



A clean lake reflects well
on all of us.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For further information: Lynn Greer, 716-879-4260

Corps of Engineers steps down as Onondaga Lake Partnership Chair

SYRACUSE, NY, May 25, 2011--The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Buffalo District announced today that due to reductions in USACE appropriations in the recently passed fiscal year 2011 spending bill, the Buffalo District must suspend its participation in the Onondaga Lake Partnership (OLP). The remaining partners intend to continue the activities of the OLP.

The OLP was authorized by Section 573 of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1999 which was sponsored by then Rep. James T. Walsh. The authorization directed the Secretary of the Army, acting through USACE, to establish and lead a partnership to develop and implement projects for the environmental restoration, conservation, and management of Onondaga Lake. In addition to USACE, the partners include the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, New York State Attorney General, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Onondaga County, and the City of Syracuse. The Buffalo District has chaired the OLP Executive Committee since 1999.

The existing OLP authority does not expire until August 2014; however, without federal appropriations the USACE is unable to participate in the OLP, including their management and administration of the partnership, and providing federal funding for future lake improvement projects. All USACE funded OLP projects were cost shared with local sponsors using a 70 percent federal, 30 percent non-federal ratio as specified in the OLP authorization. USACE has provided \$27.6 million in funds towards projects associated with the Partnership since its start in 1999. USACE will continue to administer oversight of four remaining OLP cost shared projects until work is completed.

Buffalo District Commander Lieutenant Colonel Stephen H. Bales, in his final act as chairperson, presided over the OLP Executive Committee meeting on May 10, 2011, where he shared the news with the partners. "While I am disappointed the Corps' participation in the Onondaga Lake Partnership must end due to budgetary constraints at this time," said Bales, "the activities of the Partnership will continue. I am proud of what we have been able to achieve together and am confident the teamwork established through the Partnership will continue to deliver solutions for Onondaga Lake and the future holds great promise." The partners thanked Bales for the Corps' years of dedicated service to the OLP. The remaining partners intend to continue the OLP.

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Region 7, has offered to serve as the point of contact for the Partnership in lieu of USACE. Inquiries related to the Partnership are welcome via phone, e-mail, or regular mail. The new contact information is available on the Partnership website: www.onlakepartners.org. Should future USACE appropriations include funding for the OLP, the Buffalo District will resume its participation and leadership role in the partnership.

###