



A clean lake reflects well on all of us.

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A QUARTERLY UPDATE FROM THE ONONDAGA LAKE PARTNERSHIP

AGREEMENT TO CLEAN UP LAKE

## NEW YORK STATE AND HONEYWELL REACH AGREEMENT TO CLEAN UP ONONDAGA LAKE

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), New York State Attorney General's Office and Honeywell International have reached an agreement, regarding a Consent Decree, that requires Honeywell to conduct a cleanup of contaminated sediments in Onondaga Lake. This agreement is in accordance with the Record of Decision (ROD) that was issued by the NYSDEC and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) on July 1, 2005. The Consent Decree is a legal agreement which requires Honeywell to design and construct the remedy for the cleanup of the lake bottom. Part of the Consent Decree includes a Statement of Work (SOW), which addresses several technical issues associated with the design and construction of the remedy.

The selected remedy is estimated to include the dredging of up to an estimated 2.65 million cubic yards of sediment from the portion of the lake in which water depths range from 0 to 30 feet—with most of the dredging being performed in the southwest portion of the lake. It will also include the use of isolation capping over an estimated 425 acres of this area. In water depths greater than 30 feet, a thin layer cap will be installed over an estimated 154 acres.

The most highly contaminated materials retrieved from the lake will be treated and/or disposed of at an off-site permitted landfill. The balance of the dredged sediment will be placed in one or more Sediment Consolidation Areas (SCA) constructed on one of Honeywell's Solvay

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### 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.

## FULL HOUSE HEARS OF LAKE IMPROVEMENT AT OLP ANNUAL PROGRESS MEETING



Ken Lynch, Regional Director NYSDEC, Region 7, leads the waste water/lake bottom discussion group during the OLP Annual Progress Meeting.

Standing room only was a welcome sight as the Onondaga Lake Partnership (OLP) held its sixth Annual Progress Meeting on Monday, October 30. "Environmental Progress" was the theme for this year's event held in the Tiffany Ballroom at the Genesee Grande Hotel in Syracuse. The presentation highlighted the water quality improvement in Onondaga Lake, as many of these projects, initiated as a result

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wastebeds. Honeywell recently conducted a study of the potential SCA locations on the wastebeds and recommended that the SCA be constructed on Waste Bed 13. NYSDEC and USEPA concur with the recommendation. The siting of the SCA at Waste Bed 13 is incorporated in the SOW and is documented in a Fact Sheet which is attached to the Consent Decree and the SOW.

The project includes an estimated five-year design process for all aspects of the remedial program, including design and construction of the dewatering facilities and the Sediment Containment Area. In-lake construction activities (e.g., dredging and capping) are expected to take four years to complete. Design and construction activities at several upland areas will be ongoing while design of the lake remedy is underway. The estimated cost to implement the remedy is approximately \$451 million. This is comprised of the cost to construct the remedy (estimated to be \$414 million) and the average annual operation and maintenance cost (estimated at approximately \$3 million).

Control of contamination, migrating to the lake from various upland sites, is an integral part of the overall cleanup of Onondaga Lake. To prevent recontamination of lake sediments, active sources of contamination to a given portion of the lake will need to be shut off prior to performing cleanup activities in that area of the lake. Effectiveness of the capping for certain areas of the lake will rely upon the proper functioning of hydraulic control (barrier) systems, which are planned for some of the shoreline areas. These systems will need to be constructed and operating prior to cleanup activities commencing in related areas of the lake. Therefore, timing of remedial activities in Onondaga Lake will need to be coordinated with the remedial work which will be performed as part of the remedies at the upland sites. Construction of the first phase of the barrier wall commenced in October 2006.

The NYSDEC and the USEPA are also issuing a draft Explanation of Significant Differences (ESD) which describes a change to a portion of the remedy required by the ROD in the southwest portion of the lake. The change is necessary to ensure the stability of the adjacent causeway and is supported by recent, more extensive, sampling of the area which indicates that the

extent of pure phase chemical contamination is significantly less than previously believed.

The NYSDEC recently held a public meeting and availability session in Syracuse for questions and answers regarding the draft Consent Decree. NYSDEC also accepted public comments during a 30-day public comment period commencing on October 12, 2006, and ending on November 13, 2006. A Responsiveness Summary will be prepared that describes public comments received and how the NYSDEC will address the concerns raised.

The complete Administrative Record, which contains all information upon which the selection of the response action was based, is available online at [www.dec.state.ny.us/website/der/projects/ondlake/](http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/der/projects/ondlake/). Paper copies are also available at the NYSDEC Regional Office in Syracuse and Albany and at the Liverpool Public Library, Onondaga County Public Library, SUNY/ESF Library, the Camillus Town Hall and the Atlantic States Legal Foundation.

NYSDEC will continue to work with Honeywell toward implementation of the remedy. Technical documents will need to be reviewed and approved throughout the design and construction phases of the project to help ensure the effectiveness of the remedy. Additionally, it will remain a NYSDEC priority to continue the public outreach process. Meeting with interested parties, the public and the scientific community are expected to continue with the purpose of fostering good communication, progress, and a project that benefits the entire community. ■



Kayaks at rest on the lake shore.

## ANNUAL PROGRESS MEETING

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of the Amended Consent Judgment, were completed well ahead of schedule. To encourage public involvement and receive valued public input, the format of the meeting was changed from past years to include interactive and informative group discussions regarding recreation, hazardous waste and lake bottom issues, wastewater improvements and water quality, and outreach and education. Dan Cummings of News Channel 9, WSYR-TV, moderated the meeting, which included an open question and answer session, group discussions and exhibits.

Congressman Jim Walsh attended the meeting and reiterated his personal commitment to revitalizing Onondaga Lake and its watershed. Through the efforts of Congressman Walsh, approximately \$139 million in federal funding has been allocated to various projects to achieve this goal. The OLP continues to offer Mini-grants and Education Fund Programs to local residents and schools for projects and field trips to educate students about Onondaga Lake's environment. Everyone can play a role in the clean-up effort of Onondaga Lake from bagging leaves, properly disposing of hazardous household cleaners, taking used motor oil to a service station for proper disposal, to reducing the use of pesticides and fertilizers that contribute to non-point source pollution runoff.

Onondaga Lake is getting better! ■



Bob Geraci, Onondaga Parks Commissioner, discusses recreation opportunities on the lake.

Visit the OLP website at [www.onlakepartners.org](http://www.onlakepartners.org) and sign up for our electronic list service to receive notice of important OLP events.

## 2020 VISION PROJECT—ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY IN THE FUTURE OF ONONDAGA LAKE



Dr. Tom Vawter discusses the lake's future with a young county resident during the Onondaga Lake Day event in June 2006.

Regular readers of this newsletter are keenly aware of the many projects underway to rehabilitate Onondaga Lake. This progress contributes to a new optimism about Onondaga Lake, and the OLP is encouraging the community to share their vision of the lake's future. A community visioning study is being performed to help guide the OLP in defining priorities for specific projects in the watershed. It asks the public what they would like to see the lake look like and how they would like to use the lake in the future. The study seeks to ensure that the huge investment of public and private funds into the lake cleanup will be deemed a success by the public.

The OLP selected the Cazenovia firm, EcoLogic LLC, to facilitate the "2020 Vision Project—Engaging the Community in the Future of Onondaga Lake." Since mid-2005, professionals on the EcoLogic team have held focus groups and interviews with stakeholders, brought displays to places where people gather such as Onondaga Lake park events and the New York State Fair, and conducted a phone survey of more than 500 Onondaga County residents.

The findings are remarkably consistent. People want a clean lake that will once again be a source of pride and a centerpiece of the community. Many respondents were passionate about the lake's potential as a recreational resource. Others spoke of the value of restoring the ecosystem and removing evidence of past abuse.

The EcoLogic team is compiling results into specific statements reflecting the community's vision for a sustainable future for Onondaga Lake. A final phase,

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## LOCAL STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT THE LAKE, COURTESY OF OLP GRANT



Students record their observations in sketchbooks.

This fall, students at Elmcrest Elementary in the Liverpool school district were treated to a field trip and a series of science and art lessons about Onondaga Lake, funded by an OLP Education Fund grant to Deb Dahlin, the Elmcrest Elementary art teacher.

In their first lessons, students learned about the physiology and diversity of fish, studied the artwork of Peter Thompson, and created sketchbook journals to take on their trip to the lake. Thompson then visited the school with slides of two-dimensional and three-dimensional fish art to share with the students. On September 27, Jack Gramlich and Alex Becerra of Eco-to-Go visited the school to prepare students for their Onondaga Lake field trip.

In early October, students spent a full day exploring Onondaga Lake at Onondaga Lake Park. Students sketched observations of the lake, learned how to fish and visited the Salt Museum to learn the lake's history. Gramlich and Becerra taught the students how to test the water quality, identify various aquatic organisms and how to help prevent further lake pollution. One student announced, as he arrived back at school, "Today was the best day of my life!"

To conclude their lessons about Onondaga Lake, students put their new-found knowledge of aquatic organisms to use by creating their own fish out of clay. The fish will be completed and on display at the school starting November 1.

A photo gallery for the project is available on the school's website: [www.ee.liverpool.k12.ny.us/EE/staff/%20Art%20room/Fishy/GoneFishin'.html](http://www.ee.liverpool.k12.ny.us/EE/staff/%20Art%20room/Fishy/GoneFishin'.html).

Applications for the OLP Education Fund program are accepted on a rolling basis. For more information and an application, please contact Lindsay Speer at the Onondaga Environmental Institute, 102 W. Division St., Syracuse, NY 13204 or by email at [onon1@verizon.net](mailto:onon1@verizon.net).

*The OLP Environmental Education Fund makes individual grants of up to \$500 for local teachers to support classroom and field projects to educate students about Onondaga Lake and its watershed. Grants are awarded on a rolling basis. For more information, visit [www.onlakepartners.org](http://www.onlakepartners.org).* ■

### OVER 100 VOLUNTEERS PARTICIPATE IN FIFTH ANNUAL ONONDAGA CREEK CLEANUP



Besides removing debris from the creek, volunteers scoured the banks of the creek from West Colvin Street to Kirk Park. To get involved in next year's cleanup, contact Cornell Cooperative Extension at (315) 424-9485 ext. 0.

### 2020 VISION PROJECT

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planned for early 2007, will bring these statements back to the community for its reaction. Look for a summary of the vision in an upcoming newsletter. To share your ideas, link to the vision project through the OLP web site, [www.onlakepartners.org](http://www.onlakepartners.org), or send a message to [info@ecologicllc.com](mailto:info@ecologicllc.com). ■

## LOCAL STUDENTS TEST WATER QUALITY IN ONONDAGA CREEK TO CELEBRATE WORLD WATER MONITORING DAY

On Wednesday, October 4, and Tuesday, October 17, the Onondaga Lake Partnership (OLP) sponsored two days of water quality monitoring and education for local area schools at Kelley Brothers Memorial Park, leading up to the 5th Annual World Water Monitoring Day on October 18.

Participating students were from Henninger, Nottingham, Fowler, East Syracuse-Minoa, Jamesville-DeWitt, and West Genesee High Schools and from Parkview Jr. Academy; and Levy, Blodgett, Solvay and Soule Road Middle Schools. They joined thousands of volunteers across the globe to sample local water quality and report their findings. The students learned the importance of water quality protection and the science behind water monitoring, while gaining hands-on experience sampling for temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen, and turbidity in Onondaga Creek. Students also had the opportunity to view the creek's inhabitants, such as fish and macroinvertebrates.

The OLP promotes cooperation among government agencies and other parties involved in managing the environmental issues of Onondaga Lake and the Onondaga Lake watershed. The OLP is committed to sharing and protecting our community's water ecosystem and encourages citizens to learn more about protecting our valuable water resources. World Water Monitoring Day is an excellent initiative designed to promote education and personal stewardship.

This important event was facilitated by volunteers from U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, Onondaga County Department of Health, Onondaga Soil and Water Conservation District, Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board, Onondaga Environmental Institute, Upstate Freshwater Institute, State University of NY School of Environmental Science and Forestry and Canopy. These representatives provided students guidance in testing the waters and shared their scientific knowledge of Onondaga Creek biota. We offer a special thank you to those special volunteers!!

For more details, visit the World Water Monitoring Day website at [www.worldwatermonitoringday.org](http://www.worldwatermonitoringday.org). ■

## THE CASE OF THE MISSING SANDAL

Sheila Myers, Educator, Centers for Nature Education at Baltimore Woods

This past summer, I had the opportunity to teach our youngest day campers at Baltimore Woods that what ends up in the creek ends up in the lake. Baltimore Brook, which runs through the Baltimore Woods property in Marcellus, NY, is a tributary to Nine Mile Creek, which flows into Onondaga Lake. Every summer the Centers for Nature Education hosts a day-camp for youth ages 4-12 at Baltimore Woods. Over 600 campers attended day camp in the summer of 2006.

Part of the summer day camp activities at Baltimore Woods is a trip to the creek to look for aquatic life. This summer, the campers could not resist the muddy spots in the creek, and a few lost their shoes along the way. Most found their shoes. Others, like the pink plastic sandal that belonged to Graeson Landsberg (age 5), got so lost in the mud that she could not find it.

When I told the children that the shoe would one day end up at Onondaga Lake, they had no idea what I was talking about. I explained that Onondaga Lake is the big lake by the Carousel Mall and that the water in Baltimore Brook flows all the way to that lake. They were so excited by the news! When their mothers came to pick them up that is all they talked about.

The Centers for Nature Education (CNE) is a private non-profit organization headquartered at Baltimore Woods, a nature preserve owned by Save the County in Marcellus, NY, which has over 20,000 visitors a year. CNE was awarded a 2006 OLP Mini-Grant to conduct educational programs for campers, school groups and families that visit the preserve to study the connection of Baltimore Brook to the larger Onondaga Lake watershed. For more on CNE, visit [www.takeahike.org](http://www.takeahike.org). ■



Baltimore Woods' day campers look for aquatic life in Baltimore Brook.

## PROJECT WATERSHED: A CENTRAL NEW YORK WATER QUALITY EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY

Bill Legg, Director, Project Watershed Central New York

When the present Project Watershed director retired from the Liverpool School District in 1991, he needed something to do. He soon learned about stream monitoring from a member of the Central New York Chapter, Izaak Walton League of America (IWLA), and became hooked. In August 1994, a Fayetteville Manlius High School science teacher contacted both men and three other local educational, governmental and industrial environmentalists interested in science and water resource education, thereby forming a supportive consortium. She and another teacher were interested in launching an inquiry-based science program in area high schools. After several meetings, the consortium decided on water quality education and adopted IWLA's "Save Our Streams" monitoring program as their main activity. The consortium named their organization "Project Watershed Central New York." The stream monitoring program is named "Project Watershed/Save Our Streams."

Project Watershed is a volunteer organization. Today, Project Watershed/Save Our Streams includes three programs: Project Watershed in Onondaga and Cortland Counties (18 schools); Project Oneida Lake Watershed in Madison, Oneida and Oswego Counties (6 schools) implemented in 2004; and the adult volunteer Select-A-Stream program in Onondaga County (7 teams numbering 45 individuals) initiated in 1999. Project Watershed programs are funded by grants and contributions.

IWLA's Save Our Streams (SOS) Program was introduced to Onondaga County in 1990 as an educational program for students by its local chapter. SOS is biologically oriented, collecting and identifying benthic organisms called macroinvertebrates to assess the water quality of a stream. Macroinvertebrates (bugs) include mostly immature insects but also crustaceans, mollusks and worms.

By 1995, the SOS biological format was expanded and enhanced with chemical and physical components. A \$5,000 contribution from the Niagara Mohawk Foundation enabled the purchase of new equipment that made possible water quality tests including dissolved oxygen, pH, biochemical oxygen demand, reactive phosphate, nitrate, chloride, turbidity, total dissolved solids and fecal coliform counts.

From 1997 to 1999, Project Watershed collaborated with SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (SUNY ESF) in their Environmental Studies Project, and a Project Watershed website was developed. The Project Watershed/SUNY ESF partnership continues today with



Students collect macroinvertebrates from Nine Mile Creek during a sampling event.

the Office of Educational Outreach. Established in 1995, the Project Watershed board meets bi-monthly at SUNY ESF.

In 2000, a major step toward the success of Project Watershed took place when Syracuse University's Living SchoolBook, at little cost to Project Watershed, created and continues to manage and upgrade a database, as well as Project Watershed's website at <http://projectwatershed.org>. The database is not only a record of the water quality collected, it is a validation of the volunteer work of the Project Watershed/Save Our Streams program. A 2005 Onondaga Lake Partnership mini-grant funded the most recent, extensive upgrade of the database. Project Watershed now has the largest publicly-accessible volunteer stream monitoring database in NYS.

The physical component of the Project Watershed/Save Our Streams program consisted of a manual (float) measurement of stream velocity and stream flow (discharge). By 2005, three flow meters were purchased to more accurately measure stream velocity.

Project Watershed's water quality data is now available for educational analysis and interpretation by high school students and teachers thanks to two student field research projects funded by the Onondaga Lake Partnership Mini-grants Program and to six data-based lessons funded by the John Ben Snow Foundation. These resources can be accessed at the Project Watershed website: <http://projectwatershed.org>.

Project Watershed/Save Our Streams remains an excellent model for those who want to participate in the assessment and protection of water quality in other regions of New York State. ■

# ONONDAGA COUNTY CONSERVATION FARM OF THE YEAR

Jeffrey Carmichael, Executive Director, Onondaga County Soil and Water Conservation District



The Luchsinger family's Silver Spring Farm before and after.

The Onondaga County Soil and Water Conservation District is pleased to announce that Silver Spring Farm has been named the 2006 Conservation Farm of the Year. The farm is located in the Town of Onondaga, at the headwaters of Harbor Brook, a tributary to Onondaga Lake. Silver Spring Farm is a third generation, family owned and operated dairy farm. Chuck Luchsinger is the general manager of the farm and is assisted by his son Charlie, Chuck's wife Sue, daughters Jenny and Ali, and other part-time help. Silver Spring Farm operates on 300 acres and is milking 125 registered Jersey cows.

Silver Spring Farm has taken an active and progressive approach to environmental management. The farm has been involved with the District's Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) program since 2001. They completed an AEM plan in 2002 and have implemented over 30 best management practices on the farm since 2001. These include several practices to collect and treat polluted runoff and manure. For over 10 years, the farm has had a modified rotational grazing system in place. They have 110 cows on 35 acres of pasture which are rotated every three days to keep pastures from being over-grazed.

Asked what impact the AEM program has had on the farm, Chuck commented that they are grateful for the programs and staff available to them, and there have been monumental improvements to the farm which help

improve the quality of the creek. Silver Spring Farm has continued to implement practices on their own, including a manure stacking pad currently underway that will improve management of manure from their heifer facility.

Silver Spring Farm has made a conscious effort to be involved with local programs and implement sound agricultural practices. The Luchsingers' approach to farming demonstrates to other farmers that soil and water conservation practices can be both environmentally and economically viable. Chuck has been instrumental in convincing other farmers to participate in the AEM program through tours of his farm and his praise of the program. The family has expressed their true appreciation of the program and the benefits it has afforded their operation. There is no doubt that the practices installed on the farm will be maintained, and the soil and water resources on the farm are being protected.

Silver Spring Farm was honored at the Onondaga County Soil and Water Conservation District's Annual Conservation Tour luncheon on Friday, September 29, 2006. Congratulations to Silver Spring Farm and the Luchsinger family for being named the 2006 Conservation Farm of the Year. ■

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#### 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:**

- Syracuse Department of Public Works
- U.S. Geological Survey
- Onondaga County Soil and Water Conservation District
- Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board
- Metropolitan Development Association

#### 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 and 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.

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT THE ONONDAGA LAKE PARTNERSHIP WEB SITE AT [WWW.ONLAKEPARTNERS.ORG](http://WWW.ONLAKEPARTNERS.ORG)**

## OLP IN LIGHTS ON THE LAKE DISPLAY



This year's holiday light show extravaganza offered by the County Department of Parks and Recreation at Onondaga Lake Park will be held November 21, 2006, through January 7, 2007. Again this year, the Onondaga Lake Partnership (OLP) will be represented at the light show with their 12-foot-high display featuring an outline of the OLP's logo, a sailboat, a jumping fish and the words, "Cleaner Lake, Brighter Future" in bright white lights. This is the third year the OLP display has been part of the show.

An annual tradition for many local families, the Lights on the Lake program runs each evening from 5-10 p.m. and offers a two-mile long drive through colored lights with life-size displays, theme sections and a memorable grand finale. The OLP display is located near the marina in the "Under the Sea" theme section.

For more information, go to [www.lightsonthelake.com](http://www.lightsonthelake.com) for admission fees and additional details. ■

This newsletter is intended to provide general information to the public regarding the Onondaga Lake basin and activities related to the cleanup and restoration thereof. Approval for publication by the members of the OLP does not signify adoption or approval for purposes of regulatory, enforcement or other legal actions, of the factual, scientific, or legal assertions, characterizations or conclusions contained therein.