

OCCA 2011 Program/Work Schedule

OCCA is dedicated to promoting the appreciation and sustainable use of Otsego County's natural resources through education, advocacy, resource management, research, and planning.

Principal Partnerships

SUNY-Oneonta/Biological Field Station, NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation, Otsego County Soil & Water Conservation District, USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service, Otsego County Water Quality Coordinating Committee

Tools

Advocacy: Community organizing; mobilizing public opinion against threats to the region; legal defense

Education/Outreach: Newsletters, brochures, websites, email updates, public events

Technical Assistance/Planning: Working with municipal officials, citizenry and other organizations to develop well-crafted guidance documents and regulations, and to provide hands-on project leadership that protect the region's rural, agricultural character, historic resources, and environment

Real Estate Transactions: Conservation easements, purchase of development rights, land purchases and transfers, trade lands

Stewardship: Manage resources including water, land and conservation easements

Funding/Oversight: Funding projects and research to better understand impacts to the Otsego region

WATER AND AIR QUALITY

Stewardship

Erosion Control

- Hydroseeding of roadside ditches at 8 locations within the Otsego Lake Watershed.
- No-wake-zone buoys on Otsego Lake (partner with Water Quality Coordinating Committee).
- Riparian buffer plantings: approx. 230 feet of stream bank on Otego Creek and approx. 280 feet of stream bank on Butternut Creek (partner with Otsego County Soil & Water Conservation District, Upper Susquehanna Coalition and Butternut Valley Alliance).
- EQIP agricultural water quality improvement projects: 18 acres of riparian buffers on Shadow Brook; fencing/watering facility, New Lisbon (partner with USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Services).

Invasive Species Control

- Water chestnut eradication on the Upper Susquehanna including Goodyear Lake and Oneonta swamp (partner with Goodyear Lake Association, Headwaters Youth Conservation Corps, BFS).
- Boat wash, Cooperstown, and expansion into Springfield (partner with Village of Cooperstown and Otsego Lake Association).
- Invasives survey of Susquehanna River between Otsego Lake and Sidney to observe and map invasive species including but not limited to water chestnut populations (partner with Catskill Regional Invasive Species Partnership and SUNY-Oneonta).

Non-point Source Pollution

- Monitoring of use of phosphates, fertilizers, insecticides and weed killers in Upper Susquehanna Watershed and implementation of best management practices (partner with Leatherstocking Golf Course and others).
- Upper Susquehanna Water Watch program, providing citizens with hands-on water testing/sampling training.

Education/Outreach

- Organizer, Lake Appreciation Day (partner with Glimmerglass State Park, Friends of Glimmerglass, Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society, Lake and Valley Garden Club, others).
- Member, Executive Board, Water Quality Coordinating Committee.
- Continuation of Lake Challenge Campaign for Otsego Lake and Upper Susquehanna Watershed water quality initiatives.
- Burn barrel education on environmental and health threats posed by open burning.
- Distribution of water quality informational materials via signage, brochure creation and mailing, website, eco-bulletins, social networking, etc.
- Public inquiry research and response.

Funding/Oversight

- Otsego Lake Septic System Management Program to inspect systems on the lake and ensure repair/replacement as necessary (partner with Watershed Supervisory Committee).
- Otsego Lake zebra mussel veliger study by Dr. Tom Horvath, SUNY-Oneonta.
- Butternut Valley baseline water quality study by Dr. Devin Castendyk, SUNY-Oneonta.
- Upper Susquehanna River antibiotic-resistant bacteria study by Dr. Mary Allen, Hartwick College.
- Coordinating with local, state and federal agencies on a protocol to compile data and to characterize the water quality of Otsego County.
- Stocking of walleye fry and fingerlings in Otsego Lake to control the spread of the invasive alewife.
- SWCD intern(s) to assist with twice monthly monitoring of 52 Otsego County water sampling sites.
- Interns (3) to perform Upper Susquehanna Watershed research at the SUNY-Oneonta BFS.
- Countywide private ground water monitoring.

LAND PROTECTION

Technical Assistance/Planning

- Circuit Rider Planner Program to bring municipal and environmental planning services to the Upper Susquehanna Watershed.
 - Towns of Hartwick and New Lisbon confirmed.
 - Cherry Valley pending.
- Municipal and private partnerships and advisement regarding development and regulations, including but not limited to: conservation subdivision; cluster development and open space policy; landowner assistance in alternative low impact development options; steep slope development; project reviews.
- Preliminary environmental assessments of properties for Otsego Rural Housing Authority.
- Grant assistance to municipalities, businesses and private individuals.
- Geographic information system (GIS) mapping.
- Municipal presentations on the importance of planning.
- Ensure SEQRA adherence by municipal planning boards countywide.
- Assist communities with comprehensive planning initiatives.
- Public inquiry research and response.
- Meeting/event attendance.

Advocacy

- Member, Otsego County Natural Gas Advisory Committee.
- Coalition Member, Citizens Against Unsafe Gas Drilling.
- Co-leader, Coalition Education Committee.
- Leader, Coalition Testing Protocols Committee.
- Advocate better long-term and regional planning as related to land use/environment.

- Participant in local, regional and state-wide efforts to ensure safe standards for natural gas drilling are established and adhered to.

Education/Outreach

- Organizer, municipal forums and workshops: local control of shale gas industrialization, including road and land use; geology and hydrofracking science; home rule; grassroots advocacy; etc.
- Updates to Otsego County “Natural Gas Well Locations and Leased Properties” map.
- Online Gas Related Resource Tool: A web-based map outlining municipal actions and positions, with links to town-specific data related to natural gas drilling and exploration.
- Dissemination of information via newsletter, eco-bulletins and website.

Funding/Oversight

- Natural Resources Survey for the Town of Oneonta as a planning tool for that municipality, to help protect important environmental and historic resources, and as a sample teaching tool for other municipalities.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Funding/Oversight

- Natural Resources Survey for the Town of Oneonta as a planning tool for that municipality, to help protect important environmental and historic resources, and as a sample teaching tool for other municipalities.

LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

Funding/Oversight

- Sponsor of “Out of this World” recycled art exhibit (partner with Cooperstown Art Association).
- Recycling signs for Main Street, Cooperstown.
- Education mini-grants (2): Oneonta Community Christian School and Camp Goldpetals.
- DEC camperships (3).

Education/Outreach

- Promote municipal and county energy reduction plans.
- Working to reduce outdoor light pollution, including light trespass, sky glow and glare.
- Garage Sale to promote waste reduction: reduce, reuse, recycle.
- Composting of municipal and food wastes.
- Sponsor of annual nature walk series and winter/snowshoe hikes at venues countywide.
- “Otsego Walks & Paddles” guide to 10 Otsego County trails and 3 canoe routes on the Susquehanna River.
- Co-sponsor of National Trails Day (partner with Friends of Glimmerglass).
- Recycling brochure revise, “Recycling: Above and Beyond.”
- Exhibitor at Earth Day Expo, etc.
- Organizer, co-sponsor and fiscal agent of Earth Festival, a free environmentally focused, interactive event featuring exhibits, activities, vendors, and entertainment.
- Promote alternative energy including wind, solar and geothermal.
- Preparation for move to Mohican Farm and possible alternative energy installations/partnerships there.
- Quarterly newsletters.
- Eco-bulletins.

Stewardship

- Goodyear Swamp Sanctuary trail rehabilitation to restore elevated boardwalk portions (partner with BFS, OLA, LVGC and Opera).
- Goodyear Lake Access project to create deck/dock system with educational component and formal DEC boat launch (partner with GLA and DEC).
- Basswood Pond trail clean-up (OCCA maintains 7 miles of trail as steward of this state forest, through NYS DEC).
- Recycling at public events.
- Development of 10-mile, multi-use trail to extend from the City of Oneonta to The Robert V. Riddell State Park in Milford and, ultimately, a north-south trail running along the entire 50-mile stretch of the Susquehanna in Otsego County (multiple partners).
- Fiscal agent for Oneonta Susquehanna Greenway, a 4-mile hiking trail along the Susquehanna River.

Technical Assistance/Planning

- Recycling Agricultural Plastics Project to allow local farmers to properly dispose of agricultural waste film and rigid plastics.
- Small Business Energy Efficiency Program to improve lighting, reduce energy use and save money.
- Low Carbon Diet program to reduce carbon footprint in community “eco-team” setting.
- Renewables: biodiesel, wind power, solar electric, solar hot water, micro-hydro.
- ORCA Bike to Work Day, to encourage people to choose an alternative “green” mode of transportation (partners countywide).
- Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day including pharmaceutical collection (partner with Otsego County Solid Waste).
- Municipal and school recycling programs.

Advocacy

- Advocate for sustainability measures with the Oneonta Sustainability Committee, Cooperstown Village Sustainability Committee, Sustainable Otsego, Environmental Working Group and others.