

**ANNUAL REPORT ON ACTIVITIES: JANUARY 1, 2012 TO DECEMBER 31, 2012**  
**AND THE EXPECTATIONS FOR 2013**

**Oatka Creek Watershed Committee, Inc.**

I. Meetings:

- a. Twelve regularly scheduled monthly OCWC meetings were held: January 23, February 13, March 19, April 16, May 21, June 18, July 16, August 20, September 17, October 11, November 21 and December 17. On average, every month 11 folks attended our meetings this year.

Meetings are held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month, from 6:30 PM to 8:15 PM at the downstairs meeting room of the Woodward Memorial Public Library, located on Wolcott Street in the Village of LeRoy. If in some month the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday falls on a legal holiday when the library is closed, then an alternative Monday during the month will be selected and Committee members are notified in advance of the change.

- b. In 2012, our April regular meeting was held at the Wyoming County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) in the Village of Warsaw. This allowed several other folks from the upper watershed area to attend the meeting. In addition to running through our normal meeting agenda, the meeting included two presentations. Peter Lent provided a summary of the Watershed Planning Process and the Watershed Characterization Report component, in particular, highlighting potential stresses and impairments found in the upper Oatka Creek Watershed. Then Greg McKurth and Bethany Bzduch presented a summary of Wyoming County SWCD's ongoing activities in promoting Best Management Practices (BMPs) for agriculture activities and erosion & sedimentation control within Wyoming County portion of the Oatka Creek Watershed.

In 2013 we will schedule another meeting or two in the upper portion of the Oatka Creek Watershed. Last year's April meeting allowed some new folks to attend our meeting and prompted discussions of local concerns and issues. This type of interaction may become a more frequent occurrence as we move toward finalizing a Watershed Plan latter this year.

- c. At our September meeting we had a presentation from Dale Pettenski on his year-long study of Oatka Creek, which provides the most recent assessment of nutrient and sediment loadings throughout the watershed. Dale received his Masters in Science Degree from SUNY Brockport earlier in the year and his investigations on Oatka Creek formed his Masters Thesis project. Dale's Thesis is accessible at [http://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1037&context=env\\_theses](http://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1037&context=env_theses) .

## II. Watershed Planning:

### a. Watershed Characterization Report –

This report is one of three watershed planning documents that will together provide the basis on which to develop a Watershed Management Plan for the Oatka Creek Watershed. The Watershed Management Plan is being developed with funds provided under Title 11 of the Environmental Protection Act Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP), which is administered by the New York State Department of State (NYS DOS) Division of Coastal Resources. The LWRP grant was awarded to the Town of Wheatland as the municipal contractor. The Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (G/FL RPC) is the Project Manager and EcoLogic, LLC is the Project Consultant.

In January 2012, a draft of the Watershed Characterization Report was made available for public review and comment. David Zorn, G/FL RPC Executive Director, led a February 9, 2012 public meeting in the Town of Pavilion where the planning process and the draft report were summarized. Attendee's comments were recorded and discussed. Approximately 30 people attended the meeting, including all 9 members of the OCWC Board of Directors.

A meeting of the Project Advisory Committee for the Oatka Creek Management Plan project was convened on March 29, 2012 to finalize the Watershed Characterization Report. David Zorn described how both public meeting and written comments on the draft document had been addressed in the final version of the report. Those PAC members and other individuals interested in the Oatka Creek Watershed who attended included: L. Compton, E. Leadley, M. Leupold, F. Oltramari, G. Squires, G. McKurth, P. Lent, A. Mack and D. Pettenski. The final document was placed on the G/FLRPC website in April 2012 and can be found at:

<http://gflrpc.org/Publications/BlackOatka/Characterization/OatkaCreekWatershed/index.htm> .The February 9, 2012 Public Meeting and the March 29, PAC

Meeting summaries are at:

<http://gflrpc.org/Publications/BlackOatka/ProjectAdvisoryCommittees.htm>

### b. Watershed Planning Status –

Also at the March 29, 2012 PAC Meeting, David Zorn indicated that NYS DOS had extended the project schedule for one year until end of September 2013. This was a very important decision because Brian Slack, who had been designated as the G/FLRPC staff person assigned to the project since its inception, had left to accept another position in Ulster County. It seems that it will take some time to get back the momentum we had with Brian's knowledge and familiarity with the watershed. Two remaining basic components still needed to be completed before the actual Watershed Management Plan could be developed. These components are the "Assessment of the Regulatory and Programmatic Environment" and the "Sub-Watershed Prioritization".

- c. Local Regulations and Practices Assessments for Counties, Towns and Villages within the Oatka Creek Watershed

At our December 17, 2012 meeting, Tom Kicior from G/FL RPC notified the committee that draft Local Regulations and Practices Assessments for Counties, Towns and Villages within the Oatka Creek Watershed are available at:

<http://www.gflrpc.org/Publications/BlackOatka/Assessment/Oatka/index.htm> . Tom reviewed approach being used in the assessment and provided Committee members printouts of their County and local town assessments. Tom asked if the committee members could review information and get back to him with any changes or questions. Tom indicated that his review of both the Black Creek and Oatka Creek Watersheds consisted of 3000 pages of regulations comprising 60 local laws. Tom is looking for any comments by January 21, 2013.

In order to meet the current deadline of the end of September 2013, OCWC members should anticipate that in addition to the local law review assessments, 2013 activities will include the following watershed planning activities: reviewing and commenting on additional draft documents; providing input for the sub-watershed prioritization component; development of a draft Watershed Plan document; outreach to municipalities; and another public meeting and comment period on the draft Watershed Plan.

### III. Outreach Activities

- a. On January 17, 2012, R. VenVertloh and D. Zorn gave a presentation to the Seth Green Chapter of Trout Unlimited on the process that will develop a Watershed Management Plan for Oatka Creek Watershed. Peter Lent was also present at the meeting.
- b. Watershed Information Displays at Community Events and other venues.

During 2012 members of the committee participated at five events:

<b>Event</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>OCWC Volunteers</b>	<b>Service Hrs.</b>
1. Rochester Sportsman Expo	March 2-4	R. VenVertloh, M. Leupold, P. Lent, G. Squires	46
2. GCC Eco-Fest	April 9	L. Compton, M. Leupold, B. Gick, J. Seiler, P. Lent	34
3. Adirondack Club Outdoor Expo	June 9	R. VenVertloh, P. Lent, G. Squires	14
4. LeRoy Oatka Days Festival	July 14-15	R. VenVertloh, L. & J. Compton M. Leupold, B. Gick, J. Seiler, P. Lent, G. Squires	52
5. Scottsville Summerfest	August 18	L. & J. Compton, M. Leupold, P. Lent, G. Squires	26

For each festival, a booth was set up using our presentation board. The booth also included a live macroinvertebrate display of organisms collected from Oatka Creek and ponds adjacent to the creek. After the event, the critters were returned to their waterbodies. Graphics (8 1/2x 11 format) were available to help identify specific species. Watershed literature was also available for distribution. Photographs of the Creek were available for viewing.

We have not been keeping tallies of how many folks stop at our display. However, we did try to keep an accurate count at the Scottsville Festival and came up with a total of 161 visitors to the booth for this one day event. The Sportsman's Expo was held in the Dome Arena in Henrietta. It was a 3-day event and we estimate that at least 400 visitors attended our display. We were located next to Trout Unlimited's booth area and both of our organizations benefited from the arrangement. Although this event was held at a venue that was outside of the area of our watershed, we talked with many fishermen who have fished along the Oatka Creek, some that even in the small headwater streams around Warsaw. At the end of this event we had very few handouts left.

In 2013, we will continue to keep tallies of traffic to our display at these events. We are also trying to find a community event in the upper watershed, for example at Warsaw, where we can bring our display board and the live macroinvertebrates.

c. School-Based Outreach Development:

(1) During 2012 we continued to devote time to move toward the development of a stream monitoring program that local middle and high school science teachers at school in the watershed would find useful and exciting. Early in the year we found out that Delta Labs, who has the Adopt-A-Stream program, could not assist because of restricted monetary resources and they were focusing their efforts on partnering with the City of Rochester School District. At the end of August, three OCWC Board Members (L. Compton, M. Leupold, and P. Lent) met with staff at the Genesee Country Village and Museum, who have shown an unfaltering interest in working collaboratively with OCWC on this project. At the meeting we identified action items that were needed move forward.

(2) Subsequent to the meeting. P. Lent met with Jordan Youngman, coordinator of the Finger Lakes Stream Monitoring Network which is a project of the Figure Lakes Institute at Hobart and William Smith colleges in Geneva. Mr. Youngman was very supportive and is willing to help our committee establish a stream monitoring program. A summary of the meeting with Mr. Youngman can be found in the minutes of the November 19, 2012 meeting which were sent on 12/13/2012 in an e-mail by P. Lent with the December 17 Meeting Agenda.

(3) In 2013 we will continue this effort. Our objective is to reach out to some of the high schools located on the creek (there are six of them) and work with the teaching staff to incorporate a stream monitoring program into their curriculum. At first it may be advisable to establish a pilot program to work out any kinks. Stream monitoring equipment (kits) could each cost over \$1000. P. Lent will set up a separate meeting with the OCWC subcommittee which currently is comprised of M. Leupold, L. Compton, R. VenVertloh, P. Lent, and G. Squires and will also include Genesee Country Village & Museum (GCV&M) staff. The items for discussion will include: best ways to contact both science teachers and schools to make them aware of the program and to assess interest; address funding of equipment; and discuss teacher workshop in spring for teachers to be held at GCV&M and where we hope Jordan Youngman can help lead the training, We plan on using the protocols and techniques that are used by the Finger Lakes Stream Monitoring Network so data collected can be comparable.

d. GCC Student's Environmental Stream Field & Laboratory involved  
Biomonitoring & Stream assessment of Oatka Creek

Eight (8) GCC students in Maureen Leupold's Environmental Science class participated in the event and followed Tier II protocols established by the Finger Lakes Institute. Some of the stream activities included an oxygen probe, stream flow, temperature and macroinvertebrate collection/identification. P. Lent assisted in both the field and laboratory activities.

e. Revising Oatka Creek Map Guide

As was mentioned earlier we were very busy in 2012 with outreach events and as a consequence we have depleted our supply of our Map Guides. We planned to have more Map Guides printed and, at the same time, make revisions to the Map Guide. The map is being completely revised with the help of Molly Stetz, a SUNY-Brockport graduate, who is currently working as an intern with George Squires at the Genesee Co. Soil & Water Conservation District. The map will include more roads, expanded inserts showing details of Villages, more Points of Interest, and more symbols (e.g. parks & NYS DEC fishing access). On the other side of the guide, the narrative information describing the watershed's geological and human history is also being revised and updated. Lisa and John Compton are taking on this part of the challenge, with help from Bob Kelley from Wyoming and Jerome Smith from Warsaw.

We should have the new map printed and ready to go for the upcoming outreach events this year. The first being the Eco-Fest at Genesee Community College on April 13, 2013.

IV. Corporate Activity:

a) None to Report

V. General Activities:

- a. A Coastal Clean-up initiative was organized by Maureen Leupold. The cleanup was held on Saturday, September 22, 2012 in Oatka Park in Momoe County. Attending were six students from RIT, four students from GCC, one resident from the Town of Rush, P. Lent, Maureen and her husband, Steve.
- b. Several updates to the OCWC website ([oatka.org](http://oatka.org)) were completed by Lisa Compton.
- c. Webinar presentations on "Fundraising" and "Use of Biological Criteria in Water Quality Assessments" were accessed by members through OCWC's membership in the River Network.

Submitted By:



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Peter Lent, Chairperson,  
Oatka Creek Watershed Committee  
January 14, 2013