

ONEIDA LAKE WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN 2007 Year in Review

Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board (CNY RPDB)
January 2008

The following narrative provides a summary of Oneida Lake watershed accomplishments by the CNY Regional Planning and Development Board. Responsibilities of our subcontracts (the Cornell Biological Field Station, Cornell University Cooperative Extension of Onondaga County, and the Madison County SWCD) are included, as well as the volunteer contributions of the Oneida Lake Watershed Advisory Council

* * * * *

The Oneida Lake watershed, which includes portions of five counties, 69 municipalities, two DEC regions, and two regional planning boards, has multiple jurisdictions and planning authorities.

- Approximately 265,000 people live in the Oneida Lake watershed.
- The watershed covers 872,722 acres in three physiographic regions.
- 27% of this area is residential, 17% is forested, and 29% is agricultural. The watershed includes some of the most productive agricultural land in the state.
- The common tern, red-shouldered hawk, and Chittenango ovate amber snail are examples of rare, threatened, and endangered species found in the watershed.
- The lake offers world-class fishing with more fish per acre than any other lake in the northeast United States. There are 75 fish species in Oneida Lake.

In 2004, the CNY RPDB in cooperation with other regional planning boards, academic researchers, agency personnel, and community leaders completed a watershed management plan that was endorsed by watershed municipalities and over 100 agencies and organizations. The “Management Strategy for Oneida Lake and its Watershed” is a comprehensive, ecosystem-based approach for the protection and restoration of water resources throughout the Oneida Lake watershed. Watershed priorities established in 2007 were based on the recommendations from this report.

FUNDING SOURCES AND SUBCONTRACTS

Support for Oneida Lake watershed management projects in 2007 came from federal and state sources. The CNY RPDB received grants from the US Environmental Protection Agency and the NYS Department of State, which were used to implement Oneida Lake watershed goals. The CNY RPDB provided additional support for watershed projects as part of its Baseline water quality program.

The CNY RPDB used EPA funds to subcontract with the following organizations in 2007: the Cornell Biological Field Station, Cornell University Cooperative Extension of Onondaga County, Madison County Soil and Water Conservation District, SUNY Delhi Onsite Training Network, and EcoLogic. In addition, many other organizations throughout the region contributed funding and in-kind services for watershed projects.

2007 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS RESULTING FROM STATE AND FEDERAL GRANT FUNDING SOURCES:

- Researched nutrient loading characteristics in order to benefit Oneida Lake fisheries
- Reduced erosion, septic waste, and other types of pollution
- Improved control of invasive plants and animals

- Recommended changes in local laws and management practices to protect water resources
- Implemented education programs which targeted diverse audiences
- Promoted sound agricultural management
- Improved regional partnerships and communications

THE FOLLOWING GROUPS TOOK A LEADING ROLE IN WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PROJECTS IN 2007:

CNY RPDB
Oneida Lake Watershed Advisory Council
Oneida Lake Watershed Technical Committee
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Onondaga County
Cornell Biological Field Station
Soil and Water Conservation Districts: Onondaga, Madison, Oneida, and Oswego
New York Sea Grant
Oneida Lake Association
Watershed municipalities

CNY RPDB WORKED ON THE FOLLOWING WATERSHED TASKS IN 2007 (REFER TO APPENDIX A):

- Provided staff support to the Watershed Advisory Council; worked with Board Chair on meeting preparations, guest speakers, agendas, minutes, locations, and program updates;
- Coordinated the 2007 Oneida Lake Watershed Conference (refer to Appendix B), including speaker recruitment, publicity, catering, and tabletop displays; served as conference presenter;
- Developed and distributed a municipal survey (refer to Appendix B) in cooperation with Advisory Council to collect information on local issues and municipal priorities. Phone calls and site visits were made to maximize municipal response rate;
- Coordinated the Foundations of Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems workshop (refer to Appendix B); worked with SUNY Delhi on registrations, brochure, receipts, certificates, catering, and contract negotiations; maintained contact with County Health Departments, the Onsite Training Network (OTN) at SUNY Delhi, and the Village of Sylvan Beach;
- Managed all aspects of the Nutrient Management Plan (refer to Appendix B):
 - Distributed a consultant "Request for Proposals" to NYS contacts, Syracuse Post Standard, Contract Reporter, Advisory Council, County Planning Departments, SWCDs, Cooperative Extension; posted information on web site, responded to telephone and e-mail inquires;
 - Contracted with EcoLogic to develop method of forecasting changes in phosphorus loading based on population and land use for the benefit of Oneida Lake fisheries and lake productivity;
 - Scheduled meetings of the Technical Committee, which provided guidance and recommendations on all Nutrient Management Program project deliverables.
 - Compiled quality assurance documents and other EPA requirements in cooperation with consultant.
- Represented the Oneida Lake watershed community at monthly meetings of the Finger Lakes and St. Lawrence Eastern Lake Ontario Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM) groups; helped compile a summary of the type, extent, and control methodologies for aquatic invasive plants and animals in the Finger Lakes region;
- Completed the Oneida Lake Watershed Local Law Program. Worked with watershed municipalities on the review of local laws as they relate to water resource protection; completed report with narrative, assessments for land use controls and management practices, maps, municipal summaries, recommendations, and model laws;

- Developed a proposal for the Oneida Lake Watershed Education Initiative in cooperation with the Cornell Biological Field Station, New York Sea Grant, and Cornell Cooperative Extension;
- Developed grant proposals for the Oneida Lake watershed in response to prioritized program needs. The following grant proposals were submitted by CNY RPDB for Oneida Lake watershed projects:
 - Congressional request on behalf of the Education Initiative, submitted to Congressmen Walsh, Arcuri, and McHugh (refer to Appendix B). CNY RPDB worked with CCE, CBFS, and NYSG on program goals, budgets, and match (request denied)
 - FL-LOWPA Special Projects Fund (submitted 12/07, decision pending)
 - EPF (submitted by CBFS w/ assistance from CNY RPDB, decision pending)
 - DEC Environmental Justice Program (research only; proposal due in 2008)
 - Blueway Trail project on Fish Creek (research only; in preparation for 2008 EPF)
- Developed maps and compiled environmental & economic statistics for municipalities;
- Distributed fact sheets, maps, posters, and educational literature at meetings and conferences, through special mailings, and in response to individual requests;
- Maintained Oneida Lake watershed website: <http://oneidalakewatershed.org> with program summaries, maps, publications, events, and announcements; developed new domain name for easier public access;
- Developed a legislative brochure and a goals diagram;
- Worked with SWCD managers to update the “Priority Erosion Sites in the Oneida Lake Watershed” report;
- Attended County Water Quality Coordinating Committee meetings and provided updates on Oneida Lake watershed activities;
- Reviewed / submitted comments on SUNY ESF research proposal and on an Oneida County CARE team report titled “Recreational Water Quality Profile”;
- Responded to requests for information from homeowners;
- Maintained and staffed Oneida Lake watershed informational displays;
- Distributed fact sheets to Advisory Council Board members and other interested parties;
- Submitted press releases to announce notable watershed events and activities;
- Distributed Oneida Lake watershed placemats to shoreline restaurants;
- Facilitated communication with college and university professors in support of regional collaborations with academic research; met with CNY Waterways to discuss the Oswego River Basin Commission, flooding, water level management, and sediment transport in the lake;
- Administered subcontracts (EcoLogic, Soil and Water Conservation District, Cornell Cooperative Extension, the Cornell Biological Field Station, and SUNY Delhi) to ensure that all programs were completed and deliverables were met by December;
- Managed all EPA contract requirements, including a 2007 contract amendment; satisfied all additional federal, state, and local grant requirements.

WATERSHED ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Oneida Lake Watershed Advisory Council provided valuable guidance and support for many watershed projects in 2007. Board members participated in the following projects:

- Attended Board meetings and provided guidance to the CNY RPDB on watershed initiatives;
- Actively participated on the Technical Committee;
- Took a leading role in the development of the Nonpoint Source and the Nutrient Management programs;
- Took an active role in the selection and guidance of the technical consultant and edited the Nutrient Management Plan;
- Joined the CNY RPDB in meetings with municipal representatives;

- Took an active role in planning for the Oneida Lake Watershed Conference agenda, provided presentations, and served as moderator;
- Provided advice on grant proposals and wrote letters of endorsement.

THE CNY RPDB USED EPA FUNDS TO SUBCONTRACT WITH THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS IN 2007:

- The Cornell Biological Field Station (refer to summary below)
- Cornell University Cooperative Extension of Onondaga County (refer to summary below)
- Madison County Soil and Water Conservation District (refer to summary below)
- SUNY Delhi Onsite Training Network – provided speakers and planning for the November workshop;
- EcoLogic – compile technical report, “Oneida Lake Watershed Nutrient Management Plan: Phosphorus Budget.”

THE CORNELL UNIVERSITY BIOLOGICAL FIELD STATION USED FUNDING FROM THE CNY RPDB TO COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING ONEIDA LAKE WATERSHED TASKS IN 2007:

- Developed website to disseminate Oneida Lake information to schools and the public;
- Installed weather station and buoy for distribution of climate information to the public;
- Developed an information program that includes the traveling trunk and training sessions for local schools and local waterfront communities;
- Updated the “Oneida Lake Profile”;
- Submitted grant proposal to EPF.

CORNELL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION OF ONONDAGA COUNTY USED FUNDING FROM THE CNY RPDB TO COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING ONEIDA LAKE WATERSHED TASKS IN 2007:

- “Know Your Lake” presentations and educational literature;
- Promoted the “Weeds Watch Out” program and training sessions for watershed residents, community groups and businesses;
- Developed educational placemat and distributed 5,000 copies;
- Developed brochure and distributed it to 3,000 homeowners and elected officials.

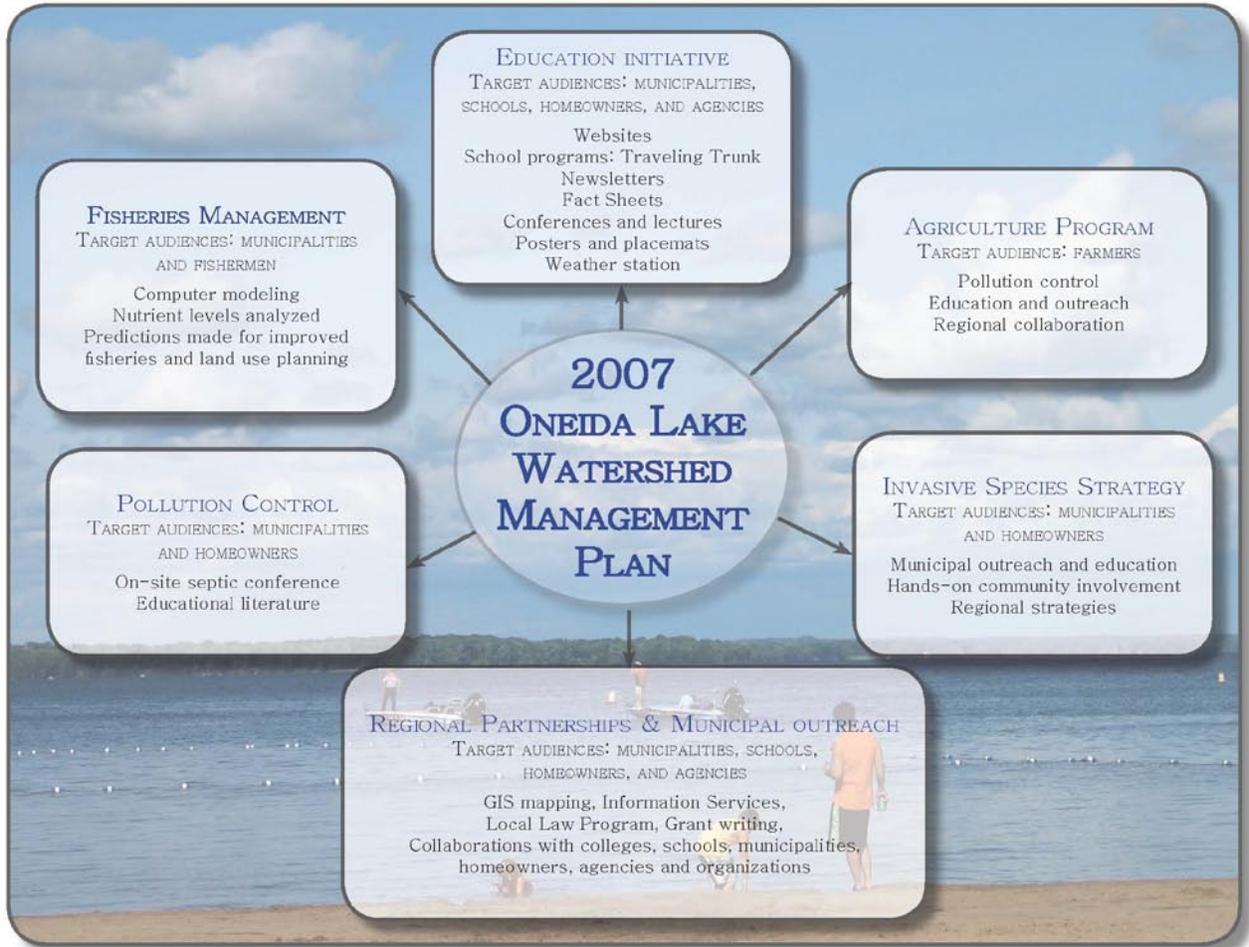
THE MADISON COUNTY SWCD USED FUNDING FROM THE CNY RPDB TO COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING ONEIDA LAKE WATERSHED TASKS IN 2007:

- Developed and/or administered programs to reduce agricultural runoff throughout the watershed;
- Conducted education and outreach, AEM farm prioritization, grant writing and administering to reduce nutrient and sediment loading to Oneida Lake and its tributaries;
- Maintained the Agricultural Advisory Committee, made up of farmers from each county;
- Drafted articles about agricultural issues for publication in major newspapers in the region;
- Published Agriculture Program newsletters.

WATERSHED MANAGEMENT GOALS FOR 2008:

Regional partners will work to generate grant funding for the Oneida Lake Watershed Education Initiative, staff support for the Watershed Advisory Council, and restoration programs that enhance recreation and reduce nonpoint source pollution.

APPENDIX A: GRAPHIC OVERVIEW



APPENDIX B: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT ONEIDA LAKE WATERSHED PROGRAMS IN 2007

ONEIDA LAKE WATERSHED CONFERENCE

The Oneida Lake Watershed Conference was held on July 26th at the Arrowhead Lodge. The Watershed Advisory Council took a leading role in defining the agenda, facilitating the Arrowhead Lodge rental, editing brochures, assisting with event logistics, and contributing speaker and moderator time. The CNY RPDB distributed two press releases to watershed media contacts. Brochures were distributed through the mail and e-mail follow-up was made. Bulletin board posters were sent to municipalities. CNY RPDB handled negotiations with the conference caterer, developed the floor plan with Arrowhead, handled negotiations with conference speakers, compiled speaker bios, and designed and printed conference handouts and signage.

CNY RPDB made a formal conference presentation on progress to-date and goals for 2008, reserved A/V equipment, organized tabletop displays, developed a conference opinion survey, identified co-sponsorships, and printed nametags. CNY RPDB compiled a "Certificate of Attendance" for municipal reps and handled conference registrations. Arrangements were made for photo coverage, facility set-up and clean up. Thank you letters were sent to all conference presenters.

74 people attended the event. 40.5% were from agencies and organizations; 20.3% were legislative and municipal officials; 13.5% were homeowners and lake association representatives; 10.8% represented non-profit organizations; 10.8% were teachers, professors, or students from colleges and universities; and 4.0% were consultants. CNY RPDB compiled responses from the conference survey and will use this information if a similar event is held in 2008.

MUNICIPAL SURVEY

CNY RPDB and the Advisory Council developed a municipal survey in order to collect information on local water resource issues of concern, municipal priorities for water resource protection, and ways in which the CNY RPDB and the Advisory Council can be more effective. This information is being used to set and prioritize goals for 2008.

Cover letters (co-signed by the CNY RPDB and the Advisory Council) and surveys were sent to all watershed municipalities. Follow-up telephone calls were made to maximize the survey response rate. CNY RPDB also visited several municipalities to collect feedback on the survey questions.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF ONSITE WASTEWATER TREATMENT

The Foundations of Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems workshop was held on November 7th at the Sylvan Beach Municipal Building. CNY RPDB was responsible for overseeing conference registrations, assisting with the brochure design, mailing press releases, distributing receipts and completion certificates, and maintaining contact with County Health Departments, the Onsite Training Network (OTN) at SUNY Delhi, and the Village of Sylvan Beach. CNY RPDB made arrangements for a continental breakfast and lunch, managed contract negotiations with OTN, and reserved space at the Village of Sylvan Beach municipal office.

The goal of the workshop was to provide instruction on the proper siting, installation, and maintenance of on-site septic systems and legislative initiatives. Additional topics included instruction on the biology of wastewater treatment, system design, system components, the importance of soil classification, recognizing system failures, and the technologies available to avoid pollution. This was a successful event with 40 professionals from municipalities (code enforcement officers and municipal elected officials), treatment plants, and health departments throughout the Oneida Lake watershed.

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT PLAN

CNY RPDB contracted with EcoLogic, a Cazenovia consulting firm, to develop a method of forecasting changes in phosphorus loading based on population and land use to support maintenance of a mean May through October total phosphorus level of 20 ppb ($\mu\text{g/l}$) for the benefit of Oneida Lake fish populations and overall lake productivity. The CNY RPDB worked with the Technical Committee on this project. Committee members provided guidance and recommendations on all project deliverables.

EcoLogic presented their findings in a report titled, "Oneida Lake Watershed Nutrient Management Plan" and based their conclusions on four scenarios that had been developed at the Technical Committee meeting in June. CNY RPDB commented on the draft report and collected additional comments from the Technical Committee. The final report was then added to the publications page of the CNY RPDB Oneida Lake watershed website.

The federal Quality Assurance Project Plan and Data Usability Assessment (DUA) were updated by EcoLogic, approved by the CNY RPDB and the Technical Committee, and received final approval by the EPA.

CNY RPDB scheduled a joint meeting of the Watershed Advisory Council, the Technical Committee, and shoreline municipalities on August 28th and invited EcoLogic to present a summary of their research. EcoLogic presented PowerPoint slides and distributed CDs with an Excel spreadsheet of the phosphorus budget calculations. CNY RPDB sent copies of the CD and PP presentation to Technical Committee members that weren't able to attend the presentation.

CONGRESSIONAL FUNDING REQUEST

The CNY RPDB submitted a request for funding to Congressmen Walsh, Arcuri, and McHugh. CNY RPDB negotiated with Cornell Cooperative Extension, the Cornell Biological Field Station, and the Soil and Water Conservation District to define 2008 program goals, budgets, and local match. The Congressional proposal contained an appropriations form, a descriptive narrative, a Congressional map showing the Oneida Lake watershed, graphics, and a budget. Two diagrams were enclosed – one displayed water resource projects throughout the watershed that are currently funded by the EPA, and another showed the benefits of these projects to the Oneida Lake community. The 2007 funding request was denied but another request will be submitted in 2008.

APPENDIX C: MEETING SUMMARY

THE CNY RPDB ATTENDED THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS AND EVENTS IN SUPPORT OF ONEIDA LAKE WATERSHED PROJECTS

- 1/16 Advisory Council meeting
- 1/23 Watershed Advisory Council Board meeting
- 3/2 Technical Committee meeting
- 3/12 Oswego River Basin Commission meeting
- 3/13 CNY Waterways meeting
- 3/24 Invasive Species conference
- 3/27 Watershed Advisory Council Board meeting
- 3/29 Tug Hill Commission Local Government conference
- 4/23 Advisory Council meeting, C. Gray
- 4/24 Watershed Advisory Council Board meeting
- 4/25 Oneida Lake Association annual meeting
- 5/17 Meeting with CCE and OLA
- 5/22 Watershed Advisory Council Board meeting
- 5/30 Madison County Stormwater and Watershed Management conference
- 6/22 Meeting with C. Gray, Watershed Advisory Council

1/17/08

6/26 Watershed Advisory Council Board meeting
6/28 Technical Committee meeting
7/26 Oneida Lake Watershed Conference
8/28 Advisory Council / Technical Committee meeting
9/11 Watershed Advisory Council meeting
9/26 Conference call, CBFS, NY Sea Grant
10/10 Sullivan meeting
10/18 New York Sea Grant meeting
10/23 Advisory Council Board meeting
10/24 DOS workshop
11/7 OTN CNY RPDB conference
11/26 Constantia / West Monroe meeting
Plus monthly invasive species meetings (approximately) and bimonthly WQCC meetings