

The Oatka Creek Watershed Committee, Inc.

PO Box 181

Scottsville, NY 14516

NEWSLETTER

Fall/Winter, 2005



Message From the Chairman

Greetings from the Oatka Creek Watershed Committee! It has been some time since we produced our last newsletter. It is my hope that we can restart this important outreach function. Our goal is to produce two newsletters a year.

The Oatka Creek Watershed Committee (OCWC) has been very busy over the last 12 months and there are several initiatives that I would like to highlight. The first item is our "Oatka Creek Guide" project. Our goal was to produce an educational map that would illustrate the Oatka watershed and some of its prominent features. The map also includes a detailed history of the surrounding area. This project was first discussed several years ago and has now been completed. Copies have been distributed throughout the Region. Funding for this initiative was provided by the Rochester Area Community Foundation. Please feel free to contact me if you wish to obtain a copy.

The OCWC is continuing to partner with the Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (G/FLRPC). We are very fortunate to be working with David Zorn, Executive Director, and his staff. The Committee is currently under contract with G/FLRPC to develop a comprehensive outline for our Watershed Plan. Additionally they are helping us to prioritize the kinds of technical studies and other information still needed to be completed. We are hopeful that through our fundraising initiatives and grant writing endeavors we will be able to continue our relationship with the G/FLRPC for the development of a written plan.

As we press forward with our mission, I cannot overstate the importance of partnering with stakeholders in the basin: towns, villages, counties, resource agencies, educational institutions and the public. This is an important tenet of a successful planning effort and we will continue to pursue alliances that will help preserve this wonderful resource. Thank you for your support! *-Richard Venvertloh, Chair*

Controlling Sediment in the Black & Oatka Creek Watersheds-*Excerpted from an Article by David Zorn, Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council*

The Genesee/ Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (G/FLRPC) has been busy working in the Oatka Creek and Black Creek watersheds. The project they are working on is entitled, "Controlling Sediment in the Black & Oatka Creek Watersheds." This is a very significant project with some real benefits anticipated at the local municipal level. The project is partially funded by the Great Lakes Commission. The five (5) components of the project are as follows:

Municipal Board Meetings

Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (G/FLRPC) staff in association with the Oatka Creek Watershed Committee (OCWC) has completed presentations to Town and Village Boards within the watershed. This work was completed last year. A similar initiative is currently taking place in the Black Creek watershed in association with the Black Creek Watershed Coalition (BCWC). Some 13 Towns and 2 Village Boards will be visited. The goal of this effort is to solicit feedback about the watershed, educate the community and promote municipal involvement in the development of a Watershed Management Plan.

Identification and Analysis of the Riparian Corridor in the Black & Oatka Creek Watersheds
Stream bank inventories were conducted in 2004 by Wyoming, Genesee and Monroe County Soil and Water Conservation Districts. As part of this effort, the most assessable severely eroded stream banks were documented. For each location, restoration recommendations, concept designs and preliminary cost estimates were developed. A report was prepared and is entitled *Identification and Analysis of the Riparian Corridor in the Black & Oatka Creek Watersheds*. The report can be found at <http://www.gflrpc.org/Publications/RiparianCorridor.htm>. There were five (5) sites identified in the Black Creek Watershed and six (6) sites identified in the Oatka Creek watershed.

Analysis of Federal and State Laws and Regulations and Municipal Local Laws, Ordinances and Practices in municipalities in the Black and Oatka Creek Watersheds

G/FLRPC staff, in association with the Black Creek Watershed Coalition (BCWC) and the Oatka Creek Watershed Committee (OCWC) developed the Municipal Law Review & Ordinances and Practices Assessment Form. The form is being used to assess and analyze municipal local laws and practices. The goal is to better understand the current status of municipal land use regulations as they pertain to soil erosion and sediment control.

Water quality/resource issues identification and prioritization

G/FLRPC staff, in association with the BCWC and the OCWC will identify and prioritize the significant water quality and quantity issues in the watershed in anticipation of building implementation recommendations within a watershed management plan framework.

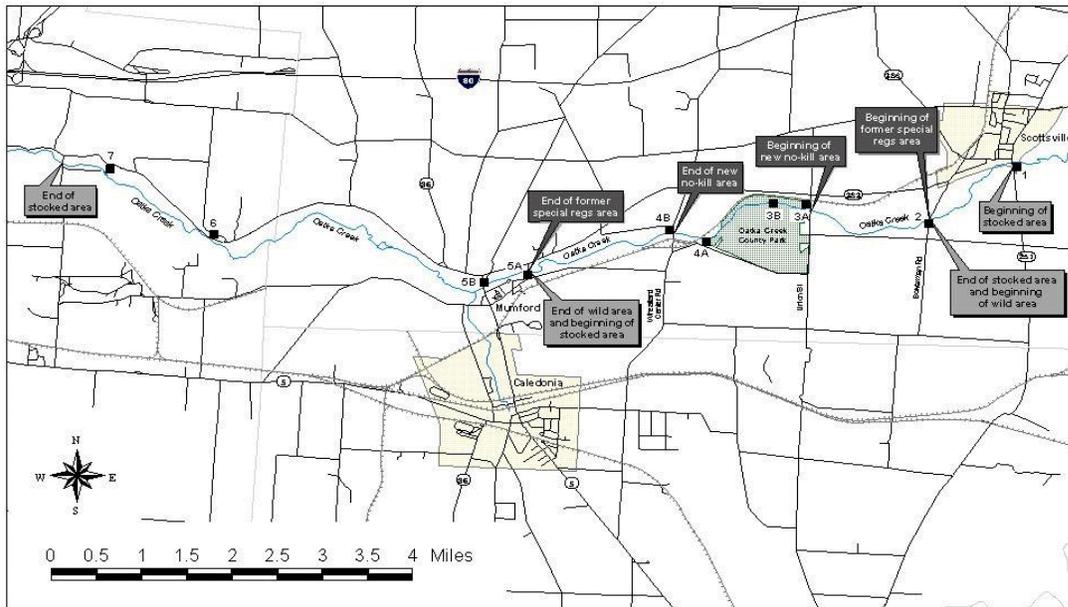
Assistance to Municipalities Revising Local Laws

Based on the above Analysis of Local Laws Ordinances and Practices and Issue Prioritization, G/FLRPC staff will work with willing municipalities in the two watersheds to revise local laws in accordance with gap analysis and best management practices. A letter went out to all municipalities in the two watersheds in September 2005 soliciting municipalities interested in local law revisions. Applications for local law revision assistance were due back by October 3, 2005.

The Effect Of A No-Kill Regulation On Angler Effort, Catch, And Harvest Of Brown Trout (*Salmo Trutta*) On Oatka Creek-excerpted from the report for NYSDEC Region 8 by Matt Sanderson, Senior Aquatic Biologist, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, Region 8 Bureau of Fisheries, 6274 East Avon-Lima Road, Avon, New York 14414

Oatka Creek is a high quality western New York trout stream. Fisheries resources in certain areas within the stream are managed by stocking hatchery raised yearling and two-year-old brown trout (*Salmo trutta*). Another section of the stream is managed for wild, naturally produced brown trout with restrictive harvest regulations. The trout fishing regulations in a portion of the wild area were changed from a high size and low creel limit to a no kill regulation on October 1, 2000. To determine whether the no kill regulation would cause an immediate increase in the number of anglers seeking this type of recreational experience, and to see if angler catch rates would increase, creel surveys were conducted. A creel census was conducted from late March 2000 through October 2000, prior to the regulation change. Another creel survey was conducted from March 2001 through October 2001, after the change. Total angler effort over all survey areas (wild and stocked) increased by 51 % in 2001. This increase was proportionally similar among management types and months. Total catch and harvest were 56% and 21% higher in 2001, respectively. These too, were proportionally similar between the years among management types and months. Catch rates remained the same between the years among management types and months. Harvest rates in the stocked areas were the same in 2000 and 2001. As expected, harvest rates in the wild area dropped from a low rate (0.01 fish/hr) in 2000, to nearly zero in 2001. Higher angler effort in 2001 explains the increase in catch and harvest in 2001. It is not likely that the no kill regulation alone induced higher fishing pressure in the wild area, since effort increased in both the stocked and wild areas. Unfavorable air temperature and stream flow conditions may explain why low angler effort occurred in 2000.

Figure 1. Oatka Creek study area. Numbered squares are access sites and count and interview areas.



More anglers fished the wild section of the Oatka in 1970 than 2000 or 2001. Catch rates were lower and harvest rates were higher in 1970 than in 2000 or 2001. Under the right weather and flow conditions, anglers targeting the larger stocked two-year-old brown trout are very successful at catching and creeling these fish immediately after they are stocked. All of the stocked two-year old brown trout were creeled within a week of stocking in 2000.

