

ANNUAL REPORT ON ACTIVITIES: JANUARY 1, 2022 TO DECEMBER 31, 2022

Oatka Creek Watershed Committee, Inc.

- I. Meetings:
 - a. Regularly scheduled OCWC meetings were held on: January 24, February 28, March 21, April 18, May 16, June 27, July 18, August 15, September 19, October 17, November 21 and December 19.
- II. Corporate Activity:
 - a. Held *Annual Meeting of the Corporation* for year 2021 on 1/18/22
 - b. Approved Budget for 2022 at the 1/18/22 meeting.
 - c. Nominated and elected directors and corporate officers for 2022.
 - d. The OCWC is starting to concentrate on developing a succession plan for Board Members & Officer Positions.
- III. Advisory Agency Interaction:
 - a. Regular coordination with Monroe County and Wyoming County Soil and Water Conservation Districts.
 - b. Emily Royce, Associate Regional Planner and lead for water resources projects at the Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (G/FLRPC) is starting to attend some OCWC meetings.
 - c. Ryan Elliott, NYSDEC Buffalo, is attending some OCWC meetings.
 - d. NYS DEC Resilient NY Program: The OCWC is coordinating with NYSDEC to identify potential flood prone areas in the watershed, particularly those that could be suggested for the NYSDEC Resilient NY program. The OCWC identified opportunities in Genesee and Wyoming Counties. The program utilizes consultant teams to develop state-of-the-art flood studies (data collection, characterization, flood mitigation analysis, reporting to New York) that end in recommendations that can be implemented. Benefits of the program include ecology, economic, flood risk reduction and water quality. Areas in Wyoming County were recommended.
 - e. Letters of support: Letters were sent for two grants including NYS Parks & Trails (improvements in Canawaugus Park, Scottsville) and Monroe SWCD Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Grant Program from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (riparian plantings in parks in Monroe County and education).
 - f. Freshwater Futures (FF) 2022 Grant Opportunities: the OCWC investigated possible grant opportunities and brainstormed possible projects that could qualify under the program.
 - g. Wyoming County Water Resources Coordinating Committee: members attended several meetings.
 - h. The Great Lakes Program produced a biennial report which included an article on OCWC 's outreach work, specifically municipal outreach.

- i. Grant Opportunities: The OCWC worked with the NYSDEC to identify possible grant opportunities that could support Watershed Management goals in the Oatka watershed. Discussions occurred regarding the Great Lakes Basin Small Grants Program, Non-Agricultural Nonpoint Source Planning, and MS\$ Mapping Grant. Other discussions centered around Environmental Bond Act (EBA) funding. It is possible that EBA money can be directed specifically to addressing projects related to restoration/flood risk reduction identified in the Great Lakes Action Agenda. Recommendations from the Resilient NY studies could possibly qualify for funding and implementation.
- j. Invasive Species: OCWC had communications with the NYSDEC and the Western New York Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (WNY PRISM). Discussions within the OCWC focused on the Committee's role in addressing Watershed Management Plan (WMP) recommendations regarding invasive species.
 - 1. Andrea Locke, coordinator for the WNY PRISM attended the September meeting and gave a general presentation on the organization. The OCWC can assist the WNY PRISM by helping to identify invasive species in the field (Ex. Slender False Brome, Japanese Stiltgrass, Swallow-worts, spotted lanternflies) before they can get a foothold. Another possibility is developing an invasive species management plan. An example template for an invasive species management plan was provided to OCWC.
 - 2. The OCWC provided WNY PRISM with basic invasive species goals information from the WMP and provided information on the Committee.
 - 3. iMap Invasives website was reviewed to identify any confirmed records in the Oatka Creek watershed. Only two aquatic invasives were in the data base: eurasian milfoil and curly leafed pondweed.
- k. OCWC members Maureen and Steve Leupold attended a walk-through at Oatka Creek Park (OCP) with Gary Koplun – NYSDEC Forester Region 8; Justin Perry – NYSDEC Bureau Chief of Invasive Species Management & Ecosystems Health; and, Tad Norton - NYSDEC Forester Region 8. The OCP is a place devastated by EAB and the walk through was intended to demonstrate the positive effects of proactive conservation efforts.
- l. At the November OCWC meeting, a detailed review was conducted of the Draft NY Great Lakes Action Agenda 2022 – 2030. Ryan Elliott from the NYSDEC helped to explain some of the nuances of the agenda and how it might relate to the work of the OCWC.
- m. Members Maureen and Steve Leupold coordinated with the Monroe County SWCD regarding another Forest Service Grant that would provide funding for tree planting. There is agreement with the Town of Wheatland to do another planting at Indian Allan Park.

IV. Education/ Outreach Activities:

- a. Website: Several website updates by Lisa & John Compton.
- b. Municipal Outreach:
 - 1. Watershed Management Plan booklets were assembled and printed for: Town of Gainesville, Town of Covington, Village of Caledonia, Town of Caledonia, Village of

Wyoming, Town of Warsaw, Village of Warsaw and County of Wyoming.

Photographs were taken of the creek to be used as part of each booklet. The WMP booklet for County of Wyoming included recommendations for all watershed municipalities as well as the standard summaries and spreadsheets.

2. Municipal Presentations in 2022: Town of Gainesville (June 2nd), Town of Covington (June 16th), Town of Warsaw (September 14th), Village of Warsaw (October 3rd)
 3. Presentation outlines were assembled for each community including a one page 'hit list' for Village of Warsaw which identifies the top five recommendations. Of particular note, custom presentation outlines were worked on for the Town and the Village of Caledonia, which are anticipated to be in 2023.
 4. The OCWC is beginning to plan for the next round of presentations for the Town of Stafford, the Town of Orangeville, the Town of Perry and the Town of Bethany.
 5. Municipal Outreach follow-up: The OCWC had discussions at several meetings regarding the best strategies to follow-up with municipalities. The OCWC followed-up with the Town of Middlebury whose presentation was on December 8, 2021. OCWC member Jim Seiler followed up with several of the communities listed under IV.b.2. A note of thanks was sent with some links to relevant resources.
- c. Warsaw Valley Fest: The OCWC attended the festival (with booth) on July 15 and 16.
 - d. Tour of LeRoy WWTP: Members of OCWC toured the WWTP on the afternoon of June 30th.
 - e. Genesee Country Village & Museum's (GCV&M) Agricultural Fair Day:
 - f. OCWC Chairman Lent attended Wyoming County Water Resources Coordinating Committee meetings.
 - g. Guest speaker Ryan Elliott (NYSDEC) gave a presentation on the aquatic invasive Hydrilla sp. (*Hydrilla verticillata*). The presentation described plant characteristics, spread/range and management methods with focus on how to tell it apart from the native Elodea sp. (American Elodea/*Elodea canadensis*) and *Egeria densa* (Brazilian Elodea).
 - h. Guest speaker Gary Koplun, Forester for Region 8 NYSDEC, spoke to the OCWC about a variety of concerns related to the emerald ash borer and dead ash trees, particularly those near roadways. OCWC members attended Gary Koplun's presentation on tree planting and maintenance that was held as part of an event at Godfrey's Pond.
 - i. Guest speaker Andrea Locke, coordinator for the WNY PRISM, attended the September meeting and gave a general presentation regarding the organization and its activities.
 - j. OCWC members Steve and Maureen Leupold taught sessions at the Monroe County Conservation Field Days in September.
 - k. OCWC member Jim Seiler coordinated with the Genesee County Highway Department regarding efforts to minimize safety issues associated with the EAB tree die-off.
 - l. Members Maureen and Steve Leupold attended the yearly New York NACD (New York Association of Conservation Districts) conference for three days (Tues-Thurs) in Cazenovia, NY.
 - m. OCWC member Maureen Leupold attended a Town of Wheatland Board meeting in September to talk about the EAB deforestation and any Town initiatives in this area.

V. General Activities:

- a. Spring Tree Planting:
 - i. Plant material was purchased from the Monroe County SWCD and Orleans County SWCD. A total of 215 plants were purchased. Also, Monroe County SWCD provided an extra 100 black cherry trees. The trees were planted in April and May, primarily in Oatka Creek Park and Baloneks farm. Genesee River Watch gave a refrigerator to the Leupold's to be used to store plants in their barn.
 - ii. Willow planting was sponsored by the USDA-NRCS' Plant Material Center (PMC). The OCWC investigated potential sites in the field, including the Baloneks farm. A total of 300 live stakes were obtained from the PMC and planted. OCWC conducted a follow-up field visit to check on the live stakes and determine which variety was growing best.
- b. Monroe County Pick Up the Parks event at Oatka Creek Park: Members attended the event on April 23d. There were 14 participants.
- c. Plaque for George Squires in DeWitt Park: The OCWC purchased a plaque for the memorial tree that commemorates George Squires' watershed work. OCWC members conducted maintenance on the tree and Fall inspections to determine overall health.
- d. Coordination with Monroe County Parks and Sabin Metals was accomplished with respect to debris jams at the concrete bridge in Oatka Creek Park and the sluice dam at Sabin.
- e. Stream Bank Erosion: The Genesee River Watch announced that a joint Sea Grant application (\$50,000) was approved for two stream bank erosion projects on Genesee Country Village & Museum property. OCWC has joined with Genesee River Watch (GRW) for this project. The OCWC collaborated to help develop plans for each site with the objective to find less expensive erosion control measures that utilize natural on-site materials. OCWC participated in a design charrette designed to help develop plans.

Submitted By: Richard VenVertloh, Board Member
Oatka Creek Watershed Committee
March 2024