means that surface and groundwater from this broad area flows into the Lake and influences fisheries, recreation, and water quality. Many groups throughout the region have been collaborating over the past few years on numerous aspects of a watershed management plan, including the recently completed “Oneida Lake State of the Lake and Watershed Report,” which summarizes the priority issues of concern. This report is available at the following web site: <http://www.cnyrpdb.org/oneidalake/SOLW.asp>. For more information about the recommendations, or the *Know Your Lake and Watershed Series*, please call the CNY RPDB (315-422-8276) or the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Onondaga County (315-424-9485).



*Data collection from a bridge above Oneida Creek.*

## **Water Quality Monitoring on Oneida Creek**

*(continued from front page)*

identify the specific sources of sediment within the watershed. The sampling team also collects photographs and on-site information to further identify potential sources of sediment loading. This information will be used to seek funding for education, shoreline improvement, and restoration projects.

Hamilton College and the Madison County Planning Department are also conducting research on sediment characteristics at the base of Oneida Creek. Their work will be finalized this spring and a technical report summarizing their findings will be added to the Oneida Lake watershed web site.

## A Closer Look at Wastewater Disposal Alternatives

### *For More Information*

- Information is available on the Oneida Lake watershed website at the following address:  
<http://www.cnyrpdb.org/oneidalake>
- General program information -**  
Anne Saltman, Senior Planner,  
CNY RPDB, (315) 422-8276.
- The Watershed Advisory Council -**  
Dan Ramer, Board Chairman,  
(315) 363-4860 or Christine Gray,  
Vice Chair, (315) 349-8322.
- Oneida Lake Watershed Agricultural Program -** Jo-Anne Faulkner,  
Agricultural Watershed Resource  
Specialist, (315) 736-3334.
- Educational programming -**  
Amy Samuels, Cornell Cooperative  
Extension of Onondaga County,  
(315) 424-9485.

Following a history of problems associated with wastewater disposal along portions of Oneida Creek, a Task Force was established to address these issues and protect the Creek and its influence on Oneida Lake. Through a grant from the CNY Regional Planning and Development Board, finances from the Environmental Protection Fund were used to develop alternatives and associated cost estimates for achieving the goal of sewage waste disposal in non-sewered areas along sections of the Oneida Creek watershed.

A report titled, "Oneida Creek Sub-Basin Sewer System Evaluations" summarizes the research findings that were compiled by consulting firm, O'Brien and Gere Engineers. This report can be found on the "publications" page of the Oneida Lake web site (<http://www.cnyrpdb.org/oneidalake/>). It provides stakeholders with background information, maps, engineering alternatives, and potential economic impacts. This information will be helpful when seeking additional funds for protection and improvement projects.

The programs presented in **Project News** are part of the Oneida Lake Watershed Management Plan, a regional initiative coordinated by the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board. These activities are jointly funded by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation using dollars from the Environmental Protection Fund, and by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency with funds secured by Congressmen Walsh and Boehlert.

## Project News

CNY Regional Planning and Development Board  
126 North Salina Street  
100 Clinton Square, Suite 200  
Syracuse, New York 13202

PRSR.T. STD.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
SYRACUSE, N.Y.  
PERMIT NO. 1302