



News Release

For immediate release: November 10, 2003

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Onondaga Lake Partnership announces 2004 mini-grants program

Syracuse, N.Y. – The Onondaga Lake Partnership (OLP) announced today their request for proposals for the 2004 Public Education and Outreach Mini-Grants Program for community-based education and stewardship projects in support of the goals of the lake restoration effort. A total of \$40,000 is available, in individual grant award amounts of up to \$5000 each.

“The mini-grants program is just one way to involve the communities around Onondaga Lake in the ongoing effort to reclaim and restore it,” said Lt. Col. Jeffrey M. Hall, Commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Buffalo District and Chair of the OLP Executive Committee. “We were greatly encouraged by the enthusiasm with which the first mini-grants program was received. The communities we serve play a key role in the success of the Onondaga Lake Partnership’s efforts, as evidenced by the mini-grants projects that have been under way this year.”

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The program encourages locally-based watershed enhancement programs and educational activities that help restore, protect or enhance the habitat associated with Onondaga Lake and its watershed; develop the capacity of local governments, citizen groups, youth groups and other organizations to promote community-based stewardship activities that will prevent non-point source pollution from entering the lake and the tributaries that enhance the Onondaga Lake watershed; and strengthen the link between communities and the OLP. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), an OLP member organization, provides the funding for the Mini-Grant Program through the Onondaga Lake Cleanup Corporation, which administers the program on behalf of the OLP. “Public interest and involvement is integral to the success of the OLP’s efforts,” said Mario Del Vicario, Chief of the Community and Ecosystem Protection Branch of the USEPA and OLP Executive Committee member. “We are pleased to help facilitate grassroots efforts that ultimately benefit Onondaga Lake and communities throughout the watershed.”

The 2003 mini-grants recipients included Boy Scout Troop 139, to clean up around Nine Mile Creek and create bird habitat and observation opportunities; Izaak Walton League, for a stream restoration and habitat enhancement project at Beartrap Creek; Marcellus High School Science Department, to complete curriculum addressing Onondaga Lake historical, biological, political and social issues; Nine Mile Creek Conservation Council, for launch site improvements and a watershed management

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conference; Project Watershed Central New York for a database of water quality data from Onondaga Lake tributaries created by teachers and students from watershed schools working with Project Watershed and Syracuse University's Living School Book; and Friends of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo for landscaping, interpretive signage and an education station at the zoo addressing the positive effects of native plant species on non-point source pollution. All of the 2003 mini-grants recipients will participate in the OLP's Third Annual Progress Meeting on Thurs. evening, Nov. 13 in the Broadway Bistro at the Art and Home Center on the New York State Fairgrounds. Further information about the 2004 mini-grants program will be available at that meeting, which is free and open to the public.

Additional information about the Onondaga Lake Partnership, the lake restoration effort, and the mini-grant program and application forms may all be obtained on the OLP website, www.onlakepartners.org, by email at info@onlakepartners.org, or by calling toll free 1-800-833-6390.

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