



News Release

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For further information: Marianne Rodgers, 716-879-4135

Rep. James Walsh and Onondaga Lake Partnership Announce 2005 Public Education and Outreach Mini-Grants

Syracuse, N.Y. – Earlier today, Rep. James Walsh (NY-25) joined members of the Onondaga Lake Partnership (OLP), including U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Acting Regional Administrator Kathleen Callahan, County Executive Nicholas J. Pirro, Syracuse Mayor Matthew J. Driscoll, Lt. Col. Timothy B. Touchette of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Regional Director Kenneth P. Lynch and Timothy Mulvey, representing the Attorney General’s office to announce the recipients of the OLP’s 2005 Public Education and Outreach Mini-Grants. A total of \$31,728 was awarded at the event today at the Onondaga Yacht Club.

“Congratulations to this year’s award recipients. The involvement and stewardship of local community groups and organizations plays an integral role in raising awareness about Onondaga Lake cleanup efforts and issues affecting its watershed,” said Walsh. “These worthwhile projects are a significant contribution to our efforts to enhance the lake for the enjoyment of our community.”

“Onondaga Lake is a treasure to the residents of Syracuse, and these grants will allow local communities to get involved in improving the water quality of this important water body,” said Callahan. “EPA is proud to support these projects and the collaboration involving kids, adults, non-profits and private industry dedicated to protecting the health of the lake for the future.”

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Lt. Col. Timothy B. Touchette, chair of the OLP Executive Committee and Commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Buffalo District, agreed:

"Community involvement and stewardship is important to ensure the long-term health of Onondaga Lake and its watershed. We are excited about this year's mini-grants projects and look forward to working with these organizations to enhance the future of Onondaga Lake."

"The County strongly supports the Partnership's mini-grants program, that spreads some of the federal funding received by the OLP to a number of local organizations to encourage and assist them in improving the lake and educating others about lake issues. This year's mini-grant recipients include schools, environmental groups, sportsmen's organizations and others who will use the grant monies for a wide variety of creative initiatives designed to benefit the lake and further involve the public in lake improvement," Pirro said. "Public support of lake restoration continues to remain a key to the success of all lake improvement efforts."

Driscoll added, "This year's OLP mini-grant recipients are to be commended for selecting projects that disseminate information to heighten public awareness about key environmental issues relating to Onondaga Lake and its watershed and projects that educate our young people regarding the precious resources derived from Onondaga Lake and its tributaries."

The awards are as follows:

- **Centers for Nature Education** - \$2,500 to continue and expand the dissemination of EnviroMails, a listing of environment-related events, meetings, resources and announcements that are e-mailed to central New York residents.

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- ❑ **Central New York Chapter of the Izaak Walton League** - \$5,000 to design and produce education panel displays about carp to be used at the Carp Fishing Tournament in June 2005 and other events.
- ❑ **Onondaga Cortland Madison Counties BOCES** - \$4,428 to introduce water-testing and watershed education into 5th grade classrooms in the Liverpool and North Syracuse school districts.
- ❑ **Save the County Land Trust** - \$5,000 to develop a public awareness project concerning the impacts and spread of invasive species in the Nine Mile Creek sub-basin and to initiate control of Japanese Knotweed within the riparian corridor.
- ❑ **Fund for the Environment** - \$5,000 to produce a video to promote Onondaga Lake as a viable resource for recreational fishing.
- ❑ **Project Watershed Central New York** - \$5,000 to work with student teams to review the results of water monitoring data and examine project stream site images of the 2004 Onondaga Watershed Database Inquiry project.
- ❑ **LeMoyne College** - \$4,800 to development and implement a summer science camp where elementary students will learn the importance of water as a natural resource.

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 Jennifer May, EPA (212) 637-3658.

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