

# ONEIDA LAKE WATERSHED AGRICULTURAL PROGRAM

Volume 1

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## The Oneida Lake Watershed Agricultural Program Moves Ahead

Oneida Lake Watershed's farmers are encouraged to participate in a new program called the Oneida Lake Watershed Agricultural Program (OLWAP). The OLWAP is sponsored by the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board.

The Oneida Lake Watershed Agricultural Program's immediate 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.

**Phase One** of the project has just wrapped up. This phase involved identifying and communicating with farmers throughout the five-county watershed. We used the Farm Service Agency records to develop a mailing list of farmers within the watershed. Farmers on the mailing list have received a "Dear Producer" letter about AEM workshops and a brochure giving a program overview. Another accomplishment in Phase One is the establishment of the Agricultural Advisory Committee. This eight-member group of watershed farmers has held its inaugural meeting and will be meeting in the future to guide the direction of the Oneida Lake Watershed Agricultural Program. (Continued on following page).



**Watershed area** - 800,000 acres of which:

34% is in Oneida County

25% is in Madison County

16% is in Onondaga County

14% is in Oswego County

10% is in Lewis County

<1% is in Cortland County

• **Lake surface area** - 79.8 mi<sup>2</sup>

• **Length** - 20.9 mi (33.6 km)

• **Prevailing winds** - westerly to northwesterly

• **Maximum width** - 5.5 mi (8.8 km)

• **Mean width** - 3.8 mi (6.1 km)

• **Mean depth** - 22.3 ft (6.8 m)

• **Shoal depth** - 14.1 ft (4.3 m)

• **Volume** (at 367 ft) - 370 billion gallons

• **Length of shoreline** - 54.7 mi (88.0 km)

• **Flow-through time** - 235 days

# Meet the AAC members

## David Scheifferstine



One of Oneida County's representatives on the 8-member Oneida Lake Watershed Agricultural Advisory Committee is David Schiefferstine. Mr. Scheifferstine's family has been farming on Scheifferstine Road since way back in 1911. Currently, the operation encompasses over 800 acres and 200 milking cows. And talk about farming on the edge – the Scheifferstine farm is situated on the eastern border of the Oneida Lake watershed in the City of Rome. Dave received on the job training when it came to farming and is proud of the good quality dairy products that come from the Scheifferstine farm. When he's not working on the farm, Dave is active in the Cooperative Extension and Farm Bureau. He is also on the advisory board for the Vernon Verona Sherrill School District's Future Farmers of America.

Dave's hope for the Oneida Lake Watershed Agricultural Program is to make residents in the region more aware of their surroundings and the watershed concept in general.

## Maurice Kelsey

In addition to being one of Madison County's premier dairy farmers, Maurice Kelsey has added a few more job titles to his resume lately. He is a Madison County representative on the Oneida Lake Watershed Agricultural Advisory Committee and he is also the agricultural liaison to the Oneida Lake Watershed Council. In the latter role, Maurice is responsible for ensuring the inclusion of agricultural issues in the development

of the Oneida Lake Watershed Management Plan and for communicating the proposed plans to the agricultural community. Maurice's hope for the Oneida Lake Watershed project is that water quality improvement needs that are identified and prioritized will receive installation funding.



So who is Maurice Kelsey? He's a third generation farmer whose Monafran Farms in Canastota now includes 925 acres and 160 milking cows. The success of Monafran Farms is due in large part to the dedication and hard work of the whole family. Maurice is hopeful that a fourth generation will continue the tradition begun in 1919 by Maurice's grandfather, Monford Kelsey. It was Monford who signed the original Cooperator's Agreement with the Madison County Soil and Water Conservation District in 1946. The hard work of the Kelsey's was recognized in 1986 when Monafran was designated a Dairy of Distinction and again in 1997 when they were named the Madison County Conservation Farmers of the Year by the Madison County SWCD. When asked why he enjoys farming, Mr. Kelsey stated that he enjoys the variety of farming, working with quality livestock and the knowledge that he and his family harvest good crops.



(Oneida Lake Watershed Moves Ahead, cont'd)

We'll be acquainting you with the AAC members in this and future publications. Please see the profiles of David Scheifferstine and Maurice Kelsey on Page 2.

**Phase Two** of the OLWAP is just getting started. Phase Two involves completing an inventory and prioritization of Agricultural Issues within the watershed. SWCD personnel will be completing Agricultural Environmental Management Tiers I and II on farms throughout the watershed. Following the completion of Tiers I and II, each farm will be prioritized in six areas including barnyards, manure management, milkhouse waste, pasture management, silage and soil erosion. Phase Two should be completed in February of 2003.

**Phase 3** slightly overlaps Phase Two and involves applying for funding to complete farm planning or AEM Tier III on Priority Farms. **Phase 4** takes the project through November of 2004 and involves applying for funding and implementing conservation Best Management Practices like milkhouse waste systems and barnyard improvement practices.

If you're a farmer in the Oneida Lake Watershed and you would like assistance to complete conservation best management practices on your farm, please contact Jo-Anne Faulkner at (315) 736-3334.

<p>Agricultural Environmental Management</p>
Tier I: One Page Inventory of Farm Resources
Tier II: Worksheets detailing natural resource issues on the farm.
Tier III: whole farm plan developed from Tier II information.
Tier IV: implementation of Best Management Practices planned in Tier III.
Tier V: evaluation of the plan and process.

## What's an AAC and who's on one?

The AAC, or Agricultural Advisory Committee is comprised of 8 members who are active, full time farmers in the Oneida Lake Watershed. There are two members each from Madison, Oneida, Onondaga and one member each from Lewis and Oswego Counties. This arrangement coincides with the population of agriculture in the watershed. **We're still looking for a representative from Lewis County, so if you are interested, please contact Jon Stewart at the Lewis County SWCD office at (315) 376-6122.** The representatives from Madison County are Maurice Kelsey and Richard Carrier, both dairy farmers from the Canastota area. Maurice is also the agricultural liaison to the Oneida Lake Watershed Council where he'll be keeping other watershed stakeholders apprised of progress within the Agricultural Program. The representatives from Oneida County are Bill Boice and David Schiefferstine. Both of these members are dairy farmers. Bill operates his farm in the Sconondoa Creek watershed while David farms in the Wood Creek watershed. The representatives from Onondaga County are Peter Mapstone and Bud Nurse. Peter is a dairy farmer in Manlius while



Bud's dairy is in LaFayette. In Oswego County, the primary AAC member is Jeff Hopkinson, a dairyman from Williamstown and the alternate member is June Wood, a beef producer in Bernhards Bay. Announcements for future AAC meetings will be available on the Oneida Lake website at <http://www.cnyrpd.org/oneidalake>.

# Meet the Partners

Here's a section where we'll be introducing (or reacquainting) you with the folks that are on the Oneida Lake Watershed Agricultural Program Committee. In this edition, you'll meet Mike Johnston, District Manager of the Madison County Soil and Water Conservation District and Walter Neuhauser, Executive Director of the Onondaga County Soil and Water Conservation District.



**Mike Johnston**

Mike began his career in conservation with the United States Forest Service in Lassen National Forest in Chester, California. He then joined the Madison County Soil and Water Conservation District as a Technician. Mike assumed the District Manager's position in 1991 and has guided the Soil and Water District to a staff of nine who focus on nutrient management, pasture management, water quality improvement projects and educational programs. Mike and his staff will be exceptionally busy with the Oneida Lake Watershed Agricultural Program as there are over 200 farmers in Madison County that operate within the Watershed. Mike can be reached at (315) 684-9577.

**Walt Neuhauser**

In addition to being the Executive Director of the Onondaga County SWCD, Walt Neuhauser also serves as the Chair of the Oneida Lake Watershed Agricultural Program Committee. Walt is retiring in December so we wanted to give you a chance to know a little more about him before we lose him. While he's not sure what retirement will bring, Walt says that he's had a lot of fun and has learned a lot. Walt's commitment to natural resources management has endured for the last 40 years.



**Walt Neuhauser (cont'd)**

After receiving a Masters degree from the University of Connecticut in Natural Resources Management, Walt worked for the Onondaga County Cornell Cooperative Extension office for 27 years in their agricultural program. Then, in 1991, Walt accepted the position of District Manager in the SWCD. At that time, the District employed two full time people and one part time person. Since then, the District staff has grown to 19 and its programs have become many and varied. Walt feels that the Oneida Lake Watershed Agricultural Program is indicative of the next generation of AEM planning activities. Walt is confident that once AEM Tiers I and II are completed, the OLWAP committee will succeed in securing funding to implement best management practices on farms in the Watershed.

## **THE 2002 FARM BILL**

### **USDA COMMITS HISTORIC RESOURCES TO CONSERVATION ON PRIVATE WORKING LANDS**

On May 13, 2002, President Bush signed the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act – also known as the Farm Bill. This Farm Bill contains tremendous support for conservation programs administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Farm Service Agency. The 2002 Farm Bill re-authorizes several existing conservation programs such as EQIP and CRP as well as allocates funding toward new programs such as the Conservation Security Program. EQIP is the Environmental Quality Incentives Program. Under EQIP, eligible producers are provided technical and financial assistance to address natural resource concerns. The Conservation Reserve Program, or CRP, is a highly successful program where technical and financial assistance are made available to landowners to reduce soil erosion, improve water quality and establish wildlife habitat. The Farmland

## **ONEIDA LAKE WATERSHED AGRICULTURAL PROGRAM PARTNER CONTACTS**

Protection Program (FPP) helps protect prime farmland from conversion to nonagricultural uses. One of the new Farm Bill Programs is the Conservation Security Program. This program financially recognizes ongoing stewardship efforts of producers. The Conservation Security Program also helps producers address additional resource concerns on agricultural working lands.

According to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), USDA's lead agency for conservation on private lands, landowners will benefit from a portfolio of voluntary assistance, including cost share, land rental, incentive payments and technical assistance.

Also included in the Farm Bill are new initiatives that address challenges in water quality and quantity. A new grassroots sourcewater protection initiative will provide for wellhead and groundwater protection by working with state programs.

For more information about the Farm Bill, go to the USDA's website: <http://www.usda.gov/farmbill> or contact your local NRCS/SWCD field office.

### **Oneida Lake Watershed Initiative**

The Oneida Lake and Watershed Management Plan is a process whereby local municipalities, homeowners, citizens groups, and county, state and federal agencies are working together as a partnership to develop a plan for the long-term protection and improvement of surface and groundwater resources. This project involves data collection and analysis, identification of priority lake and watershed issues, pooled funding and staff resources among Task Force partners, and the selection of appropriate restoration and protection projects for improved water quality. The Management Plan is designed to encourage community-based partners to look beyond county and agency boundaries as they work together to monitor, conserve, and protect Oneida Lake and its watershed.

The Oneida Lake Watershed Agricultural Program is sponsored by a grant from the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board (CNYRPDB).

CNYRPDB Contact:

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Lewis Co. Soil & Water Conservation District

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Walt Neuhauser 677-3851

Doug Fisher 677-3851

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John DeHollander 592-9663



## Nonpoint source pollution?

Nonpoint source pollution is a term that describes the contamination of water resources as a result of runoff from a diffuse area rather than from a specific point like a pipe. When water from a storm or melt flows over areas devoid of vegetation, or over paved areas where pollutants have collected, the result is a decline in the quality of a water resource. Agricultural nonpoint sources of pollution originate on farms. For example, a field that is fall plowed is susceptible to erosion when the spring melt occurs. Eroded sediment conveyed by runoff into a stream clogs the channel and disrupts the habitat of aquatic organisms. When a heavy rain falls on a farmstead, the runoff can become loaded with nutrients from the barnyard, the silo, a manure pile or a milkhouse waste area. Nutrient laden runoff promotes the growth of aquatic vegetation which can deplete the available oxygen supply in the stream. Like excessive sediment, the lack of oxygen damages the habitat of aquatic organisms. The focus of the Oneida Lake Watershed Agricultural Program is to provide farmers technical and financial assistance to prevent and treat agricultural nonpoint source pollution on their farms. If you would like to participate in the Program, please call Jo-Anne Faulkner at (315) 736-3334 for more information.

