

# NEWS FROM THE OATKA CREEK WATERSHED COMMITTEE



Summer 2000

## OCWC RECEIVES GRANT FOR OUTREACH WORK

The Finger-Lakes Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance recently awarded OCWC approximately \$11,000 to hire an Outreach Coordinator who will spearhead the early development of the Oatka Creek Watershed Management Plan. The Coordinator will work to engage elected and appointed municipal officials and the general public in the process of creating and implementing the Plan.

Tim Tatakis, author of the State of the Basin report, will also serve at the Outreach Coordinator for this “Municipalities Project”. With a Ph.D. in Biology, residence in LeRoy, and work with the OCWC since its inception, Tim brings a wealth of knowledge and enthusiasm to these important tasks. Tim has also developed and implemented a watershed management plan for Lake LeRoy, and has worked extensively with Genesee and Wyoming Counties on watershed and water quality issues and projects. In short, the OCWC is thrilled to have Tim Tatakis take the role of Outreach Coordinator as the Committee advances its efforts towards an inter-municipal Watershed Management Plan.

Tim’s work will be performed in cooperation with the Genesee County Soil and Water Conservation District as well as OCWC.

## WORDS TO PONDER

*When you drink the water, remember the spring.*

--Chinese Proverb

## STATE OF THE BASIN REPORT NEARS COMPLETION

The State of the Basin Report for Oatka Creek is the first step in the process towards creating and implementing a Watershed Management Plan, and will be the first chapter of that Plan. The State of the Basin report offers up-to-date information on the watershed, water quality, and summarizes the potential and problems afforded the creek by human activity.

The State of the Basin Report provides an overview of the ecology, geology, geography, and uses of the Creek and its watershed. The research and writing was completed by the Oatka Creek Watershed Committee’s Tim Tatakis, Professor of Biology at Monroe Community College, and Conservation Board Member for the Town of LeRoy.

For more information or copies of the State of the Basin Report, contact Chair Jack Bradbury.

### **WHAT IS THE OATKA CREEK WATERSHED?**

The Oatka Creek Watershed is the 215 square miles of land that encompass rural parts of four counties, 15 towns and four villages, and that drains into Oatka Creek. The Creek is 58 miles long, with its headwaters in Wyoming County and its end at Monroe County’s Scottsville and the confluence with the Genesee River.

### **WHAT IS THE OATKA CREEK WATERSHED COMMITTEE?**

A group of 30 dedicated volunteers, representing a variety of interests and backgrounds such as farming, soil conservation, public health, education, environmental conservation, recreation, and municipal government. The Committee is working towards the participatory, inter-municipal creation and implementation of a basin-wide Watershed Management Plan.

## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Oatka Creek and its watershed is, quite simply but profoundly, beautiful. The New York State Department of Environmental Quality has awarded the Oatka—which flows from its headwaters south of Warsaw in Wyoming County to its confluence with the Genesee River near Monroe County's Village of Scottsville--"Blue Ribbon Trout Creek" status. The Oatka Creek Watershed Committee has embarked on a journey to preserve and protect the ecological integrity of the creek and its basin through a Watershed Management Plan. In this fact lies my important message. Our Committee consists of dedicated volunteers who bring a wealth of knowledge, experience, and passion for the Oatka, but it will not be just these volunteers who bring a Watershed Management Plan to life. It is you, the "stakeholders", who will do this—those of you who are reading this newsletter right now. The wonderful mix of people living in the towns and villages of this watershed—environmentalists, municipal leaders, county legislators, school board members, students, local business proprietors and leaders, religious community members, civic group participants, farmers, sportsmen and sportswomen, non-profit organizations, and individual landowners along the creek and its tributaries. These people and all other are the life-blood of our Plan. These people will be the designers, the authors, and the beneficiaries of the environmental, economic, and quality-of-life success stories a cooperative, inter-municipal Plan will bring to all communities in the watershed. This Committee needs your support, and I invite your participation at this early date. Please think about it and call me!

*-Jack Bradbury*

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*The OCWC is supported by the  
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## OCWC FEATURED AT WATERSHED SYMPOSIUM

On April 28 and 29, *Caring for Creeks* offered the regional community the opportunity to learn about watershed-based work being accomplished by citizens, organizations, and agencies in our region. On Friday April 28 a Watershed Symposium held at Genesee Country Village in Mumfordsport featured Oatka Creek, Irondequoit Creek, Northrup Creek, Black Creek, Allen's Creek, and Canandaigua Lake Watersheds and their planning efforts. In addition, several exhibits gave attendees a view of the volume and variety of water-quality efforts ongoing in the region. On Saturday, April 29, ten "hands-on, feet-in", family-oriented activities throughout Monroe County were open to the public for inter-generational, experiential fun and learning! *Caring for Creeks* was funded and organized by Rochester Area Community Foundation as part of their participation in the Great Lakes Community Foundation Environmental Collaborative. For any information about the *Caring for Creeks* presenters, presentations, or the watershed efforts featured, contact Evan Lowenstein at Rochester Area Community Foundation, 716-271-4271.

## OCWC CONDUCTS TRACE METALS STUDY OF OATKA

Over the last year, University of Rochester environmental scientist Carolyn Dowling and her students conducted an analysis of metals in the water and sediments of Oatka Creek. On February 18 and April 28, Carolyn and her students presented the findings of their research at the University of Rochester and at the *Caring for Creeks* Watershed Symposium respectively. In summary, the research revealed relatively little negative influence on the creek from human sources. While promising, these results point strongly to the need for proactive decision and action, effort and vigilance, and careful planning to preserve the quality and character of the creek. For more information on the trace metals study, contact Committee Chair Jack Bradbury.