



Oneida Lake Association

PO Box 3536 Syracuse, NY 13220-3536
info@oneidalakeassociation.org



Greetings!

And Happy New Year!!!

WHAT'S UP?

It is with regret and understanding that the OLA-BOD accepted in November the resignation of **Tom Pierce**. A sage, Tom has served OLA for decades as a Director, President, and volunteer. We wish Tom well in his second retirement. Look for further acknowledgement in the next Bulletin.

If you have an avocation and interest in serving OLA, please reach out to one of the Directors. Our contact info is at our website.

The BOD currently has one Director vacancy, and anticipates another in the next year. Directors meet once a month; each Director must serve on at least one standing committee, volunteer for special events, and anticipate advancement to an officer's position after serving for a few 2-year terms. Write out your avocational resume and send it along with a brief note outlining your experience and interests to any OLA Director, or to President@OneidaLakeAssociation.org

NYS's Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) made awards to 124 entities to improve water quality, reduce polluted runoff and restore waterbodies and aquatic habitats. In reviewing the list

http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/water_pdf/wqipawardr15.pdf of funded water quality improvement projects, it would appear that municipalities and organizations within the Oneida Lake watershed could similarly apply for 2019

grants. Fayetteville got \$522,000 for Limestone Creek erosion and sedimentation reduction. Several Land Trusts were funded to purchase lands for riparian protection. Amherst, Cheektowaga, Sloan, Walkill and many other towns got tens of million\$ for wastewater and sewerage; Sullivan should continue exploring grants and means to inexpensively complete sewerage between Shackleton Point and Chapman Park.

For those of you who have to do permitting or regulatory business with NYSDEC, you might want to examine the latest Draft Revised SEQR Handbook. James Eldred, NYS DEC - Division of Environmental Permits, 625 Broadway, 4th Floor, Albany, NY 12233-1750 or deppermitting@dec.ny.gov is seeking comments on the revisions, which can be submitted on or before February 1, 2019.

The Graduate

As I put out the Christmas trash, I shook my head at how much my extended family has obviated my adult training, profession, and inclination to protect our environment. Old-timers like me can point to the 1982 Tylenol murders as a major contributor to contemporary consumer packaging. For those of you old enough to remember the catch phrase of the 1967 Dustin Hoffman-Ann Bancroft movie, those words are now the bane of the Millennials and their children. National Geographic has a multi-year effort to raise awareness about the global plastic waste crisis that is generally being ignored. <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/2018/12/tips-for-families-kids-to-use-less-single-use-plastic/>

Several years ago I suggested that the OLA-Board of Directors weigh in on the then emerging science reporting of microbeads. Microbeads are manufactured solid plastic particles of less than one millimeter in their largest dimension. They have been found to plug the gut of organisms worldwide. The import or manufacture of toiletries containing microbeads was banned on 1 January 2018 and sales were banned from 1 July 2018. Microbeads in natural health products and non-prescription drugs will also be banned in 2019. But they are still floating our waterways and oceans, too small and buoyant to quickly settle into sediments.

According to this article <https://www.popsci.com/plastic-not-recycled-statistic> in *Popular Science*, some 90 percent of all plastic waste has never been recycled. In our "fisheries" world, there are scores of contributing villains. Aside from the plastic baits and fishing lines now dominating our tackle, think about all the blister and shrink-wrap packaging adorning shelves, and the bags in which they leave the stores. Decades ago hemp cordage on lobster pots and trawlers yielded to fibers based on some petrochemical. Untold numbers of oceanic "ghost nets" are still fishing, detached from retrieval, snagged on wrecks and rocks, trapping and killing fish and crustaceans forever.

A challenge. Try to keep track of the number of times daily that you touch at least once made of plastic. Keurig pods, kitchen utensils, keypads, phones, pens, lunch bags, blister packaging, lures, appliances, paint brushes, toys, peanut butter, milk bottles. You get the idea. Next time you go to the supermarket, stop. Look down the dairy isle. The detergent isle. The soda isle. The counters and signage themselves, as well as the carts and dollies used to move produce, hold meats, and the checkout isles. Saturday, doing household chores, packing away Christmas decorations, and feeding and herding active granddaughters, I stopped counting at 165 separate times that my hands grasped plastic.

Plastic usage will not go away any time soon. However, as consumers you can take action. Shop wisely, thinking not only of the product, but also how long it will be used, how it is packaged, where that packaging will wind up, and what the consequences may be. If you have an organization or business position to responsibly communicate, let retailers like Wegmans, Walmart, Home Depot, Cabelas, and Amazon know that you would like them to influence their suppliers to minimize plastic packaging. And, please recycle at home. ~Scott Shupe, OLA Vice President

A missed opportunity?

We spoke years ago with Mark Burger, Executive Director of the Onondaga County Soil and Water Conservation District about working with local towns to clear debris from, and stabilize the waterways of the major tributaries entering Oneida Lake. Last

month Mark reported the following:

Regarding the Butternut Creek, and other locals, I am at a loss. I wish we could do more to get folks to get on board. We have not given up, but the municipalities have unfortunately not taken us up on our offer to help reimburse them to remove the woody debris. We have all the permitting requirements met with DEC, have a guidance document, that they reviewed/approved.

So, for next year we have assigned that money to another project in Tully as it is "use it or lose it." We have the inventory done, just need the municipalities to get on board. I do understand that this is new, different, and some elected officials have reservations about it. Should something change in the decision making matrix, we are pretty agile to be able to re-allocate funding where needed.

I hope that this explanation helps a bit. It is not what we had hoped for in terms of results either. But, I do want to emphasize a shining star. We worked with CSX Railroad in the Minoa area. There was old rail car parts over an embankment, lots of rail road ties in Limestone Creek. Over a two year period, the CSX contractor removed the car parts and rail ties by their tracks. We provided them private landowner information for a 1 to 1.5 mile stretch of Limestone Creek. They contacted these landowners and made access to the Creek to remove the remaining ties that had floated downstream. GREAT WORK! I wish we could provide them more credit for their positive efforts!

ALSO OF INTEREST

In late November, we saw a press release: \$16.8 MILLION TO PROTECT WATER QUALITY ACROSS NEW YORK STATE. Looking closely, we found some work funded in the Oneida Lake Watershed. County Soil and Water Conservation Districts applied on behalf of farmers for the grants awarded through the state's Agricultural Nonpoint Source Abatement and Control Program.

Onondaga SWCD

\$204,087 was awarded to the Onondaga County Soil and Water Conservation District to work with four farms in the Oneida Lake Watershed. The project will:

- * Implement four best management practice systems to reduce nutrients and sediments in waterways. These projects include implementation of two prescribed grazing systems, one heavy use area runoff protection system, and one silage leachate control system.
- * Demonstrate the success of AEM planning and best management practice implementation to other area farms
- * Implement approximately 300 acres of cover crops to reduce soil loss and improve soil health

This funding is for four (4) farms in the greater Chittenango Creek Watershed, including: Butter Creek, Limestone Creek and Chittenango Creek. Projects will be implemented in the Town of Lafayette, Pompey, and Manlius.

Madison SWCD

\$331,650 was awarded to the Madison County Soil and Water Conservation District to work with two farms in the Oneida Lake Watershed. The project will:

- * Improve manure management on the farms and increase storage capacity to eliminate winter spreading
- * Implement approximately two acres of riparian herbaceous buffer to reduce sediment nutrient loss

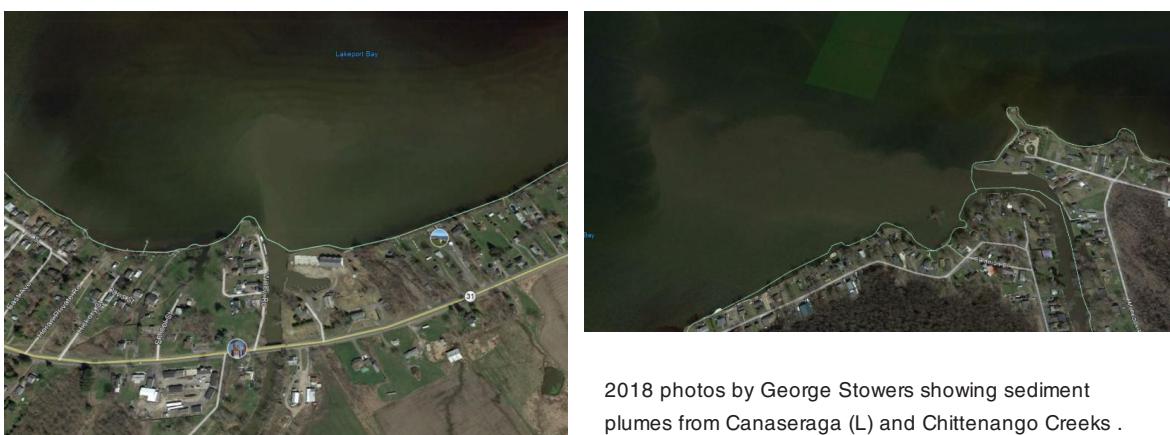
This funding is for 2 farms located in the Town of Stockbridge in the Oneida Creek Watershed.

In some watersheds, not really Oneida, there is a lot of finger pointing going on, blaming water quality problems solely on Agriculture, when really the problem is from many sources. The general thought is to put money where it will make the most improvement, which is not easy to do on a state-wide basis, but at least the **Nine Element Plan** (See <http://www.oneidalakeassociation.org/ENews30.pdf> and the past two *OLA Bulletins*) process has some science behind it and it involves stakeholders.

Nine Element Watershed Plans identify and quantify sources of pollutants, determine the water quality goal(s) or target(s) and the pollutant reductions needed to meet the goal, and describe the actions (best management practices) needed to achieve the reductions that will improve water quality. In the case of the anticipated NEP for Oneida Lake, our largest current concern is the sediment load delivered after storms by each of its, primarily southern, tributaries.

Apparently because of (1) its location between disparate ecotones, (2) absence of reliance on the lake as a drinking water source, and (3) relative political obscurity , Oneida Lake seems not to get the attention of leadership in Albany and a number of elected municipal officials within its basin.

OLA urges the Department of State to ramp up its review of the stalled Oneida Lake NEP. Further, we wish it to enable the Central NY Regional Planning Board and its affiliates to update the Oneida Lake plan in 2019 & 2020. Then, we ask the state to provide funding for administration of projects. And, more importantly, for NYS authorities to, in and beyond 2020, advance funding for specific remedial actions once projects are identified within the context of the NEP. In viewing the adjoining pictures, state and local politicians *need not* a thousand words to recognize a problem!



2018 photos by George Stowers showing sediment plumes from Canaseraga (L) and Chittenango Creeks .

Climate change prognostication for 2019 and 2020 – will we see more HABS alerts in CNY waters?

"One thing is the extremes get more extreme with climate change," said Pittsburgh native Brenda Ekwurzel, director of climate science for the Union of Concerned Scientists and a co-author of the Fourth National Climate Assessment.

<https://www.nbcphiladelphia.com/news/local/Climate-Change-Affecting-Northeast-Pennsylvania-503658281.html.>

Summer temperatures will continue to rise, with heat waves becoming more frequent and intense. Not only will more precipitation fall as rain, heavy rain events will become frequent. Frequent rains lower hay and corn production. Farmers can't get in to saturated fields to harvest (did you notice all the still-standing corn across NYS?). Winter recreation will take a hit as the warmer, wetter conditions lead to a truncated snow season. The changing climate also will impact mosquitoes, which flourish in hot, steamy weather. That increases the likelihood that more of the blood-

sucking insects will be infected with West Nile virus that can be transmitted to humans. The forests are going to change their complexity and complexion. (We in CNY are already seeing more alien plants, fewer native sprouts, more ticks, fewer turkeys, over population of browsing deer.)

"Climate change is here. We are living it and seeing it in the emergency management world, but yet I don't think we are reacting to it the way we should." Said Wyoming County PA Emergency Management Director Gene Dziak. Change portends storms of increasing intensity and frequency in the Northeast realize that floods greater than Agnes can and will occur. Infrastructure, Oneida Lake shorelines, and riparian zones will be put at risk at an accelerated rate in the future. While a 1 degree average temperature change will have significant consequences at our latitude, the accentuated changes at the higher latitudes of both hemispheres will domino the induced impacts sent our way as the oceans change.

Climate change is real. It is repeated throughout historical records. However, the unresolved question is to what extent are humans responsible for what we can now measure? Does it matter to our offspring? Why not examine our individual 'footprint' now, and try to minimize its impact anyway?

ICE!

If you were sipping rum and Coke on New Year's Eve, and if you swirled your ice with a swizzle stick, it may have reminded you of the ice on Oneida Lake this season. From my view here on Lower South Bay, the ice has traveled in and out and round and about so many times that I can't keep track of it! First, the entire Bay was covered on Thanksgiving Day. I don't ever remember that happening before! And then it broke up and traveled with the winds, first from the east, and then from the north for a few days. And on New Year's Eve, it howled out of the northwest (my weather station recorded a gust of 52 mph!), breaking up huge sheets of two-inch ice, and shattering them against the south shore.

According to a scholarly report on Oneida Lake (<http://www.cnyrpdb.org/oneidalake/pdf/SOLWFinal/ch2-2.pdf>) "Ice formation usually begins in December, and complete cover occurs in December or January. The earliest and latest ice-in dates from 1975 to 2001 occurred on December 3, 1976 and January 31, 1998, respectively." This year is shaping up to be one of those unusual years.

With no solid ice in the near future, it is a good time to remind ourselves, once again, about the importance of good judgment in keeping our ice anglers out of harm. The NYS Department of Conservation recently **"encouraged anglers to put safety first when ice fishing. Four inches of solid ice is usually safe for anglers accessing ice on foot. However, ice thickness can vary on water bodies and even within the same water body. Anglers should be particularly wary of areas of moving water. The presence of snowmobile tracks or footprints on the ice should not be taken as evidence of safe ice conditions. DEC strongly encourages individuals to check ice conditions and avoid situations that appear to present even a remote risk. Testing the thickness of ice can easily be done with an auger or ice spud at various spots."**

According to DEC Commissioner Seggos, "Ice fishing is a popular sport in New York State and with the temperatures dropping around the region, anglers are looking forward to an early start to the season this year. The rush to get out onto the ice can lead to tragedy unless anglers remain vigilant about the condition of the ice. Anglers should heed DEC's recommendation of at least four inches of solid clear ice before venturing out on the ice."

Your OLA urges you to be safe, and to watch out for yourself and for others!
~John Harmon, OLA Vice President

Pay your dues, and HELP PROTECT ONEIDA LAKE!!!!

Climate Smart Grants

Beyond supporting Climate Smart Community certification, Climate Smart Community Grants support projects that advance climate change and clean energy goals by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, mitigating flood risk, and preparing for extreme heat and weather events.

The town of DeWitt, located in the Oneida Lake watershed, received \$100,435 for its Rethinking Rain Water in the Franklin Park Community project. The town will implement several stormwater best management practices along Richwood Drive, a neighborhood that has had problems with flooding and standing water during heavy rains. Porous pavement, culverts, infiltration basins, street trees, and water storage areas will be constructed to alleviate ponding of water. Stormwater educational materials and rain barrels will be distributed to residents in an effort to further reduce the amount of stormwater runoff in the area.

Is it but a matter of time before they are in NYS? Or may they already be here?
<https://www.outdoornews.com/2018/12/04/invasive-snails-found-in-two-additional-wisconsin-streams/>

**Pay your dues, recruit your non-member neighbors and friends, and
HELP PROTECT ONEIDA LAKE!!!!**



Donate

Help OLA function. Memorials and contributions to our program are most welcome.

OLA is a 501(c)4 organization serving protection of the Oneida Lake environment.



OLA is a 401(c)(4) not-for-profit organization. Implicit in the preceding text is OLA's status – and its reliance on government agencies to effect some desired change when lobbied to act. Issues affecting the lake, users, the environment, and regulations of all the aforementioned often obligate the BOD to call on one or more government representatives to fund or correct something perceived by the BOD as detrimental to our mission for Oneida Lake protection. It is one of the nation's most studied lakes, in several scientific areas. The knowledge base acquired by Cornell University, other CNY colleges, and NYSDEC is not always seen by decision makers.

The Oneida Lake Association is a member of the New York State Conservation Council <http://www.nyscc.com/> and the New York State Federation of Lake Associations <http://www.nysfola.org/>.

Report environmental violations. Please remember to obey all laws, rules, regulations, and codes of ethics as they pertain to boating, fishing, hunting, and management of Oneida Lake and its drainage basin. Be civil. **1-844-DEC-ECOS (1-844-332-3267) or 1-800-TIPP DEC (1-800-847-7332)**

*Edited by Scott Shupe and John Harmon.
Send us your notes and articles for use in future ENews!*