



Founding Organizations:

- *Albany County Land Conservancy (ACLC)
- *Audubon Society of New York (ASNY)
- *Albany County Water Quality Coordinating Committee (ACWQCC)
- *Trout Unlimited-Clearwater (TU)

Mailing Address:
 OCWC
 46 Rarick Road
 Selkirk, NY 12158

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 767-9051 ext 15

Chair:
 Fred Realbuto (ASNY)
 Vice-Chair:
 Laura De Gaetano (ACWQCC)
 Secretary:
 Gene Webster (TU Clearwater)
 Treasurer:
 Dan Driscoll (ACLC)

Membership:
 Gail Pearsall
 Newsletter:
 Nancy Heinzen



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UPCOMING EVENTS

SINKHOLES of BENNETT HILL

Sunday, October 17, 1-3 pm, Bennett Hill Preserve

Albany Land Conservancy president, Dan Driscoll, will lead a hike at Bennett Hill Preserve assisted by columnist/educator Mike Narducci. Participants will explore the geology of the Preserve, examining the connection between sinkholes at the base of Bennett Hill and the Onesquethaw Creek.

From Delmar, drive west on Route 443. Go through Clarksville; turn left on the Clarksville South Road; then take an immediate left on Bennett Hill Road. The preserve is about a 1/2 mile on your right. For more information, e-mail alcl@albanylandtrust.org or call Dan Driscoll, 872-0602



THE STORM DRAIN MARKERS HAVE ARRIVED!

Planning Meeting, November 9, Tuesday, 3pm, Location to be announced.

The OCWC recently received 48 storm drain markers from the DEC Estuary Program. 17 markers will be glued next to curbside storm drains to mark where stormwater flows of street into the Creek. Knowing where stormwater is going can be a first step in understanding where and how pollutants, such as pesticides and herbicides, make their way to Onesquethaw-Coeymans Creek.

With the cooperation of local municipalities and the help of volunteers, we will be installing storm drains in the watershed. This is a perfect activity for a scout troop, environmental or service organization. If you'd like to help, call 447-5670 for meeting and program details.

NATIVE AMERICANS in the WATERSHED

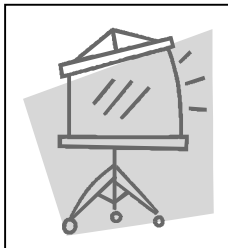
This program, originally scheduled for November 18, has been postponed.

Watershed Show Reaches 200!

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In February 2004, with funding support from the Hudson River Estuary Program, the OCWC launched an outreach and education program. This involved presenting a power point show to Creek-side residents, businesses, municipal officials, and others interested in the watershed. Packed with photos, maps, and water quality data, over 200 individuals learned about the watershed! Special thanks to the various individuals, organizations, and businesses that either hosted a meeting or attended a private viewing. They are:

Gail and Don Pearsall
 Bob and Lauren Barber
 Sarah and Marc Hafensteiner
 Gene Webster
 Maryann and Bruce Shubert
 Richard Longley
 Barbara and Johnny Riegel
 Ravena-Coeymans Historical Society
 Audubon Society of New York
 Albany County Farm Bureau
 Holt and Bennett Hill Preserve
 Trout Unlimited-Clearwater Chapter
 New Scotland Kiwanis Club
 Onesquethaw Fire Department
 SUNY Albany Watershed Researchers
 Berne Conservation Board
 Helderberg Lake Association
 Town of New Scotland
 Town of Bethlehem
 Village of Ravena
 Town of Coeymans
 GE Plastics-Noryl Plant
 LaFarge North America Cement
 BOC Gases
 MG Industries



Schools and the Watershed

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Clarksville Elementary School Bethlehem Central School District

This past spring, Clarksville Elementary School received a \$10,000 grant from the Bender Scientific Fund to restore a vernal pond located on school property formerly flooded for an ice skating rink. Located within a limestone bedrock formation on clay soils, the area now supports a spring amphibian population. Restoration work will focus on wetland reclamation and creating a hands-on learning center for the Clarksville school community.

Thanks to the successful grant writing efforts of teachers and parents, Barbara Reigel, Agnes Zellin, and Ellen Sax this project will help protect a fragile ecosystem while educating the larger community about wetlands, water quality protection, and stewardship.

Ravena-Coeymans-Selkirk High School

Since 2002, with the help of a \$8000 grant from Selkirk Cogen Partners, staff support from Audubon Society of New York, and the cooperation of property owners Lauren and Bob Barber, Matt Miller's AP Biology students have been collecting water chemistry data at the Route 396 bridge. During the school year, bi-monthly water samples from three locations up and downstream of the Coeymans and Onesquethaw Creek confluence have been tested for conductivity, nitrates, phosphates, dissolved oxygen, pH, and temperature.

The monitoring effort will continue for the '04-'05 school year.

SUNY at Albany-MA Geography Thesis

Two years ago, SUNY at Albany student Staci Clark completed a Geography Master's thesis that focused on the Onesquethaw-Coeymans watershed. Using aerial photographs taken in 1999 and GIS technology, she estimates that 7.8% of the watershed is made up of impermeable surfaces, such as roads, parking lots, houses, and buildings. Clark also photographed and mapped erosion hot spots along a small portion of the Creek located in the Town of Bethlehem.

In addition to the mapping and impervious surface analysis, Clark evaluated techniques used to assess and prevent stream bank instability. Her research is available upon request

PAST EVENTS

Picnic and Trout Program

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Watershed Picnic

Over 100 friends of the watershed participated in the May 16 picnic at Hollyhock Hollow Sanctuary on Rarick Road on the Onesquethaw Creek. Catered by Granny Foods, with music provided Traditional Strings, the Landfill Mountain Boys, and Sean Madden, picnic goers enjoyed warm, sunny weather, great food, and delightful music, while learning about the OCWC and natural resources in the watershed.

Special thanks to Marjorie Dennin for an informative tour of native plants, Michelle Segerberg for sharing her tame crow, screech owl, great horned owl, and weasel, and to Jean Mackay for showing us the aquatic life at the Creek-side pond. Rarick Road residents, Susan and Stu Morrison helped keep traffic flowing, while Gene Webster and Nancy Heinzen managed the information booth. Additional thanks to Larry Cot for setting up the electrical system, the Audubon Society of New York (ASNY) for letting us use the Hollyock Preserve and to Fred Realbuto for all of his hard work organizing the event.

Trout and the Onesquethaw

Thanks to the efforts of OCWC member Gene Webster, on June 13 Trout Unlimited volunteers shared trout lore, casting tips, and watershed geography with an enthusiastic group of new and experienced fisherman. Yes, there are trout in the watershed! Brown trout, both stocked and wild, but catching them with a fly, that's harder than it looks!

SEPTIC SYSTEMS

The elephant in the room...

Out of sight, out of mind...

Do ostriches really bury their heads in the sand?

Helpful websites:

National Small Flows Clearinghouse

http://www.nesc.wvu.edu/nsfc/nsfc_index.htm

New York State Onsite Wastewater Treatment
Training Network

www.wastewater.delhi.edu

(There are over 1000 septic systems in the watershed.)

PROTECTING WATER QUALITY

Organizations, Towns and Residents

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Helderberg Lake Association

Helderberg Lake is a small water body located in the Helderberg Escarpment near the headwaters of the watershed. Approximately 60 residents live on or near the Lake and most rely on wells for their drinking water. A short distance downstream, water from the Onesquethaw Creek is diverted to the Vly Creek Reservoir, an important drinking water source for the Town of Bethlehem. Given its location relative to a public water supply and its use for recreation, keeping the lake water clean is very important.

As a volunteer organization, the Helderberg Lake Association deserves special recognition for their stewardship. Association members have a long history of annually dye testing septic systems to see if they are functioning properly. Dye released into a toilet should disappear into a septic system. If it surfaces on the lawn, nearby ditch or water way this indicates that repairs or replacement of the system is necessary.

Summer and year round residents regularly participate in the dye testing and this annual check-up has proven to be an effective way to gently let neighbors know that a problem exists. Lake residents are also strongly encouraged to frequently pump out their septic tanks, with some residents pumping out every year.

In addition to dye testing, the Lake Association helped guide the Albany County Water Quality Coordinating Committee effort to secure funding and install sediment and erosion control measures along the tributaries feeding into the Lake

Town of Bethlehem

Water quality can be protected through land use planning and zoning laws. Currently the Town of Bethlehem is engaged in a community-wide effort to create a comprehensive plan and update the zoning code. If you're interested in this process and would like to participate, contact the Town of Bethlehem, at either 439-4955 ext 164 or on the web at www.townofbethlehem.org/bpac.html. A Draft Comprehensive plan will be presented to the public November 18.

PROTECTING WATER QUALITY (cont'd) Pearsall's Septic System

Faced with a failing septic system, Creek-side residents Gail and Don Pearsall used innovative septic system technology to solve their problem. Located on limestone bedrock with clay soils, mandatory setbacks from the Creek and their drinking water well limited the space available for a leach field.

Using an Eljen In-Drain septic system, they were able to reduce the leach bed footprint, while increasing long term leaching capacity. The system consists of large rectangular modules positioned below the perforated pipes of the leach field. Within each module, biofabric separated by a rigid

plastic core aids in the formation of a biomat, which regulates the flow rate within the module. Microorganisms in the biomat also breakdown waste material, in particular suspended solids and fecal coliform. Each module is wrapped in a geotextile fabric that prevents fill and fine grains from washing in, possibly upsetting biomat performance.

Interested neighbors are watching performance carefully as they grapple with similar septic issues elsewhere in the watershed. Since it was installed in 2000, the system has operated flawlessly.

To learn more about septic systems...

...check out the websites listed on page 3.

OCWC
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Non-profit Org

US Postage

I want to get involved!

Membership:

Benefactor \$100/yr
 Friend 50/yr
 Family/Individual 15/yr
 Student/Senior 10/yr

I would like to volunteer.

The above membership is a gift from:

I would like to host a watershed presentation.

Make checks payable to OCWC.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____ Cell phone _____ e-mail: _____

Mail to: OCWC, 46 Rarick Road, Selkirk, NY 12158 All contributions to the OCWC are tax deductible to the extent allowable by law.