

# 2002 Year in Review



## Oneida Lake and Watershed Management Planning and Implementation Project



January 2003

Central New York Regional Planning  
and Development Board



## **2002 YEAR IN REVIEW**

### **ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

Much has been accomplished during 2002. The Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board (CNY RPDB) coordinated the activities relating to the watershed management plan and provided funding to the following organizations: Cornell Biological Field Station, J. Makarewicz (SUNY Brockport), Project Watershed, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Onondaga County, Herkimer Oneida Counties Comprehensive Planning Program, Life Science Laboratories, Hamilton College, Madison County Planning Department, and the Oneida County SWCD. Many additional organizations provided in-kind support and matching funds. The following progress was made as a result of these regional partnerships:

#### **Outreach and Education**

- The fourth annual Task Force Conference was held in October. Municipal officials, state and county agency representatives, and non-profit groups attended the event;
- A watershed bus tour was held with visits to watershed sites that have an influence on water resources;
- The Water Chestnut Task Force was formed with representation from groups throughout the Upstate New York region. Maps have been developed and control options are being researched;
- Two newsletters titled, "Project News", were distributed to 250 watershed groups and elected representatives throughout the watershed;
- Press releases covering notable accomplishments were sent to all newspapers throughout the watershed;
- Tabletop displays were set up at conferences and meetings;
- PowerPoint and overhead presentations were given throughout the region;
- Fact sheets and maps were distributed at meetings and conferences;
- Cooperative Extension organized two water chestnut hand-pulling public workshops.

#### **Water Quality Monitoring**

- The Oneida Lake tributary monitoring program continues at eleven sampling sites. The program represents a partnership between CNY RPDB, NYS DEC, Cornell Biological Field Station, SUNY Brockport, and agencies in the four counties that border Oneida Lake (Onondaga County Health Department, Madison County Planning Department, Oneida County SWCD, and Oswego County SWCD);
- School student involvement in local water quality issues has continued through Project Watershed.

#### **Oneida Lake State of the Lake and Watershed Report (SOLWR)**

- Municipal survey responses were compiled and summarized;
- Text and GIS maps were completed and put on a website for public review;
- Three public comment meetings were held throughout the watershed and editorial comments were incorporated into the document when appropriate;
- 2,800 letters were sent to shoreline homeowners with information about the SOLWR;
- Press releases were distributed to all watershed newspapers;

- The Watershed Advisory Council Board of Directors, the NYS DEC, and the US EPA officially endorsed the SOLWR.
- The final report is available for public review at the following website:  
<http://cnyrpdb.org/oneidalake/>

### **Watershed Advisory Council**

- The Council Board of Directors was formed in 2002 with representation from municipalities, counties, and stakeholders. Board members are taking a leading role in formation and implementation of the watershed management plan;
- Board meetings were held on regular basis with CNY RPDB staff support;
- By-law revisions were approved;
- Board elections were held and the Chairman and Vice Chair positions were filled;
- Educational sessions were held prior to each business meeting;

### **Task Force Committees**

- The following Committees met throughout the year in support of Oneida Lake watershed management planning projects:
  - Oneida Lake Task Force Executive Committee
  - Oneida Lake Task Force Land Use Committee
  - Oneida Lake Task Force Education Committee
  - Oneida Lake Task Force Technical Committee
  - Grant Review Committee
  - Agricultural Advisory Council

These meetings are open to agencies, organizations, municipal representatives, and the public. The CNY RPDB provides staff support.

### **GIS Maps (HOCCPP)**

- HOCCPP handled the regional coordination of GIS resources;
- Maps were developed for the State of the Lake and Watershed Report and for educational purposes.

### **Website development and maintenance**

- <http://cnyrpdb.org/oneidalake> was created as a general information site with program summaries, maps, publications, events and announcements, and much more;
- Computer links were established with other related web sites.

### **Watershed Improvement Grant Program**

- CNY RPDB provided funding for the following projects:
  - Shoreline vegetative restoration project
  - Sediment research on Oneida Creek
  - Oneida Creek Sanitary Non-Point Source Pollution Control Evaluation and Alternatives Analysis (negotiations in progress)
  - The Oneida Lake Watershed Agriculture Program

Selection of these projects was based on recommendations by the Task Force Executive Committee

### **Oneida Lake Watershed Agricultural Program**

- SWCD Managers created an inventory of farms and farm issues;
- An Agricultural Resource Specialist was hired with CNY RPDB funds and a mission statement was developed;
- Inventory and prioritizations of farms and agricultural issues took place;
- Education and outreach plans have been developed for the agricultural community;
- A mailing list is created with over 400 active farms;
- An Agricultural Advisory Committee is formed and meetings were held;
- A watershed-wide prioritizations system was developed;
- An informational brochure was written and distributed;
- Four Producer Workshops were held at different locations throughout the watershed;
- AEM Tier II worksheets were completed on the majority of watershed farms;
- The agriculture chapter for the State of the Lake and Watershed Report was written;
- A \$428,785 SWCC/EPF grant was awarded to the Madison County SWCD for agricultural programs in the Oneida Lake watershed.

### **Administrative Services (CNY RPDB)**

- Staff support was provided for Task Force Committees and the Watershed Advisory Council;
- Communication continued with regional partners and elected officials;
- Subcontracts and agreements were executed with the following organizations: Cornell Biological Field Station, J. Makarewicz (SUNY Brockport), Project Watershed, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Onondaga County, Herkimer Oneida Counties Comprehensive Planning Program, Life Science Laboratories, Hamilton College, Madison County Planning Department, and the Oneida County SWCD.
- State and Federal grant requirements were met;
- Grants were submitted.

## **Oneida Lake Watershed Management Plan**

### **GOALS FOR 2003**

*Protecting our natural resources while maintaining regional partnerships:  
Watershed management planning is a step in the right direction*

Shoreline homeowners and other lake users enjoy the Oneida Lake region for its natural beauty, abundant recreational opportunities and proximity to urban centers. The lake and watershed management plan is providing an opportunity for groups to work together to identify and prioritize areas of concern as a comprehensive, watershed-wide effort. Throughout the project duration, municipal and county representatives, agencies and organizations, and all other watershed decision-makers will be encouraged to participate in the protection and improvement of our natural resources. Management practices will be defined and implemented through a cooperative approach at the local level.

The primary goal in 2003 for the Watershed Advisory Council and Task Force Committees is to develop the Oneida Lake Watershed Management Plan. Investing in regional partnerships takes time and effort, but by looking beyond county, agency, and municipal borders and working together on shared water resource issues, we can pool our resources, improve our efficiency, reduce our project costs, and enhance our chances for success. We've come a long way. Planning for the future to protect and improve 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 and moving ahead with natural resource protection is a step in the right direction.

### **STATE OF THE LAKE AND WATERSHED REPORT (SOLWR)**

The final SOLWR report will be printed and distributed to stakeholders, agencies and organizations, municipal representatives, elected officials, and libraries. An Executive Summary will be prepared.

### **WATERSHED MANAGEMENT REPORT**

A report will be written, reviewed, and distributed with guidance provided by Task Force Committees and the Watershed Advisory Council Board. This report will present a plan of action for the areas of concern identified in the State of the Lake and Watershed Report (SOLWR). The management report will include pollution reduction goals and water quality objectives, funding sources and participating agencies, an implementation timeline, and a plan for education and outreach.

### **TRIBUTARY WATER QUALITY MONITORING**

Stream monitoring on all major tributaries will continue throughout the winter months. Additional sampling will be implemented in the spring on one or two high priority streams that contribute the greatest level of sediment to the lake. All DEC and EPA quality assurance requirements will be met. CNY RPDB will coordinate a Stressed Stream Analysis and contracting arrangements with J. Makarewicz. The Agricultural and Task Force Technical Committees will be consulted for recommendations on sampling site selections, based on a review of erosion surveys, water quality data, land use, and invertebrate data.

### **WATERSHED ADVISORY COUNCIL and ONEIDA LAKE TASK FORCE COMMITTEES**

Meetings will be held on a regular basis as work continues on the watershed management plan; Task Force Committees will provide technical assistance to Council Board members; Strategies will also be implemented to secure funding in 2004 and beyond.

### **GIS MAPPING**

Maps will be available for use by municipalities for projects such as the identification of environmentally sensitive land and open space preservation;

GIS maps will be used when selecting stream monitoring sites;

## **EDUCATION**

A Stream Restoration Conference is scheduled for March 26 (Cornell Cooperative Extension);  
The 5<sup>th</sup> annual Task Force conference and bus tour will be held in October;  
Opportunities to involve school children in water resource education will be explored;  
A Northern Oneida Lake Watershed Stream Restoration Conference is being considered for the fall (Tug Hill Commission and CCE);  
Project newsletters and watershed fact sheets will be distributed;  
Continued support will be provided to the Water Chestnut Task Force.

## **OUTREACH**

Press releases to announce notable milestones will be distributed to all local newspapers;  
Plans will be implemented to increase public involvement;  
Land use planning and water resource protection assistance will be provided to municipalities;  
Presentations will be made at conferences and meetings, educational handouts will be distributed to the public, and table top displays will be available at all possible events.

## **WATERSHED IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS**

Work will continue with the Oneida Creek sedimentation research (Hamilton College and Madison County Planning Department), including bathymetric survey, 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;  
Work will be initiated with the City of Oneida's Alternatives Analysis;  
The Oneida Lake Watershed Agriculture Program will continue to gather data through the Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) Program.

## **AGRICULTURAL PROGRAM**

CNY RPDB will continue to provide financial and administrative support to the Agricultural Watershed Resource Specialist;  
Work will continue on the completion of AEM Tier IIs on watershed farms;  
Funding opportunities for farm planning and conservation Best Management Practices will be explored;  
Educational opportunities related to agriculture will be provided to Agricultural Advisory Committee members and watershed producers.

## **MUNICIPAL ASSISTANCE**

Opportunities will be explored to provide GIS/Arc View assistance to municipalities with land use planning needs;  
A strategy will be developed for the evaluation of local regulatory controls in watershed municipalities and for the review of options for model land use controls.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE – CNY RPDB**

Subcontract negotiations will continue between CNY RPDB and HOCCPP, Cooperative Extension, Life Science Labs, the Madison County Planning Department, J. Makarewicz (SUNY Oswego), Oneida County SWCD, the City of Oneida, and Hamilton College; reports and claims from all sub-contracts will be compiled and coordinated;  
Reporting requirements for DEC/EPA will be met;  
Strategies to secure funding in 2004 and beyond will be implemented;  
Program updates will be sent to elected officials on a routine basis;  
Staff support will be provided to the Advisory Council and all Task Force Committees;  
Participation on County Water Quality Coordinating Committees will continue.

# 2003 LAKE WATERSHED MANAGEMENT GOALS

