



# ONONDAGA LAKE WATERSHED MANAGEMENT STUDY (OLWMS)

**Project Description:** After many years of work by numerous agencies under the Amended Consent Judgment and the 1993 Onondaga Lake Management Plan, the Onondaga Lake Partnership realized the need in 2003 to encompass the progress made to date, the work currently underway, and the work planned for the future within a comprehensive management framework and document.



This project entails a multi-agency Project Delivery Team (PDT) led by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) developing a multi-purpose/multi-objective evaluation of the Onondaga Lake watershed to (1) integrate existing projects/plans/studies; (2) assess program progress; and (3) plan future lake and watershed revitalization programs and projects into a comprehensive Onondaga Lake Watershed Management Study (OLWMS). The final product will be used as a tool for the OLP to move toward the rehabilitation of the Onondaga Lake watershed.

Watershed studies are planning initiatives that have a multi-purpose and multi-objective scope that accommodate flexibility in the formulation and evaluation process. The outcome of a watershed study will generally be a watershed management plan. Watershed management plans are documents that identify the combination of recommended actions to be undertaken by various partners and stakeholders in order to meet the needs and achieve the objectives identified in the study and may identify existing studies, further studies or projects for implementation.

The OLWMS project will be accomplished using a three-phased approach over several years.

- Phase 1 – Develop a “State of the Onondaga Lake Watershed Report” for the Onondaga Lake watershed to establish existing baseline conditions.

- Phase 2 – Develop a “Strategies and Priorities Report” that considers existing baseline conditions and evaluates alternatives and provides recommendations for projects. Public involvement and exchanges will be critical as the alternatives are developed. The NEPA processes will be implemented to ensure all participants have opportunities to provide input and review draft documents.
- Phase 3 – Update and revise as necessary the 1993 Onondaga Lake Management Plan (OLMP) to a watershed-scale document or create a new Onondaga Lake Watershed Management Plan (OLWMP) that addresses the problems, needs and opportunities within the watershed for the goals and objectives sought.

**Location:** The entire 285 square-miles of the Onondaga Lake watershed

**Project Sponsor:** The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers serves as the Federal sponsor of this Onondaga Lake Partnership project, and the project is 100% Federally funded.



**Current Status:** The first phase is underway and will result in the production of a State of the Onondaga Lake Watershed Report (SWR) that will include two documents: 1) a scientific and comprehensive technical document, and 2) a public overview pamphlet. Both will present a state of the current conditions of watershed resources, such as biological (habitat, fisheries, etc.), water quality, socioeconomic, cultural, and other various physical conditions. A panel of independent experts is finishing their efforts in identifying appropriate index models and assessment tools that can be applied to the watershed resources. Data collected about the watershed resources from a separate project will be used to create the OLSWR.