

Hartwick study provides planning tool for the Rt. 28 corridor

The water resource assessment of the stretch of New York State Route 28 running through the Town of Hartwick has been completed. The study, commissioned by the Hartwick town board in partnership with the Otsego County Conservation Association, was prepared by the Clifton Park firm Alpha Geoscience.

“This section of Route 28 is one of the fastest growing developed parts of Otsego County,” said Erik Miller, OCCA executive director. “OCCA wanted to help fund this project so that the town would have a scientifically documented planning tool when making decisions about the use of water resources in this corridor.”

Alpha Geoscience found that parts of the study area had significant aquifer potential although variations do exist. There are many areas in which yields are insufficient for some developments. Also, some of the same areas that have sufficient water supplies also have increased potential for groundwater contamination.

The study describes the geology, soils, wetlands, well yields, aquifer recharge and potential, and surface waters. It also provides well databases and includes the results of a contaminant database search derived from regulatory and public records.

Other information regarding the study area was noted, including:

- Ground water is the sole potable water source, with no known surface water users.
- Widespread problems associated with iron, manganese and turbidity are not evident in the study area.
- Primary drainage in the corridor is to the upper Susquehanna River.
- The DEC indicates that the best use of the Susquehanna and its tributaries (Burditt Brook and Chase Brook) are not water sources for human consumption.
- The Susquehanna is a DEC “Class B” water resource, indicating that its best usage is for “primary” water contact activities such as swimming and “secondary” activities, such as boating and fishing.
- Water quality of the Susquehanna River may be impacted by development within this corridor, as referenced by the 2007 preliminary investigation by Dr. Devin Castendyk of SUNY-Oneonta.

The report’s executive summary concurred with the New York State Department of Health’s recommendation that the town should “investigate the creation of a water district to provide community water services in the study area.” Alpha Geoscience also recommended a study to determine whether there is a sufficient quantity and quality of groundwater available for a water district.

Pat Ryan, Hartwick Town Supervisor stated, "The report provides a lot of valuable data that will be helpful as we complete our comprehensive planning process. I feel strongly that before we reach the conclusion that a community water supply should be created along the Route 28 corridor, we must evaluate the use of other, potentially less expensive, land use planning options that can help steer appropriate levels of development to the appropriate locations."

According to Ryan, planning board chair Greg Horth has received a copy of the study and four copies are available for public access in the Hartwick Town Hall. Miller also stated that OCCA has four copies which may be perused in its Cooperstown office during business hours. Appointments may be made by calling 547-4488.