



News Release

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For further information: Nancy Sticht, 716-879-4134

Rep. Jim Walsh and Onondaga Lake Partnership announce 2004 Public Education and Outreach Mini-Grants

Syracuse, N.Y. – Earlier today, Rep. Jim Walsh (NY-25) joined members of the Onondaga Lake Partnership (OLP), including U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Deputy Regional Administrator Kathy Callahan, County Executive Nicholas J. Pirro and Syracuse Mayor Matthew J. Driscoll to announce the recipients of the OLP's 2004 Public Education and Outreach Mini-Grants. A total of \$26,430 was awarded at the event today at the Onondaga Yacht Club.

“Congratulations to all award recipients for developing worthwhile initiatives that will greatly enhance our efforts to improve Onondaga Lake water quality,” said Walsh. “It’s imperative that we recognize that all activities that occur within the lake’s watershed have an impact upon our efforts to enhance and improve it.”

“By supporting groups with these grants, we are building on an already successful collaboration involving kids, adults, non-profits and private industry to protect Onondaga Lake well into the future,” said Callahan. “Government is playing a major role in cleaning up this treasure, to be sure. But the involvement of the Syracuse area public is tantamount – residents’ interest in the lake brought us to where we are today, and they will play a major role in moving us forward. We are very proud to support these projects.”

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Lt. Col. Jeffrey M. Hall, chair of the OLP Executive Committee and Commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Buffalo District, agreed: "One of the most important things that the partnership can do to ensure the long-term health of Onondaga Lake and its watershed is to not only encourage but support community involvement and stewardship through the mini-grants program. We are excited about this year's projects and we look forward to working together with these fine organizations to enhance the future of Onondaga Lake."

"The County supports the Partnership's mini-grants program, which provides big help to local groups to implement lake-related programs through small amounts of federal grant funding. This year's mini-grant recipients represent a wide variety of initiatives designed to benefit the lake and further involve the public in lake improvement," Pirro said. "This is important because public support of lake restoration remains a key to the lake's future."

Driscoll added, "This year's OLP mini-grants recipients are to be commended for their ability to create projects that will directly benefit Onondaga Lake and the environment. Teaching our community to monitor our streams, the development of multilingual educational brochures and the creation of forums to talk about Onondaga Lake can only further instill the importance of our natural resources and their direct relationship to the quality of life in our city."

The awards are as follows:

- ❑ **Project Watershed** - \$1,630 to provide training for high school science teachers and other adult volunteers to participate in stream monitoring programs and expand the available database for water quality parameters in Onondaga Lake tributaries.

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- ❑ **Canopy** – \$2,500 to this green space advocacy group to develop and print an educational brochure about Onondaga Creek.
- ❑ **Nine Mile Creek Conservation Council** - \$3,300 for a “Nine Mile Creek Watershed Day” that will bring local officials and residents together to protect natural resources and to develop of a “State of the Watershed” report and management plan.
- ❑ **Cornell Cooperative Extension of Onondaga County** - \$4,000 for education and hands-on training to establish rain gardens as a tool to prevent non-point source pollution and stormwater runoff. They will also establish a demonstration rain garden in the watershed.
- ❑ **Syracuse University** - \$5,000 to update the Project Watershed database, the largest publicly accessible volunteer stream-monitoring database in New York State.
- ❑ **Onondaga Yacht Club** - \$5,000 to identify and monitor invasive aquatic plants in the Lake, purchase and install a portable dock, improve a public access ramp for small boats and design and construct an educational kiosk.
- ❑ **Onondaga County Resource Recovery Agency (OCRRA)** - \$5,000 to promote hazardous waste collection by developing multilingual materials and direct mail brochures and fliers, and by coordinating with community centers.

The OLP mini-grants program encourages locally based watershed enhancement programs and educational activities that help restore, protect and enhance the habitat associated with Onondaga Lake and its watershed. By developing the capacity of local governments, citizen groups, youth groups and other organizations to undertake stewardship activities, the mini-grants program helps prevent non-point source pollution from entering the lake and its tributaries and strengthens the link between communities and the OLP. The mini-grants are funded by the Onondaga Lake Partnership through a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to the Onondaga Lake Cleanup Corporation.

The Onondaga Lake Partnership was established under the Water Resources Development Act of 1999 and includes representatives from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, New York State Department of

Environmental Conservation, New York State Attorney General's Office, Onondaga County, City of Syracuse and other local academic, non-profit and civic organizations. Its mission is to manage the environmental problems facing Onondaga Lake and its watershed.

For more information about the Onondaga Lake Partnership, log onto our website at www.onlakepartners.org. For information relative to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, call Nina Habib Spencer, EPA (212) 637-3670.

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