



NEWS FROM THE **OATKA CREEK WATERSHED COMMITTEE**

Winter 1999-2000

The mission of the Oatka Creek Watershed Committee is to preserve the pristine character and water quality now present in Oatka Creek for future generations through the development, promotion, and implementation of an Oatka Creek Watershed Management Plan.

Members of the Committee include streamside neighbors, recreational users, farmers, officials of local towns and villages, representatives of not-for-profit environmental organizations, and environmental scientists from the four counties in the watershed. The Committee holds monthly meetings at the LeRoy Town Hall. A step by step action plan has been developed to provide direction. Anyone is welcome to attend Committee meetings! Call Jack Bradbury (716-768-4908) or Evan Lowenstein (716-271-4271 x4305) for meeting dates and times.

Summary of Progress:

- 1) Information pertaining to Oatka Creek and the watershed collected:** This includes GIS information for geological and current land use data; historic and current water quality data; landfill locations and data; hazardous waste sites and other contamination/pollution site data; DEC data relating to spills; SPDES (State Pollution Discharge Elimination System) permits, discharge information, and amounts; CAFO (Concentrated Animal Feedlot Overflow) information; Natural Heritage data; historical and cultural information.
- 2) Consultant for State of Basin Report hired:** The committee has hired Tim Tatakis, Assistant Professor, Department of Biology, Monroe Community College, to compile this information into a reader-friendly State of the Basin Report. A draft will be presented at the Caring for Creeks 2000 Symposium (described below). This is the committee's first step toward completing a Watershed Management Plan.
- 3) Water quality research initiated:** A project to determine the types and sources of trace metals in Oatka Creek is currently underway. Students from the Geology and Environmental Science Department at the University of Rochester have conducted three separate rounds of water sample testing at 33 sites along the creek. One more round—plus testing of sediment and rock samples and continued precipitation testing—is anticipated. Findings will be available in a report written by graduate student Carolyn Dowling, and will be presented ***Friday, February 18 at 8:00 a.m. in the University of Rochester's Hutchinson Hall (Room 229).***

4) Stakeholder list created: The committee is working collectively to compile and keep current a comprehensive list of Oatka Creek 'stakeholders'. This list includes residents and landowners, municipal officials from towns, villages, counties, and agencies, farmers, business owners (corporate, industrial, service), and civic organization members. Preliminary drafts of the State of the Basin Report will be distributed and/or presented to persons and groups on this list—their feedback and participation will be requested!

5) Partnerships with other Oatka Creek endeavors and organizations initiated:

- The Monroe County Water Quality Coordinating Committee, which monitors dissolved oxygen, sediment, temperature, and nutrients in the creek, will have their findings distributed in the OCWC State of the Basin report.
- OCWC members joined the Friends of Oatka Creek in a stream bank stabilization project. This team planted willow bundles along an eroded section of Oatka Creek Park in April 1999.
- Community efforts towards the establishment of two creekside parks will gain support and assistance from the Committee.

The Oatka Creek Watershed Committee is one outcome of a symposium held in February 1998 that focused on efforts to protect three local watersheds. This event, **Caring for Creeks**, was created and funded by the Rochester Area Community Foundation as part of their participation in the Great Lakes Community Foundation Environmental Collaborative. The OCWC began meeting formally in September of 1998. The Oatka Creek Committee will present their work at **Caring for Creeks II**, to be held April 28 and 29, 2000 (Call Rochester Area Community Foundation for more information at the number listed below). The trace metals research is funded by Monroe County Health Department and RACF, and administrative support for the committee is provided also by RACF.

The OCWC welcomes your participation: suggestions, feedback, comments, recommendations, questions, etc. For more information, please contact:

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