

The Oatka Creek Watershed Committee, Inc.

PO Box 181
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NEWSLETTER

Fall/Winter, 2006



Message From the Chairman

Richard VenVertloh, Chairman

It is my pleasure to inform you that the Oatka Creek Watershed Committee (OCWC) has been active in moving closer toward our goal - the development of a Watershed Management Plan. I would like to point to three initiatives that we have recently been working on. First is the development of a detailed watershed plan outline. It identifies specific content we wish to include in the final document. Input for the outline was received from our membership as well as the Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council. It is comprehensive and should serve as an excellent guide for us (see article below). Second, we have been lobbying for financial support from our elected officials in Albany. A consideration is to hire an expert in watershed planning to help us develop the plan. And, third, we have recently organized the membership into three sub groups representing the upper, middle and lower watershed. These working groups will focus on prioritizing watershed issues within each geographic area. The sub groups are empowered to work on specific tasks important to the communities they are from!

As always, we appreciate your support and look forward to working with you to preserve our creek. Thank you !

Rick

Contents of the Watershed Management Plan

Robert Kelley - Town of Covington

Since our last newsletter, the Oatka Creek Watershed committee (OCWC) has moved aggressively in developing a comprehensive outline for our Watershed Management Plan. To assist in this process the committee collaborated with the Genesee / Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council, retained to provide input and guidance. From within the OCWC membership, volunteers such as myself and Lisa Compton (LeRoy) started by reviewing published watershed plans to see how others successfully organized the material. In so doing, important precedents were determined. Some of these include keeping the reader foremost in mind, organizing the material logically and keeping things as simple as possible. In its simplest form the outline is as follows:

- Executive Summary
- Section 1: Introduction
- Section 2: The Watershed Management Plan
- Section 3: References and Supporting Studies

It is recognized that the "Executive Summary" is an important piece of the Watershed Plan. It will touch on key topics such as: purpose of the plan, primary stakeholders, summary of important issues, completed studies and recommendations. It is intended to be a convenient tool for the reader who wants an overview without digging into the supporting details.

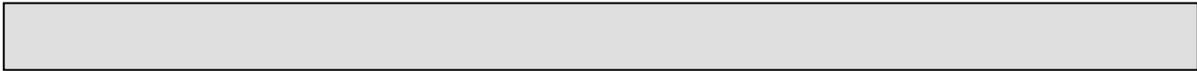
The "Introduction" addresses a number of topics. In particular it builds the case "Why do a Watershed Management Plan?" and "What are the problems this plan addresses?" The Committee's role in the process is defined along with other involved

stakeholders. This includes the contributions local municipalities can make. The scale and scope of the plan are brought into focus.

After setting the stage in the introduction, Section 2 gets into the heart of the plan. First, it defines existing and baseline conditions. What do we currently have in the watershed? Second, it identifies the “desired” state. What are the goals in the watershed and how might use of the land change? Third, it establishes a set of recommendations. What needs to be done to preserve water quality? Fourth, the plan suggests an implementation and tracking strategy. What does the “road map” look like? Fifth, it identifies tools and resources needed to implement and evaluate what is recommended.

We choose to put all the references, including study reports, in a defined Section 3. This permits a smoother and uninterrupted flow of ideas in the text, and still makes all pertinent background material available to the reader.

For well over a year, the OCWC has benefited from a collaborative association with the Genesee / Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council. This collaboration extends to the preparation of the Watershed Management Plan Outline. We believe G/FLRPC’s contributions are integrated seamlessly. We are at the stage where writing assignments can be made: we expect G/FLRPC will contribute significantly to writing the plan. In a subsequent article, we will update progress in preparing the plan.



New Salt Storage Shed In Warsaw Will Protect Oatka Creek

Robert Heubusch, Councilman, Town of Warsaw

The Town of Warsaw is in the process of building a new salt storage shed to replace the present one which is showing a lot of wear. The location is in close proximity to the creek therefore there is concern for contaminated runoff. Proper salt storage will provide a benefit to the creek by reducing the likely hood of unnecessary pollution. The Town plans on using the building specifications from a similar storage shed that has been built in another township

The process of grants and permits is in the works. Dave Reckahn has been very helpful in pointing the Town in the right direction for possible help through the USDA. They are also in touch with representatives in the State and Federal Governments. The Town has invited the Village to participate in the project to make a one storage shed that would serve both municipalities. The Village will participate.

The project is anticipated to start and finish in the year 2007.



Tales of Turbidity: Controlling Sediment in the Black and Oatka Creek Watersheds

Brian Slack, Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council

Initiated in early 2005 by the Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council in association with the Black Creek Watershed Coalition and the Oatka Creek Watershed Committee, the *Controlling Sediment in the Black and Oatka Creek Watersheds* project came to a close this summer...and with its completion came an impressive body of information relative to erosion and sediment control in these two watersheds, as well as funding for two stream bank stabilization projects.

Every year, enormous amounts of soil are lost from the land and transported to receiving water bodies downstream. The negative impacts of sedimentation come in many forms, including water pollution/degradation, the need for frequent and costly dredging, and the loss of productive farmland, just to name a few. Partially funded by a grant from the Great Lakes Commission's Program for Erosion and Sediment Control, the project involved several key components in an effort to better understand the major sources and root causes of erosion within the two watersheds and begin to plan for viable and cost-effective solutions.

The first major task involved a detailed stream bank inventory in the study area. A close assessment of the banks of the Black and Oatka Creeks was conducted using site visits and detailed aerial photography. Once the sites with the worst cases of erosion were identified, methods for remediation were proposed, including the identification of possible funding mechanisms. The work resulted in a report entitled *Identification and Analysis of the Riparian Corridor in the Black and Oatka Creek Watersheds* <<http://www.gflrpc.org/Publications/RiparianCorridor.htm>>. It was felt that with this information in-hand, relevant agencies will be in an excellent position to target possible funding sources for future site remediation. In fact that is exactly what happened when Wyoming and Monroe County were awarded \$97,557 for stream bank stabilization projects this spring from the Great Lakes Commission.

The next major task of the project involved an assessment and analysis of municipal local laws, ordinances and practices in the 28 municipalities in the two watersheds with specific regard to erosion and other types of non-point sources of pollution. Documents such as zoning and subdivision ordinances were reviewed in an effort to understand how each municipality addresses erosion and sedimentation through their local laws. Findings for each community were summarized and included in a final report entitled *Municipal Law Review and Analysis* <<http://www.gflrpc.org/Publications/ControllingSediment/Assessment/ReviewAnalysis.htm>>

Concurrently, G/FLRPC staff worked directly with three selected communities in an effort to integrate erosion and sediment control best management practices into their local laws.

For more information on the project visit <http://www.gflrpc.org/Publications/ControllingSediment/ControllingSediment.htm>



Great Lakes Commission provides funds for Oatka Stream Protection

David Reckahn - Wyoming County Soil and Water Conservation District

The Great Lakes Commission has selected the Kennedy site on Oatka Creek to receive funding under the 2006 Erosion and Sediment Control program. The Kennedy site was one of 5 sites identified on the Oatka by an earlier Great Lakes Grant. The project sites were identified by Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council staff, with local input. Then preliminary designs were developed by Lu Engineers of Rochester, NY to protect the sites.

The Wyoming County SWCD took the preliminary designs and developed a grant application for funding from the Great Lakes Commission. The Commission notified the SWCD that the project had been selected for funding.

The SWCD and Lu Engineers are working to finalize a design to stabilize the streambed using natural stream design. After the design is complete, it will be used to obtain permits from DEC and Army Corps of Engineers to work in the stream channel.

The goal will be to construct the project design between June 1st and October 1st of 2007. The natural stream design will use as much native tree cuttings, logs and stone as possible to provide fish and wildlife habitat, while maintaining the natural character of the stream.

