



## Annual Report on Activities: January 1, 2015 To December 31, 2015

### Oatka Creek Watershed Committee, Inc.

#### **OCWC Board of Directors for 2015:**

Esther Leadley•Ray Cipriano•Jerome Smith•Rick VenVertloh•Jim Seiler (Treasurer)•Lisa Compton (Secretary)  
George Squires•Maureen Leupold (ViceChair)•Peter Lent (Chair)

#### **OCWC Coordination with Other Watershed Initiatives and/or Groups**

The Committee continued throughout the year to work with and support other organizations and governmental departments in their work on water quality issues in the watershed. Groups that OCWC worked jointly with in 2015 include: the NYSDEC, Genesee, Wyoming and Monroe County SWCDs and their associated committees, watershed groups Black Creek Watershed Coalition and the Center for Environmental Initiatives (CEI)/Genesee River Watch, planning organization Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (G/FLRPC), educational institutions The Finger Lakes Institute at Hobart and William Smith Colleges (FLI) and Alfred State University, the Genesee Country Village & Museum (GCV&M), and local chapters of the conservation organization Trout Unlimited (TU). OCWC also maintained membership to water conservation groups Fresh Water Future (FF) & the River Network (RN).

County SWCDs continued to be OCWC's closest collaborators, with frequent attendance at monthly OCWC meetings by both Genesee and Wyoming County personnel. Genesee Co. District Manager George Squires attended meetings regularly in addition to serving on the OCWC Board of Directors, continuing his participation after his retirement on August 15 from Genesee County SWCD. Wyoming County technician, Kim Falbo, was also a frequent meeting attendee.

#### **Meetings**

##### **Regularly scheduled OCWC public meetings for 2015:**

Meetings were held:

- 1/26, 2/23, 3/16, 4/20, 5/18, 6/15, 7/20, 8/17, 9/21, 10/19, 11/16, and 12/21

#### **Training/Committee Education:**

Training/Education events during the year included but were not limited to:

- February/March – Pete Lent, Maureen Leupold, Jim Seiler and Lisa Compton continued to attend financial management webinar sessions. Sessions were held at Genesee Community College (GCC) on February 11th and March 11th.
- March 25 – Pete Lent attended the “Planning for the Future of Agriculture by Monroe County Towns” event held at Monroe Community College (MCC) and hosted by MCC's Agriculture and Life Sciences Institute. Included was a good overview of the Farmland Protection Programs.
- June 17 – Pete Lent and George Squires attended the second Genesee River Basin Summit hosted by CEI at SUNY Geneseo.
- July/August: Maureen Leupold and Pete Lent participated in the webinar “Working with Schools for Waterways Education” developed by Waters Words that Work. This marketing firm works with EPA to develop lesson plans for grades 7-12.

- Sept 2 – Pete Lent, Jim Seiler and Kim Falbo attended the Wyoming County Soil Health Field Day at the Dueppengiesser Dairy Company in Perry. The event was sponsored by Wyoming County SWCD.
- Nov 11-14 - Maureen Leupold attended the National Association of Biology Teachers' Developmental Conference held in Providence, RI. Of particular interest to her was the session "Little Critters-Big Ideas: An Ecology Unit based on Stream Macroinvertebrates". The speaker was Alan Berkowitz from the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies located in Millbrook NY.
- Nov 17 – Maureen Leupold attended the "The Future of Food, Water & Soil" conference hosted by the Empire Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS) at the NYS Agricultural Station in Geneva.

### **Outreach Activities:**

#### **Outreach - Watershed Management Plan (WMP)**

- May – OCWC began discussions of large group and municipal outreach presentations. In June, a subcommittee was formed for creating an outreach presentation for plan stakeholders. Possible venues were discussed for the presentation. Also, OCWC corresponded with G/FLRPC regarding next steps in the planning process and a presentation for municipalities. Committee had discussions regarding the WMP Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

#### **Outreach – Educational/Collaborative/other:**

- January – Jim Seiler distributed CD copies of the nutrient management video "Oatka Creek Watershed and You" to local farmers, with good reception. In November, OCWC received a request from the company that produced the video to allow submission of it to the Rochester "Fast Forward Film Festival" to be held during Earth Week in April 2016.
- March/April - Pete Lent presented at TU Seth Green meeting (with CEI) regarding future shared activities between groups.
- March 21 - Pete Lent gave demonstrations on macro I.D. to teachers in Geneva, NY for the FLI. Discussed approaching Oatka Watershed teachers for training.
- April 11 – OCWC participated in the 10th Annual Ecofest/Cool Kids Event at Genesee Community College in Batavia – Display was live macro-invertebrates. Maureen Leupold arranged participation.
- April 15 – Pete Lent, Lisa Compton & NYDEC Region 8 Forester Gary Koplun made a presentation to the LeRoy Rotary Club about the Emerald Ash Borer and the upcoming Trees for Tribes project.
- April /May - Pete Lent and George Squires instructed at/participated in the Genesee County Envirothon.
- May 11 - Pete Lent participated in a conference call involving Watershed Groups/Watershed Coalitions. Other than NY watershed organizations (including FLOWPA AND LEWPA), participants included representatives from Soil & Water Conservation Districts, County and Regional Planning Agencies and representatives of NYS DEC and NYS Ag & Markets.
- June - LeRoy recreation director was approached in regard to establishing a youth recreation creek water sampling program. Director recommended to plan activities for next year at the soonest.
- July 18 – OCWC had informational booth with live macro display at LeRoy Oatka Festival.

- August - TU Seth Green and Canandaigua chapters, along with other fly-fishing groups, formed the “Oatka Advocates” to bring attention to the merganser duck issue and to develop some kind of tracking of catch. Pete Lent was invited to attend meetings.
- August/September – Pete Lent and Maureen Leupold calibrated water sampling equipment and subsequently went to Alfred State to assist an adjunct professor with a student sampling project.
- October 1 - Pete Lent and Maureen and Steve Leupold attended CEI’s 41st Community Salute, and had a display in the Citizens Groups Exhibit Area with information on both OCWC and the Black Creek Watershed Coalition.
- October 15 & 16 - Maureen Leupold presented OCWC’s joint T4T project(s) information at the NYS Soil & Water Conservation Committee (SWCC) meeting in Batavia.
- November 12 - Pete Lent had meeting with LeRoy Central School science teacher, Sherri Lovria, and her students to talk about local environmental/water issues. Addressed were: invasive species (including Emerald Ash Borer), microbeads and climate change.
- June, September & December NYSDEC - GLAA:
  - June 3 – Pete Lent and George Squires attended the NYSDEC Sub-Basin Work Group Workshop Re: New York’s Great Lakes Action Agenda (GLAA). State strategy & meeting schedule were presented in addition to discussion on watershed groups in area.
  - September 3 - Pete Lent attended a Meeting of the South-West Lake Ontario Sub-Basin Work Group to identify and advance priority projects to achieve goals of NYS’ Great Lakes Action Agenda.
  - December 3 – Pete Lent attended the NYS Great Lakes Action Agenda meeting for the SW Basin.

#### **Conservation projects:**

- April 25 - OCWC hosted Oatka Creek Park in Scottsville for Monroe County’s Pick up the Parks event. Maureen Leupold coordinated.
- May 2 - OCWC helped organize and participated in a T4T project with GCV&M & NYSDEC Region 8 on GCV&M Oatka Creek riparian property to replace dying ash trees. Follow up discussion on possible projects: Village of LeRoy Pond, Balonek Farms in Mumford, and private property owners along Oatka Trail in T-Wheatland.
- End of May - Pete Lent did tree check at GCV&M planting site.
- Late summer – Maureen Leupold coordinated Fall Littoral Society Coastal Clean-up at Oatka Creek Park, September 12. Event cancelled due to weather.
- October 23 - Maureen and Steve Leupold and Pete Lent did a second survey of conditions at the T4T project site on GCV&M property.

#### **Other projects:**

- OCWC assisted George Squires/Genesee County SWCD in the initial discussions as well as coordination of public outreach for the Munson St. Canoe & Kayak Launch in the Village of LeRoy. The project was developed by the SWCD. Launch was dedicated on Wednesday, June 24.
- Starting in May/ June – Supported work of Kim Falbo of the Wyoming County SWCD to expand NYSDEC Trees for Tribes (T4T) program in our region. Kim became the region coordinator (Genesee River Basin) and worked

with State entities to make the program more useful to farmers (i.e., avoid downgrade of assessment).  
December update by Kim.

### **Watershed Conditions and Data Monitoring:**

- February - Review of Genesee County SWCD's Oatka AG BMP projects under FLOWPA
- February - Review of Wyoming County water protection projects regarding Black & Oatka Creek Erosion & Sediment Control grant (Ag BMPs) Funding through Great Lakes Commission.
- March/April – Pete Lent attended the Genesee County Water Quality Committee meeting where Genesee County SWCD had presented a draft 5-year (2015-2020) Strategic Plan for the District's implementation of the Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) Program.
- April - Genesee County Planning Department Director sent George Squires and Pete Lent a copy of a Notice of Incomplete Application that DEC sent to Dolomite Products Co. Inc. (Dolomite) on April 14, 2015 regarding a 29-acre expansion of its LeRoy Quarry, which included a relocation of a portion of the Mud Creek stream channel. OCWC continued to monitor the application process.
- June 5 – Follow up on-the-ground survey of area affected in April 15 truck herbicide spill accident at intersection of Fox Road and State Route 19 in the Town of Middlebury, Wyoming County. The truck was carrying plastic drums of herbicide Halex. Pete Lent and Lisa Compton went to see what kind of damage remained about 7 weeks after the spill. They walked along small stream to the tributary and over to the Creek and took pictures. Things looked pretty good: minimal bleaching and new growth looked good. Water plants/algae looked good in tributary. Creek appeared to be unaffected.
- July 10 - Pete Lent attended the Wyoming County Joint Water Resources Coordinating Committee (WRCC) and Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) meeting.
- July – Jerome Smith brought copies of the streamflow (discharge) graphs from the USGS Stream real-time data website so Committee could review effects of recent rainfall events during June and July. Jerome reported on flooding in the valley flats in the Village and Town of Warsaw and downstream in the Towns of Middlebury and Covington between State Route 19 and Saltvale Road. Pondered water in portions of some crop fields resulted in variable yields in the fields.
- December - Maureen and Steve Leupold contacted the DEC about three 55-gallon drums that were left on the banks of the Creek near where they live. DEC came out and quickly removed the barrels. They did not hear any results of analysis of the substance.

### **Funding Initiatives:**

- January – It was suggested that OCWC consider joining the New York State Employees Federated Appeal (SEFA) to help generate some income. The program allows state employees to select local (by county) non-profits and charity organizations to support through payroll deductions. Committee decided to have donation jar at festival events.
- August - The Committee received contact from Genesee/Finger Lakes Chapter of the Air and Waste Management Association (AWMA) inquiring about what we are doing with funds they had given us for the water testing equipment. Maureen Leupold and Pete Lent responded.

- September - Pete composed a “Letter of Support” on behalf of the OCWC in support of G/FLRPC’s 2015 GLRI Grant Application “Development of Revised Local Ordinances to reflect Watershed Management Plan Priorities”.
- December - Jim Seiler contacted The Vic Blood Foundation for information on their grants. The grants are to 501(C) (3) groups for projects serving LeRoy. He received a short note back from Dane Sprague.

### **Watershed Plan**

- May - Pete Lent finalized the In-Kind Service spreadsheets (work hours recorded by members that were dedicated to the plan) for Jan-Dec 2013 and Jan-Sep 2014. Signed and returned to G/FLRPC on May 6, 2015. There was a total of 2571 recorded hours equaling \$38,565 in in-kind dollars.
- May – Plan Status report from NYS DOS to G/FLRPC last November 2014 indicated that the only comment on plan at that time was a request for some formatting changes. There have been no other requests or comments.
- Mid June: Esther Leadley reported that the NYS DOS has not yet approved the Management Plan.
- July - In-Kind hours for WMP Plan update: Pete collected all final signatures for in-kind hours, and mailed documents to Dave Zorn in August.

### **Other Committee Activities**

- January - Possible purchase of a meter through Genesee SWCD grant money. Other discussions about use and maintenance of other water testing equipment obtained with AWMA funding.
- January - Redesigned OCWC website up at new server, DreamHost. It is free for registered 501 (C ) (3) organizations. Live blogging was added. Additionally, oatka.org email addresses created for Corporate Officers.
- January - Jim Seiler researched liability insurance. On his recommendation, a policy was purchased through Alliant that covers water testing and other basic conservation activities. Committee developed and adopted policy for handling cash donations.
- Maintained FF and RN membership
- October/November Work Plan & Budget Discussions for 2016. Covered were: development of a sustainable budget and possible financing options during the year to increase donation and other income. PayPal and handling cash donations discussed. Ideas to develop community awareness and involvement with small projects (e.g. storm drain stenciling; information kiosks at canoe/kayak access point and parks near the creek and its tributaries) and methods to increase membership discussed.
- Lisa Compton continued to scan and digitize OCWC archival records.

Submitted By: 

Lisa M. Compton, Secretary, Oatka Creek Watershed Committee, INC. on Feb. \_\_\_\_, 2021