



R E F L E C T I O N S B E L I E V I N G

A clean lake reflects well on all of us.

VOL 1, ISSUE 2 SPRING 2003

A QUARTERLY UPDATE FROM THE ONONDAGA LAKE PARTNERSHIP

L A K E D A Y

ONONDAGA LAKE DAY RETURNS!



Join us on Saturday, June 7 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. for our 2nd Annual Onondaga Lake Day, a fun and interactive day for the whole family! Enjoy beautiful Onondaga Lake and learn about its history, future and why it's so important to restore this magnificent resource.

The event will be held rain or shine, under the tents at the Willow Bay Concession Area in Onondaga Lake Park.

All activities are free and available between 10 a.m. & 3 p.m. unless otherwise noted. Some of the activities include:

- Interactive displays and exhibits
- Y94-FM's "Captain John Smith" broadcasting live, with contests and giveaways between 12 & 2.
- Family fishing derby with prizes, 9 a.m.–12 p.m. For info, call Les Monostory at 435-6600.
- Open House at Onondaga Lake Yacht Club.
- Free one-hour Mid-Lakes Navigation narrated boat tours with local author Don Thompson and Mary Jane Peachy of the NYSDEC: 10:30, 12:30 and 2:00.
- Kayak demonstrations and races. For registration and info, call Debbie Fay at 391-0909.
- Rosamond Gifford Zoo presents species native to Onondaga Lake.
- Tours of Tully Valley Mudboils, 9 and 12 noon. Contact Bill Kappel at 607-266-0217, ext. 3013 for reservations or further info.
- OLP news conference and "Meet & Greet," 12:00–1:00

Visit our website for further information.

THE ONONDAGA LAKE PARTNERSHIP

The Onondaga Lake Partnership (OLP) promotes cooperation among federal, state, and local governments, and other involved parties in the management of the environmental issues of Onondaga Lake and the Onondaga Lake watershed in the Syracuse, New York area.

MINI-GRANTS TO HELP LAKE IN MANY WAYS



Congressman James Walsh, EPA Regional Administrator Jane Kenny and Onondaga County Executive Nicholas Pirro join OLP Minigrant recipients Boy Scout Troop 139 at the presentation.

At a May 16 news conference, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Regional Administrator Jane Kenny announced on behalf of the Onondaga Lake Partnership (OLP) the recipients of the first public education and outreach mini-grants offered by the OLP. A total of \$25,000 was awarded to six recipients.

The purpose of the mini-grants program is threefold: to encourage locally based watershed enhancement programs and educational activities that help restore, protect or enhance the habitat of Onondaga Lake and its watershed; to develop the capacity of local governments, citizen groups and other organizations to promote community-based stewardship

continued on page 8

In This Issue

Lake Day.....	1
Mini-grants.....	1
Photo Contest.....	2
Annual Progress Meeting.....	4
Onondaga Creek Cleanup.....	5
Kidz Korner	5
Water Quality Monitoring Day.....	6
Peer Review Process.....	7
Roundtable Forums.....	7



John Lazzaro, Liverpool, Winner, Age 18 & Over, Human Interest Category

With over 100 entries covering all age and subject categories, the Onondaga Lake Partnership's (OLP) first amateur photo contest was an unqualified success. Winners were announced at the OLP's Second Annual Progress Meeting in November 2002, and winning photos were published in the Syracuse Post-Standard. Photos will be used in a variety of educational, informational and promotional materials and will be showcased in this and future issues of "Reflections." (For those of you who can't wait, you can find all of our winners' fabulous photography at our redesigned website. Just go to www.onlakepartners.org.)

The OLP thanks our distinguished judges, professional photographers Nick Lisi of the Syracuse Post-Standard and Chuck Wainwright, all of the very generous prize donors, and all who took the time to capture the beauty of Onondaga Lake as seen through their eyes and camera lenses!



Paul Garvey, Liverpool, Honorable Mention, Age 18 & Over, Flora & Fauna Category

Visit our newly redesigned website at:
www.onlakepartners.org

A QUICK RECAP

The contest was split into three categories—“Seasons at Onondaga Lake,” “Human Interest,” and “Flora & Fauna of Onondaga Lake and its Watershed”—and each category had three levels: Age 11 and Under, Age 12–17, and Age 18 and Over.

Here are the winners, their prizes and our generous sponsors:

CATEGORY: SEASONS AT ONONDAGA LAKE

Winner, Age 11 & Under

Nina LaCombe, DeWitt

Prize: Family Zoo Pass, donated by Onondaga County; \$75 Savings Bond, donated by Key Bank

Winner, Age 12-17

Elizabeth Jurkiewicz, Syracuse

Prize: Family Zoo Pass, donated by Onondaga County; \$100 Savings Bond, donated by Key Bank



Anne Fannetti, Minoa, Honorable Mention, Age 18 & Over, Seasons at Onondaga Lake Category

Winner, Age 18 & Over

Peter Petrone, Syracuse

Prize: \$100 cash, donated by S&W Redevelopment

Honorable Mention, Age 12-17

Leah Royal, Syracuse

Prize: Family Pass for Lights on the Lake, donated by Onondaga County

Honorable Mention, Age 18 & Over

Deborah Stearns, Liverpool

Prize: Dinner Cruise on Onondaga Lake, donated by MidLakes Navigation

Honorable Mention, Age 18 & Over

Anne Fannetti, Minoa

Prize: \$50 Carousel Center Gift Certificate, donated by Destiny USA

Honorable Mention, Age 18 & Over

Paul Sanford, Marcellus

Prize: \$25 cash, donated by S&W Redevelopment

CATEGORY: HUMAN INTEREST

Winner, Age 18 & Over

John Lazzaro, Liverpool

Prize: \$100 cash, donated by S&W Redevelopment

Honorable Mention, Age 18 & Over

Joy Swensen, Baldwinsville

Prize: \$50 Carousel Center Gift Certificate, donated by Destiny USA

Honorable Mention, Age 18 & Over

Fran Sylvester Nightengale, Liverpool

Prize: \$25 cash, donated by S&W Redevelopment

CATEGORY: FLORA & FAUNA OF ONONDAGA LAKE & ITS WATERSHED

Winner, Age 11 & Under

Daniel LaCombe, DeWitt

Prize: Family Pass for Lights on the Lake, donated by Onondaga County; \$50 Savings Bond, donated by Key Bank

Winner, Age 18 & Over

Steven Schnall, Liverpool Prize: \$100 cash, donated by S&W Redevelopment

Honorable Mention, Age 18 & Over

David Tankersley, North Syracuse

Prize: \$50 Carousel Center Gift Certificate, donated by Destiny USA

Honorable Mention, Age 18 & Over

Jennifer Hertig, Syracuse

Prize: \$25 cash, donated by S&W Redevelopment

Honorable Mention, Age 18 & Over

Paul Garvey, Liverpool

Prize: \$25 cash, donated by S&W Redevelopment



Over 150 interested citizens attended the OLP's 2nd Annual Progress Meeting.

In private industry, the event might be called a shareholders meeting, during which the annual report is presented. For the Onondaga Lake Partnership, the event was called our Second Annual Progress Meeting and it presented a chance for our "shareholders" - the community - to hear about the measurable strides taken in restoring Onondaga Lake and its watershed over the last year, and they had an opportunity to be heard as well.

Held on November 13 at the New York State Fairgrounds, the meeting featured the premier of our new video, interactive exhibits, a question-and-answer session and the announcement of photo contest winners.

The audience had the opportunity to learn about what's been done, and what's in the works. There were plenty of both.

In his opening remarks, County Executive Nicholas Pirro welcomed the attendees and introduced Lt. Col. Jeffrey M. Hall, Commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Buffalo District and Chair of the OLP Executive Committee.

Hall emphasized the significance of Onondaga County's METRO Stage III Ammonia and Stage II Phosphorus Removal project, describing it as "the largest application of ammonia and phosphorus removal technologies in North America. [We anticipate that] the improved quality of the METRO effluent will improve lake clarity, reduce algae, enhance habitat and increase dissolved oxygen, to the benefit of the lake's fishery." He indicated that METRO ammonia

and phosphorus improvements have already improved lake quality, decreased odors and reduced energy requirements.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE OLP'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS OVER THE LAST YEAR INCLUDED:

- Twenty-one of over 30 projects required under the Amended Consent Judgment (ACJ) have been completed.
- Two sewer separation projects are completed and one is under way.

Hall noted that pumping facilities, floatables control facilities and sewer separation projects completed this year will significantly reduce concentrations of bacteria, litter and floating substances in Onondaga Lake and its tributaries.

- Delivery of the Hiawatha Boulevard Regional Treatment Facility project one year ahead of the ACJ schedule

COMING UP:

- Development of a comprehensive habitat restoration plan
The comprehensive restoration plan will be completed next year, and provide a basis for identifying and prioritizing future habitat projects.
- Initiation of the feasibility study for the OLP's Lake Trail and Habitat Project.
This project is intended to enhance and create near shore habitat along the southeastern lakeshore in conjunction with segment 3 of the Onondaga Lake Loop Trail.
- Development of rural and urban best management practices to address non-point source pollution currently under way.



Matt Mulcahy of WTVH (left) asked the audience for their future vision of Onondaga Lake.

Hall noted that from an urban perspective, the OLP is considering the impact of stormwater discharge. "From a rural perspective," he said, "we're considering the effects of sediment and agricultural runoff such as fertilizers, pesticides, animal and dairy wastes on water quality."

Hall also noted the successes of Onondaga Lake Day, National Water Quality Monitoring Day and the Onondaga Creek Cleanup, which he felt would become an annual event because of "the high level of interest and participation by the community."

THE PEOPLE SPEAK

Then it was the public's turn. WTVH's Matt Mulcahy asked audience members for their take on the lake's future. The responses were illuminating and encouraging. A sample:

- "It's impossible to watch a sunset at Onondaga Lake and not feel connected to something beautiful and divine. . . It's up to us to step up to the plate and work together. We need to allow the agencies that are charged with the lake cleanup the opportunity to do so, and to work by their side to achieve what none of us can do alone. When we bring healing to Onondaga Lake, we will bring strength and healing to our community as well."

— Sally Jensen-Darnell, Canopy & Communitrees Stewards

- "We need to finish cleaning up Onondaga Creek, and then keep it clean and open it up so it can be used."

— John Allen, Syracuse-Onondaga Cycling Coalition

- "If you want to teach about Onondaga Lake, you need to get people involved with Onondaga Lake."

— Len, Liverpool High School Teacher

GET THE FULL REPORT

To read more about the Annual Progress Meeting, please visit our website at www.onlakepartners.org.

It was such a success last year, it's been expanded! The Onondaga Creek Cleanup Day is now "Days," as in September 13 and 20. This year, the cleanups will start in the center of Syracuse at Kirk Park.

Already, 55 volunteers have signed up, and we're looking for more. If you're interested, please call Sheila Myers, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Onondaga County, at (315) 424-9485, ext. 230.



80 volunteers participated in the September 2002 Onondaga Creek Cleanup

CAN YOU GUESS . . .

. . . HOW LONG IT TAKES FOR EACH OF THESE ITEMS TO DECOMPOSE IN THE ENVIRONMENT?

1. plastic bottle
2. foamed plastic cup
3. tin can
4. newspaper
5. orange or banana peel
6. cigarette butt
7. glass bottle

answers: 1. 450 years; 2. 50 years; 3. 50 years; 4. 6 weeks; 5. 2-5 weeks; 6. 1-5 years; 7. 1 million years

WATER QUALITY MONITORING DAY GETS LOCAL STUDENTS' FEET WET ON LAKE ISSUES

Three decades and a couple of generations following the passing of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (commonly known as the Clean Water Act), the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and others rekindled interest in its intent by planning events to “get citizens (re)involved with the water resources around them,” according to Bill Kappel, a hydrologist with USGS.

As a result, National Water Quality Monitoring Day was born, with its inaugural celebration on October 18, 2002—the 30th anniversary of the Clean Water Act.

GETTING THEIR FEET WET

The anniversary was recognized across the United States in several ways, primarily through water monitoring, but also with open houses and clean water festivals. Locally, participation took the form of a hands-on (and feet in!) workshop conducted by the USGS for an enthusiastic group of students and their teacher, Suzanne DeTore, from Henninger High School. The students, juniors and seniors in an Environmental Studies class, were studying Onondaga Lake and the Clean Water Act.

The USGS hoped that getting young people involved (who weren't even born when the Clean Water Act was passed) would help them to understand the importance of clean water and what can be done to “continue the quest to clean up our surface and groundwater resources,” said Kappel.

The students witnessed a water-quality sampling demonstration at the USGS stream gauging station on Onondaga Creek. Don Sherwood and Kari Hetcher, hydrologists with USGS, provided background and demonstrated methods of water sample collection for various chemical constituents (common ions, trace metals, nutrients) and physical parameters (specific conductance, pH, temperature, dissolved oxygen).

After the demonstration, the students put on waders, walked into the creek and collected their own samples to gain some hands-on experience.

Recalls Hetcher, “We talked about how point and non-point sources affect the stream, what might be upstream that could affect the stream's health, and how groundwater is connected to the stream. The students came up with some great ideas for protecting the watershed.”

“The day turned out to be a very positive experience,”

says Sherwood. “It gave the students a chance to see firsthand how environmental data are collected and how that data are related to problems and issues with water quality.”

DeTore noted that “students get to understand that it's not just the lake; that this has happened over many years with the surrounding watershed affecting the state of the lake. It's a bigger issue than they ever imagined, that affects the entire area.”

EVENTUALLY, IT'LL BE THEIR TURN



A Henninger HS Science Class Participated in Water Quality Monitoring Day

Hetcher hopes that kids will want to be interested enough to pursue science as a career. “I think showing young adults that environmental science can be interesting and fun is a great way to keep them interested in science,” she says. “Field trips are the best ways for students to see that there are practical applications to what they learn in science classes.”

Kappel sums it up this way: “The kids are our future, and if they don't get down to the water's edge, and understand what they have to do to get involved, the cleanup work isn't going to get done, and the efforts to keep what gains we have made, to make the water as clean as possible, will be lost.” He also has a practical take on the day: “Sometimes we need to get hit by a 2x4 before we act. But with our youth, if we get them involved early and constantly hit them with subtle facts (feathers versus 2x4s) the message will get through, and in the long term our water resources can only improve.”

One student, Amanda, who wants to be an environmental lawyer, summed it up this way: “Our world is dwindling away; people worry too much about how they are living but not enough about where they are living.”

Mission accomplished.

OLP INITIATES PEER REVIEW PROCESS

The Onondaga Lake Partnership (OLP) is committed to ensuring a technically, scientifically, and environmentally sound process for all projects associated with the lake restoration effort. To that end, the OLP recently initiated a peer review process in order to benefit from the resulting analysis and feedback.

WHAT IS PEER REVIEW?

Peer review is a documented, critical review of specific scientific and technical work products, conducted by qualified individuals who are independent of those who performed the work. Such reviews ensure that scientific and engineering research is technically adequate, competently performed and properly documented, and that it satisfies the research objectives. The outcome of a successful peer review can lead to a sound and credible basis for subsequent use of the reviewed work.

In June 2002, the OLP agreed to establish a Peer Review Panel to provide a scientific evaluation of a water-quality model of the Three Rivers system, including the Seneca River, in Central New York. The model—referred to as the Phase 2 Three Rivers Water Quality Model—was developed by Quantitative Environmental Analysis, LLC (QEA) under a contract administered by the Onondaga County Department of Water Environment Protection.

The Peer Review was coordinated through the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), a federal agency whose mission is to provide impartial information that contributes toward the wise use of the Nation's natural resources. The review was financially administered through the Onondaga Lake Cleanup Corporation (OLCC), which received a grant for Peer Review from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). Guidelines for the review were based on the recommendations for Peer Review described by the USEPA Science Policy Council.

THE PEER REVIEW PANEL'S CHARGE

The members of the Peer Review Panel were selected to consider a broad range of scientific, engineering, and

policy issues. The panel addressed the review topics independently of the OLP, its member agencies, and the OLCC, without individual conflicts of interest.

The panel was charged by the OLP to determine if the Phase 2 Three Rivers Water Quality Model is sufficient for its intended uses; specifically:

- (1) By Onondaga County to assess and manage its potential discharges of municipal wastewater within the Three Rivers System.
- (2) By the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to provide support for the development of a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for dissolved oxygen for the Seneca River.

The review was conducted in January 2003, and a report was submitted to the OLP in April. The report is currently under review by the Project Committee and, once approved by the Executive Committee, will be made available through local information repositories. Details on its availability will be announced on our website, www.onlakepartners.org.

OUTREACH COMMITTEE TO HOLD ROUNDTABLE FORUMS

The OLP's Outreach Committee will hold two roundtable forums this fall. The first, "Restoring the Fishing Habitat of Onondaga Lake," will take place on October 25, with the time and place to be announced. The Committee invites anyone with an interest in fisheries in the lake to attend.

The second roundtable will be an Educators Summit for teachers who would like to build on curriculum that addresses watershed issues. The date, time and location will be announced at a later date.

For more information, please call Sheila Myers, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Onondaga County, at 424-9485, ext. 230, or Conrad Strozik of the Izaak Walton League at 655-2752.

THIS NEWSLETTER IS PUBLISHED BY THE ONONDAGA LAKE PARTNERSHIP

Executive Committee Members

Chaired by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
- New York State Attorney General
- Onondaga County
- City of Syracuse

PROJECT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chaired by New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

Representatives of Executive Committee agencies, as well as:

- Department of Public Works
- Lakefront Development Corporation
- U.S. Geological Survey
- Onondaga County Soil and Water Conservation District

RESOURCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chaired by Onondaga County

Representatives of Executive Committee agencies, as well as:

- Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board
- New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation
- Metropolitan Development Association
- Syracuse University

OUTREACH COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chaired by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Representatives of Executive Committee agencies, as well as:

- Izaak Walton League
- Atlantic States Legal Foundation
- League of Women Voters
- Cornell Cooperative Extension of Onondaga County
- State University of New York—College of Environmental Science & Forestry
- Onondaga Historical Association

The Executive Committee establishes and maintains the mission of the partnership and the lake improvement effort.

The Project Committee serves as the partnership technical center of expertise on specific projects.

The Resource Committee develops and maintains the funding strategy for projects.

The Outreach Committee works to enhance public knowledge and understanding of the partnership and the status of the lake improvement effort.

YOU CAN CONTACT THE ONONDAGA LAKE PARTNERSHIP AT:

1-800-833-6390
info@onlakepartners.org

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT THE ONONDAGA LAKE PARTNERSHIP WEB SITE AT WWW.ONLAKEPARTNERS.ORG

MINI-GRANTS *continued from page 1*

activities that will prevent non-point source pollution from entering the lake and its tributaries; and to strengthen the link between communities and the OLP.

"Every level of government: federal, state, county and city has focused its efforts on improving the health of Onondaga Lake," said EPA Regional Administrator Jane Kenny.

"But government can't do it alone. Thanks to citizens and students and teachers like those receiving grants today, we are working together toward a brighter, cleaner, healthier future for this wonderful lake and its tributaries."

The recipients were:

- Boy Scout Troop 139—\$3,500 for bird habitat and bird observation opportunities and a clean up around Nine Mile Creek between Rte. 690 and Onondaga Lake;
- Izaak Walton League—\$5,000 for a stream restoration and habitat enhancement project at Beartrap Creek;
- Marcellus High School Science Department—\$5,000 to complete curriculum addressing Onondaga Lake historical, biological, political and social issues;
- Nine Mile Creek Conservation Council—\$2,500 for Lakeland Launch Site improvements and a Watershed Management Conference;
- Project Watershed Central New York—\$5,000 for a database of water quality data from Onondaga Lake tributaries, involving teachers and students from watershed schools working along with Project Watershed and Syracuse University's Living School Book coordinator; and
- Friends of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo—\$4,000 for landscaping, interpretive signage and an education station at the zoo, to provide educational opportunities concerning the positive effects of native plant species on non-point source pollution.

"We were pleased to receive 16 mini-grants applications representing many outstanding ideas," said Gina A. Brown of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and a member of the OLP Outreach Committee. "We are all grateful for the community's interest and active participation in the Onondaga Lake restoration effort, and we look forward to seeing the results of each project."

The projects funded in whole or in part by the OLP mini-grants program will be highlighted in future issues of the newsletter and at upcoming OLP events.