OCCA announces results of WIOW countywide groundwater tests

The results of the Otsego County Conservation Association’s “What’s In Our Water?” program are in and, following a detailed analysis, two things are clear. First, the overall quality of Otsego County’s drinking water is very good. Second, and perhaps more significant, Otsego County now has a strong, legally defensible baseline of its water chemistry by which contamination can be detected.

“We look at this as an insurance policy of sorts,” said OCCA President Vicky M. Lentz. “We knew we had an abundant supply of good, clean water here. The data now backs this up and the collection and testing protocols are legally certifiable.”

In August of 2013, Community Science Institute – contracted by OCCA following a competitive bidding process – began sampling and testing private and municipal water wells in Otsego County. The series of 84 tests was completed in mid-November. The results of these individual tests have already been shared with participating property owners and municipalities, and now a cumulative analytical report has been compiled and will soon be released.

The report, prepared by Dr. Les Hasbargen of SUNY Oneonta’s Catskill Headwaters Research Institute, includes statistical summaries of the test data and a comparison of chemical parameters in WIOW-sampled wells with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s maximum contaminant levels for those parameters.

According to Hasbargen, OCCA “has established a strong baseline of chemical constituents in local groundwater that can be used to assess possible contamination by shale gas extraction and/or other industrial activities.”

Made possible by private donations, OCCA’s groundwater testing program provided certified baseline testing of drinking water wells in all 24 of Otsego County’s townships. The goal of OCCA’s WIOW program was to collect information on drinking water across Otsego County to provide a defensible chemical baseline against which changes to water chemistry from contamination can be determined. Wells were tested for a total of 21 parameters – including signature chemicals typically associated with hydraulic fracturing for natural gas or other heavy industri-

Results of OCCA’s WIOW program and a full analytical report will be unveiled at the Otsego Lakes Festival on Saturday, July 12 at Lakefront Park in Cooperstown.
President’s Message

Input essential for project review

In April of 2013, the New York State Public Service Commission (PSC) determined that it is necessary to relieve persistent electric transmission congestion between upstate and downstate New York. The PSC identified a definite need for the delivery of an additional 1,000 MW of electricity, and a proceeding was established by which numerous plans to meet this need could be presented.

Proposals from four different developers were submitted independently in September and will be considered, each of which reflects a solution to the congestion problem and a method to deliver the desired 1,000 MW of transfer capability. At the request of the state, these same four companies are currently in the process of submitting new or modified proposals that make greater use of existing transition corridors.

The PSC will choose from among these alternatives, and can decide to use parts of different proposals provided that together they can move the required 1,000 MW of additional electricity.

Among the selection criteria to be weighed by the PSC in its review of these alternating current (AC) system upgrade proposals are: 1) impact on environment and community; 2) cost to rate payers; and, 3) potential for implementation without excessive delay.

One of the proposals currently under consideration – from North America Transmission – would traverse four counties and 16 municipalities and would travel approximately 40 miles through Otsego County. This proposed route, the Edic to Fraser transmission line, would parallel the existing Marcy South transmission line for nearly its entire length. In this manner, it may provide an opportunity to reduce the right-of-way width needed. NAT also has the opportunity to submit an alternative proposal that would be contained, to the maximum extent possible, within the bounds of existing rights-of-way.

This winter, OCCA reached out to property owners whose parcels are crossed by, or adjacent to, the existing transmission line and could be affected by this project.

The siting, construction, and operation of high-voltage electric power transmission lines and associated facilities such as substations and converter stations present the potential for a number of adverse environmental effects – land-use changes, forest impacts, wetland and riparian impacts, hydrologic changes, soil erosion, biodiversity impacts, wildlife impacts, land, water and air pollution, electromagnetic fields, electromagnetic interference, audible noise, and more.

If you would like to learn more about this proceeding, files submitted to the PSC relating specifically to North America Transmission’s Edic to Fraser Transmission Line Proposal – which is part of Case #13-T-0454 – can be accessed on the PSC website at http://documents.dps.ny.gov/public/MatterManagement/C aseMaster.aspx?MatterCasename=13-t-0454.


OCCA has been following these cases and has been awarded party status. According to the PSC website:

“Generally, parties commit to contribute to the development of a complete record in a proceeding by conducting discovery, submitting testimony, briefs, or other formal written comments, and/or participating in evidentiary hearings, procedural conferences, and other formal events conducted in the case.

“Non-parties can participate in PSC proceedings by filing informal comments, such as letters, in contrast to the formal comments filed by parties in response to PSC notices.

“Interested persons who wish to monitor the proceedings of a particular PSC case can do so without the formal commitment to become a party in the proceeding. The persons who subscribe to the service list of a case will receive an e-mail with a direct link to the documents issued by the PSC, such as orders, notices, and rulings. Persons unable or unwilling to receive such electronic notification will receive hard copies of PSC-issued documents by regular mail.

We invite you to contribute in a meaningful way to our review by sharing with us your personal knowledge of the important local resources along this proposed route.

OCCA in the news
Visit www.occainfo.org to catch up on or revisit announcements, news items and reference materials from OCCA.

Basswood Pond
Volunteers Needed July 15 for Trail Maintenance: Basswood Pond State Forest Work Day. Help clear the trails in Basswood Pond State Forest. Join OCCA and Headwaters Youth Conservation Corps for a day of clearing brush and fallen trees, trimming shrubs, and repairing wooden walkways. Two shifts, morning and afternoon, are available. Pre-registration is required, as New York State requires special volunteer forms filed in advance. Call (607) 282-4087 for information and a form.

Edic to Fraser
OCCA Receives Funding Support for Review of Power Line Proposal: “The Otsego County Conservation Association has been awarded $65,000 to assist in its advocacy on behalf of scores of property owners who would be affected by a proposed high-voltage power grid that would run through seven towns in the county and several others in Delaware County,” wrote reporter Joe Mahoney of “The Daily Star” in his March 29 article. To read more, visit: http://www.thedailystar.com/localnews/x1387894884/Advo cacy-group-gets-65K-for-power-grid-fight/print.

Nature Walks
Join OCCA on Otsego County Trails – July 18: “Western Exposure, Fetterley Forest Hike.” OCCA’s Jeff O’Handley and Sara Scheeren of the Otsego Land Trust lead this late afternoon hike in Fetterley Forest, on Panther Mountain in Springfield. July 22: “Climb Noah’s What?” Noah’s Rump is the high point in Plainfield State Forest. Join OCCA and the Susquehanna Chapter, Adirondack Mountain Club, for a nice hike through this little-known forest. Contact Jeff O’Handley, (607) 282-4087 or programdirector@occainfo.org, for more information on OCCA’s nature hike series.

Water Chestnut
Helping Hands Needed for Water Chestnut Removal: On July 16, spend a few pleasant hours on the water while helping rid Goodyear Lake of water chestnut, an invasive species. Call (607) 282-4087 in advance to reserve a space in an OCCA canoe, or meet us with your own. Two shifts available, 9 a.m.-noon or 1-4 p.m. Portlandville Fishing Access Site, Route 28, Portlandville.

OCCA is dedicated to the protection, preservation and enhancement of Otsego County’s natural resources:  
Your Annual Fund gift keeps our programs going!

Your contribution can help in the following ways:

- $10 will pay for one riparian tree in a compromised watershed
- $10 will recycle 10 pairs of sneakers
- $25 will pay for water sampling in one aquatic tributary
- $50 will harvest 25 pounds of invasive water chestnut
- $75 will stock 50 walleye in Otsego Lake
- $125 will bale 7,200 pounds of agricultural plastics
- $250 will pay for an OCCA education mini-grant to a local school
- $350 will send a middle-school student to Environmental Education Camp
- $2,500 will sponsor an intern at the SUNY-Oneonta Biological Field Station

Support these and other important OCCA-funded programs with an Annual Fund gift today!

---

**YES, please renew my membership and/or support OCCA’s programs!**

- Otsego Lake Challenge/Upper Susquehanna Watershed Water Quality Protection Programs  $_______
- Environmental Education Opportunities, including DEC Camperships  $_______
- Willard N. Harman OCCA Biological Field Station Internship Endowment Fund  $_______
- Invasive Species Eradication Programs  $_______  □ Membership Renewal  $_______

Name ____________________________
E-mail ____________________________
Address ____________________________
City ____________________________ State _____ Zip _______ Phone ____________________________

*Clip and mail to: Otsego County Conservation Association, PO Box 931, Cooperstown, NY 13326  
www.occainfo.org*
Garage sale a time for reflection on consumption

By Anna Kramer

Boxes of books, garbage bags of clothes, piles of electronics and appliances, in an unknown state of working condition, bottles of unused shampoo, trinkets and baby toys, barely used kitchen gadgets and thoroughly-loved armchairs: all donations to the Otsego County Conservation Association’s annual garage sale. Throughout the days leading up to the sale, as locals brought in items to be donated, the recurring thought in my mind was that “nobody will ever buy this thing!” I was impressed by the quantities of stuff that people were pulling out of their attics, garages, back-room cupboards, and storage rooms. While there were certainly “treasures” to be found amidst the piles, I was fairly skeptical of the idea that people would buy most of the items that had been donated.

Yet come the weekend of the sale, I was surprised: a room full of the widest array of trinkets and household items was thoroughly scavenged and depleted. Queues formed each morning of clearly expert garage sale buyers and antique hunters, and people of all walks of life came by throughout the day I was there assisting in the sale, looking for replacements for their broken coffee maker, children’s toys to entertain their newest additions to their families, and to supplement their wardrobes for the summer season. Much of the stuff that I had mistaken for simple junk or trash someone did end up buying: clearly others saw value that I had not seen.

Garage sales, and their more permanent cousins, thrift and consignment stores, represent an alternative to our country’s voracious appetite for new “stuff.” The donations that came in represented such consumption: While many items were clearly a bit more than gently-used, some items were still in the box, barely touched, or maybe used once, before being put away and forgotten until spring cleaning time came around. These items, had donation to the OCCA garage sale not been an option, would have gone to the landfill, or remained in someone’s attic for a long time, before going to the landfill. The garage sale redirected these items away from the waste stream, and provided an alternative for those looking to participate less in the consumption-driven economy, to find a cheap deal, or to find an antique decorative piece for their homes. The option provided by the OCCA garage sale, to choose used over new, to choose conservation and reuse over consumption, counters the general trend of consumption that, in the culture of consumerism and our environmental impact, however slightly. A used computer, purchased at the OCCA garage sale, represents a heavy environmental cost avoided, otherwise incurred by buying new: the minerals in the computer’s hardware system, the energy required to manufacture, to mine the required materials, to transport the materials from mining site to factory to store to the buyer’s home, etc. The complete environmental costs of a single object, particularly one as complex as a computer, are hard to determine, but it is clear that by extending the usage life of a computer as long as possible, we can lessen the associated environmental costs, even if only by a small degree.

A recurring thought in my mind was that “nobody will ever buy this thing!” I was impressed by the quantities of stuff that people were pulling out of their attics, garages, back-room cupboards, and storage rooms. While there were certainly “treasures” to be found amidst the piles, I was fairly skeptical of the idea that people would buy most of the items that had been donated.

Yet come the weekend of the sale, I was surprised: a room full of the widest array of trinkets and household items was thoroughly scavenged and depleted. Queues formed each morning of clearly expert garage sale buyers and antique hunters, and people of all walks of life came by throughout the day I was there assisting in the sale, looking for replacements for their broken coffee maker, children’s toys to entertain their newest additions to their families, and to supplement their wardrobes for the summer season. Much of the stuff that I had mistaken for simple junk or trash someone did end up buying: clearly others saw value that I had not seen.

Garage sales, and their more permanent cousins, thrift and consignment stores, represent an alternative to our country’s voracious appetite for new “stuff.” The donations that came in represented such consumption: While many items were clearly a bit more than gently-used, some items were still in the box, barely touched, or maybe used once, before being put away and forgotten until spring cleaning time came around. These items, had donation to the OCCA garage sale not been an option, would have gone to the landfill, or remained in someone’s attic for a long time, before going to the landfill. The garage sale redirected these items away from the waste stream, and provided an alternative for those looking to participate less in the consumption-driven economy, to find a cheap deal, or to find an antique decorative piece for their homes. The option provided by the OCCA garage sale, to choose used over new, to choose conservation and reuse over consumption, counters the general trend of consumption that, in the production, use, and disposal, creates tremendous environmental costs. One could argue that the garage sale and thrift store option is growing in popularity, particularly during the recent economic downturn, yet it is still far from mainstream culture in our society.

The lessons on reusing are clear: by purchasing used items, not only do we prevent, or at least delay, an addition to our ever-growing landfills or Pacific Ocean waste dumps, but we also reduce our participation in the culture of consumerism and our environmental impact, however slightly. A used computer, purchased at the OCCA garage sale, represents a heavy environmental cost avoided, otherwise incurred by buying new: the minerals in the computer’s hardware system, the energy required to manufacture, to mine the required materials, to transport the materials from mining site to factory to store to the buyer’s home, etc. The complete environmental costs of a single object, particularly one as complex as a computer, are hard to determine, but it is clear that by extending the usage life of a computer as long as possible, we can lessen the associated environmental costs, even if only by a small degree.

Another question that arose in my mind as I spent days sorting items and especially when pricing them, focused on how much cultural emphasis is placed on “new,” and how greatly we devalue “used.” A number of the items offered were barely used, if at all, but simply because they were not being bought new from the store, we were marking and selling them at a mere fraction of their original price. This is certainly a boon to those on a very tight budget, but it does illuminate our culture’s truly curious disdain for all things used. Even if the item is essentially new, the price automatically falls simply because it has sat in someone else’s cupboard. The day before the sale, I spoke with another volunteer about how much money people must have once spent to buy the things they were now donating to the garage sale, and how little monetary value was now attached to these used items, somewhat regardless of their condition.

“I have a lot of stuff.” This was a frequent comment made by those donating items. As a society, we do have a lot of stuff, and it takes spring cleaning, garage sales, or moving for us to realize how much stuff we have. What can we do without? What can we buy used? What do we really need new? These are obviously fairly personal questions and decisions to be made, but witnessing and participating in the OCCA garage sale has certainly changed my own answers to these questions, and made me more curious about how we as a culture value “newness.” New things are fun, but we are well overdue for a good self-reflection upon the social and environmental costs of our obsession with “stuff.”

Anna Kramer was awarded an OCCA internship for the 2014 spring semester, specifically to assist with the “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle” Garage Sale.

... Another Man’s Treasure

Both students and adults submitted entries this year in the EcoArt/Trendy Trash Contest at Earth Festival 2014, ranging from utilitarian to whimsical.

This year’s winners of the popular trash-to-treasure challenge were: Best of Show, Adult, Amy Parr; Best of Show, Student, Meaghan Perrino; People’s Choice, Adult, Jill Eichler; People’s Choice, Student, Lauren Knauss; Judges’ Choice, Adult, Michele Youngs; Judges’ Choice, Student, Nikki Idelson; Honorable Mention, Tommy Clarkson, William Friedman, Jonah Groom, Dorothy Hudson, and Kyle Santello. Congratulations to all!
Hundreds enjoy Earth Festival fun, message

Earth Festival 2014 was hugely successful on ALL levels – attendance, exhibitors and vendors. Again this year we estimate the head count at between 800-1,000 people. In addition to having great public participation, I am pleased to report we have maxed out the space in the gymnasium as exhibitor/vendor numbers continue to rise! Perhaps equally important are the partnerships we have built through Earth Festival. For the third year in a row, we worked with the Master Gardeners of Cornell Cooperative Extension Schoharie and Otsego Counties, coordinating this event with Spring Garden Day, while Milford Central School serves as host and provides relevant kids’ activities. Best of all, Earth Festival continues to reach a diverse audience with its vital message on the importance of protecting, preserving and enhancing our natural resources through reduction, reuse and recycling, the emerging role of alternative energy forms, and the need for energy conservation. Many thanks to our exhibitors, sponsors, vendors and to all who attended. A special hats off as well to those who serve with me on the planning committee – Martha Clarvoe, Rich McCaffery and Susan O’Handley – and to Five Star Subaru for its support.

– Darla M. Youngs, Executive Director

Photos, clockwise from top left: Cooperstown students collected shoes for Soles to Share. The League of Women Voters challenged festival goers with a recycling game. OCCA intern Deanna Oliveri represented Bike Friendly Otsego. OCCA Board Members Jill Eichler and Jim Hill are joined by Jim’s wife, Cindy. OCCA intern Sara Buturla assisted with kids’ activities. OCCA member Paul Mendelsohn deconstructs tapes.
OCCA sending essay contest winners to DEC camp

Following a competitive essay contest, the Otsego County Conservation Association has awarded nine Otsego County middle-school students with a week-long stay at a New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Summer Camp.

Otsego County students ages 11-14 were invited to compete for DEC camperships via the essay contest. In 750 words or less, they were asked to consider the question “What does the phrase ‘think globally, act locally’ mean to you with regard to the environment?” and give examples of how a person can apply this to their everyday life. Middle-school teachers were encouraged to incorporate the essay contest into their lesson plans.

The nine winning essays received top scores in a field of 120 submissions. Students who have earned a week-long trip to DEC environmental education camp, based on the scoring of their essays by the judging panel, are: Sarah Parr, Josie Hovis, and Amanda Snyder, Cooperstown Central School; Addison Harmon, Milford Central School; Ariana Brown-Christman, Liz Knudson, Teagan Mackey, and Hunter Roy, Oneonta Middle School; and Lucy Meehan, Worchester Central School. Alternates are: Tielyn Boxill-Yakalis, OMS; Rylee Merwin, MCS; and William Friedman, CCS.

OCCA will sponsor the campers at $350 per student, thanks to funds provided by private donors. Alternates will be rewarded for their hard work as well with a small cash prize and the opportunity to attend camp if a spot should open up, and Delilah Griger of Cooperstown – who authored the best essay written by a student not applying to attend camp – will receive $50.

“We scored 120 essays this year written by students from Cooperstown, Milford, Oneonta, Schenevus, and Worchester schools. Many thanks to teachers Kathy Hardison, Noreen Kenyon, Amy Parr and Alma Prior, who made the essay-writing exercise part of their class work,” said Darla M. Youngs, OCCA executive director.

“The judges enjoyed reading the entries. We congratulate our top nine writers and recognize the hard work that went into all the essays. There are no losers here, and with so many students showing such awareness and thoughtfulness on topics including conservation, recycling, and preservation, the big winner is the environment,” said Youngs.

According to Youngs, Ariana Brown-Christman of Oneonta Middle School wrote the highest scoring essay, and the judges felt that she best captured the essence of “think globally, act locally.”

Katherine Ackley, a sixth-grader at Oneonta Middle School, had one of the most interesting recycling ideas. Katherine suggested a “state level incentive program similar to the Bottle Bill.”

Ackley wrote, “This plan could be based on a chart, which lists the value of items based on how harmful they are to our environment. Items which are very harmful would have the greatest value for being recycled rather than thrown into regular garbage. ... This would greatly reduce the amount of garbage and pollutants going into landfills, the air and our oceans. It would also create jobs in recycling materials, and create an industry in buying and selling recycled materials all of which puts money back into the citizen’s pockets.”

Consistently, students stressed the importance of recycling, carpooling, energy conservation and alternative energy, Youngs added.

Delilah Griger summed things up nicely – “One little action to help this planet will make a difference, so never stop helping this wonderful Earth!”

The authors of the top-scoring essays will enjoy a week at NYS-DEC camp this summer, where they will spend their time immersed in the natural environment and will enjoy a balance of environmental education, sportsman education, and outdoor fun.

“Our goal for next year is to have even more teachers incorporate the essay into their classwork. The more kids we can get thinking about being good stewards of the environment, the better,” Youngs said.

It Starts With One

By Ariana Brown-Christman
Oneonta Middle School

To think globally, act locally, in my opinion means to urge people to consider the health of the entire planet and to take action right in their hometowns. I feel that people don’t realize the impact that they, as an individual, have on our environment over time. There are several ways individual households can help our environment. Composting, limiting water usage and remembering reusable shopping bags are just a few ways that one person can make a really big difference for our planet.

Most people don’t realize this but according to Duke University, currently the average person produces 4.3 pounds of waste every single day and two-thirds of that can be composted. This is 1.6 more pounds than what the average person produced a little over 50 years ago. We know that we are destroying our planet but there aren’t enough people taking it seriously because they are not living for future generations. Composting is such an easy solution to decrease each household’s waste, which means, a lot less waste being sent to our landfills.

Limiting an individual’s water usage is another way to help save our earth. GreenWorks stated that over the next 20-30 years, our fresh water will be “fully exploited” if we do not change our behavior. Every drop counts and we all know that there is no way that we will be able to survive without water. There are so many simple things that each person can do to preserve our water. For instance, don’t let the water run while doing dishes or brushing teeth. Collect rain water for watering the garden and flowers. Instead of using the hose to wash a vehicle, use a couple of buckets.

Did you know that according to Larry West, it can take up to 1,000 years for plastic bags to break down in landfills while they are breaking down, they put smaller and smaller toxins in our soil and water? It has been estimated that more than one million plastic bags are consumed and discarded every minute in America. Not to mention that hundreds of thousands of sea turtles, dolphins and other marine mammals die every year because they mistake plastic bags for food. With the given information, it is sad to think that someone would still choose plastic over high-quality reusable bags that don’t harm our environment.

Taking care of our earth, on an individual level, doesn’t take a lot of time. It just takes mindfulness and creativity. We don’t have to wait for big industries to make positive changes for our environment; we can take ownership in our very own communities. To conclude, saving our environment is an exciting thing to do. Composting can be a great family activity, thinking of various ways to conserve water can be fun, and using reusable shopping bags will not only help our landfills and marine life but they also help make a great statement to a neighbor that saving our planet starts with one person. Our planet is too precious, don’t wait another minute. Start saving it today!

Think Globally, Act Locally

By Delilah Griger
Cooperstown Junior High

Think globally, act locally can mean different things to different people. To me, the phrase wants people to consider the health of the entire planet and to take action in their own towns or cities. Some people apply this to their everyday life, for example: recycling, turning off lights when you leave the room and even reusing plastic bags so they
Dear Friend,

May 22, 2014

We are very pleased to announce that the 7th Otsego Lakes Festival will be held this year on Saturday, July 12 at Lakefront Park in Cooperstown. Organized under the aegis of the Otsego County Water Quality Coordinating Committee, the Lakes Festival offers residents and visitors alike a day full of fun and festivities celebrating our lakes — educational exhibits, children’s activities, hands-on workshops and lake tours will all focus on the importance of protecting our waterways and ensuring water quality throughout our region. Good food, music, and art will also help us celebrate the importance of Otsego County’s lakes in our lives. Activities for kids will include the Cooperstown Art Association’s fish painting station, interactive science displays with SUNY Oneonta’s Biological Field Station, and a lake art station and “juried” art contest. Food and drink will be for sale on site, served up by Leatherstocking Envirotthon organizers and the Origins Café mobile food truck, among others.

As you know, it takes an entire community to put on a festival, and we need your help to ensure that this year’s Otsego Lakes Festival is the best yet! Please make a donation today to support the Lakes Festival and help us reach our modest goal of $4,000. Every tax-deductible donation counts — and we are counting on you!

In return for your support, your name or business will be listed in the festival’s official program to be distributed on the day of the event. Businesses will be mentioned in press releases, advertisements and media interviews whenever possible. Donations received by June 23 will ensure that you can take full advantage of these benefits.

We look forward to your support of this year’s Lakes Festival! Please join us on Saturday, July 12 as we celebrate Otsego County’s lakes and the vital role of water resources to our region.

Sincerely,

Holly Waterfield and Darla M. Youngs
Otsego Lakes Festival Planning Committee

Yes, I am happy to support the 2014 Otsego Lakes Festival and the WQCC’s efforts to raise awareness of the importance of our lakes and streams to Otsego County’s environment! Enclosed is my TAX-DEDUCTIBLE contribution (please circle a category):

- **LAKE TROUT** $250
- **LARGE-MOUTH BASS** $75
- **OTSEGO BASS** $200
- **PERCH** $50
- **WALLEYE** $100
- **BLUE GILL** $25

Name ____________________________
Address __________________________
City/State/Zip _____________________
Email ____________________________

Please make check payable to Otsego County Conservation Association with “OLF 2014” on the memo line and mail to Otsego Lakes Festival, c/o OCCA, PO Box 931, Cooperstown, NY 13326. No donation is too large or too small. Thank you for your contribution!
2014 EXHIBITOR/VENDOR INFORMATION
Saturday, July 12  12-5pm at Lakefront Park in Cooperstown
Set up between 10:30 and 11:30am

Please submit no later than June 23, 2014

MAIL $50 MINIMUM VENDOR/EXHIBITOR PAYMENT TO: Otsego Lakes Festival,
Otsego County Conservation Association, PO Box 931, Cooperstown, NY. Please make checks
payable to OCCA (Otsego County Conservation Association) and write “OLF14” in the memo
section. (Note: Contributions greater than the $50 minimum fee for vendor/exhibitor spaces are
tax-deductible.)

Please mail or copy and paste text below into an e-mail and send to admin@oceaninfo.org.

Name: _______________________________E-mail Address: _______________________________

Organization /Business Name: _______________________________________________________

Mailing Address: _________________________________________________________________

City/State: ___________________________Zip: ________________

Website: ________________________________________________________________

Work Phone: ___________________________Home Phone: _____________________________

Payment Amount: $_________ Please Note: Fee entitles vendor/exhibitor to one 8 ft
  table and 2 chairs. Vendors/exhibitors will need to bring their own tablecloths.

  _____ Providing own 10 x 10 tent      OR      _____ Need table space in main tent

Description of Exhibit/Business (3-4 sentences maximum, for use on website and in
promotional materials):

Thank you for your interest in participating – we appreciate your support!

P.O. Box 931
Cooperstown, NY 13326

Hosted by the Otsego County Water Quality Coordinating Committee
Safety First
OCCA Program Director Jeff O’Handley discusses wildlife with students from Oneonta’s Riverside Elementary School at Fun and Safety in the Great Outdoors Day. More than 100 students from five schools participated in the June event, held at Glimmerglass State Park. The annual event is aimed at having summer fun in our outdoor environment while being aware of keeping safe. O’Handley’s talk focused on “how we can keep us and the environment safe.”

On the Trail
OCCA kicked off its Nature Walk Series this year with a “Spring Wildflower Hike” on May 24. OCCA Board Member and SUNY Oneonta biology professor Dr. Donna Vogler (right) led a group of hikers as they explored the beautiful spring flora at Greenwoods Conservancy in Burlington (far right). The Peterson Family Trust owns Greenwoods and its conservation easement is managed by the Otsego Land Trust, co-sponsor of the hike.

Countywide Programming with OCCA

No Hitchhikers!
This spring, OCCA installed aquatic invasive species signage at nine public access sites on five Otsego County water bodies.

Time Out
OCCA members Larry Mirarchi, Steve Kent and Carol Malz pause for a moment with OCCA staff Liam Heiland and Jeff O’Handley during a hike along Schenevus Creek led by Steve and wife, Trish, at Robert V. Riddell State Park on June 21.
The buzz on bees

By Jeff O’Handley

On a September evening in 2012, I stepped outside to walk my dog and was met with a steady droning sound. The noise got louder as I made my way to the end of the driveway. I finally found the source of the noise—a colony of honeybees was moving into a maple tree just up the road.

Where they came from, I don’t know, but I was thrilled. Not just because I think bees are cool, or because I’m secretly hoping to see a black bear trying to break into the hive one day, but because bees need all the help they can get. For nearly a decade, bees have been dying in alarming numbers, and the potential impact on our environment and economy are vast.

Beekeepers expect to lose about 10-15 percent of their colonies each year, the so-called “winter loss.” Since 2006, yearly losses have skyrocketed, averaging more than 30 percent each year, every year, with some areas hitting 50 percent. Beekeepers across the country have lost some 10 million colonies in the last decade. Losses among Otsego County beekeepers reflect what is seen on a national level.

Some losses can be attributed to specific causes, such as viruses, bacterial or fungal infections, poor nutrition and parasites. Generally, these problems are easy to diagnose (though not always easy to cure). Sharp declines in the 1990s were caused by a combination of tracheal mites and varroa, an ectoparasite introduced into the United States in 1987.

Far more mysterious, however, is colony collapse disorder, or CCD.

CCD is marked by the lack of adult bees in a colony that otherwise appears to be healthy. A queen, larvae, pupae, and ample supplies of pollen and honey are present; missing, however, are adult workers and drones. Also missing are dead bodies in and around the hive. It seems as though the hive is abandoned, for no apparent reason. Without workers to forage, build and care for the young, the colony is doomed.

Despite the recent media attention, the only thing new about CCD is the name. Beekeepers have reported similar events going back to the 1890s, calling it autumn collapse, spring dwindle, disappearing disease, and mystery disease, among other things. It is apparently not an actual disease with a single cause, but a complex with many possible causative agents. Blame has been placed on fungi, viruses, bacteria, mites, malnutrition—even electromagnetic radiation.

Several recent studies appear to point the finger at a relatively new family of insecticides: neonicotinoids (neonics). Neonics are a systemic pesticide that can be sprayed on plants, applied to the soil, or used as a seed treatment. Once applied, they are incorporated throughout the entire plant, turning the whole thing—roots, stems, leaves—toxic. Neonics were developed within the past 25 years and have become among the most widely-used pesticides in the world.

While much more research needs to be done, there is evidence that the low levels of neonics bees encounter in pollen and nectar can have sinister, sublethal effects. Neonics appear to disrupt bees’ foraging behavior, learning ability and navigation. This could explain why colonies suffering from true CCD have no dead bees in and around the hive: Bees aren’t abandoning their colonies—they’re getting lost.

This past December, the European Union imposed a two-year ban on three types of neonics while more studies are done on their impacts. Is this the solution for the U.S.? Opponents argue that neonicotinoids are effective and safe when used properly; eliminating them, they argue, will lead to reduced crop yields and higher prices. Consider, however, that approximately $15 billion worth of U.S. agricultural products depend on honeybee pollination. The continued loss of honeybees and other pollinators could lead to even greater shortages of apples, blueberries, almonds, soybeans and alfalfa, to name a few of the scores of crops that rely on bees.

OCCA opposes the widespread use of pesticides and recommends

Volunteers Needed

To help us properly clear the trail at Basswood Pond State Forest, one or more volunteers with the following qualifications are needed: First Aid, CPR and Blood Borne Pathogens training; an approved chainsaw safety class that meets OSHA standards, a U.S. Forest Service Chainsaw Safety Course, or other course approved by DEC. In addition, any chainsaw operator must wear hard hat, eye and hearing protection, cut-resistant chaps, pants and boots, and have a chainsaw with properly functioning chain brake. We are also always looking for volunteers to help us with hand-pulling water chestnuts, highway clean-ups, and for other events and activities. On-site training is provided. Contact OCCA Program Director Jeff O’Handley at (607) 282-4087.

Continued on Page 14
This year’s “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle” Garage Sale brought in more than $6,000, our best sale ever. These monies will go toward OCCA programming to protect, preserve and enhance the environment.

We also did extremely well in terms of the garage sale’s primary intent, “reduce, reuse, recycle.” Unsold items, with a few exceptions, were reused or recycled: clothing went to family services and housewares to Salvation Army; shoes and boots were donated to Soles to Share; books were donated to the Cooperstown Village Library for its annual sale; the Susquehanna SPCA selected many items for resale at its thrift shops; folks from the Cooperstown and Oneonta Freecycle list-serves took merchandise; items were marked free for the taking and placed in the alley; and materials were also donated to the Cooperstown Farmers’ Market, the South Kortright Central School K-6 Holiday Store, and to a sale which helped support the building of a school in Guatemala using repurposed garbage including tires and plastic waste. Some clothing was also placed in consignment and may add to our total.

Thanks so much to everyone who supported this year’s “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle” Garage Sale, whether as a donor, volunteer and/or shopper! We simply could not do this without you.

– Darla M. Youngs, Executive Director

Photos, clockwise from top left: After a week-long collection period, the approximately 7,200-square-foot Cooperstown Farmers’ Market building – where OCCA’s annual garage sale takes place – was filled with donated items by the morning of the sale. Among this year’s two dozen volunteers, OCCA staff and Board members working the sale were Jess Armlin, Rich McCaffery, Samantha Bono, Darla Youngs, Patti Ashley, Jeff O’Handley, Connie Velez, Holly Hren, and Jill Eichler, who all braved the 9 a.m. opening rush. Hundreds of people shopped the garage sale on Saturday and Sunday. Volunteer John Darcy Youngs, standing in the empty market building, lends perspective to the size of the space and volume of merchandise. OCCA intern Deanna Oliveri and SUNY Oneonta volunteer Elliot Díaz are shown with OCCA Executive Director Darla Youngs, who spearheads the garage sale efforts.
Groundwater
continued from page 1

groundwater flow systems and mapping of aquifers.

“Relatively little is known about our groundwater,” said OCCA Executive
Director Darla M. Youngs. “Most private well owners only test their water when it
tastes bad or smells funny. This series of tests – which, for many, would have been
cost prohibitive – helps identify common chemical components and any concentrations
of concern.”

For example, while data supports that the
overall quality of the county’s drinking water is
good, 14 percent of wells tested in the
WIOW program showed levels of turbidity
(cloudiness) which exceed the maximum
contaminant levels established by USEPA.

“Higher turbidity levels are often associat-
ed with higher levels of disease-causing
microorganisms such as viruses, parasites
and some bacteria. Clearly, it is a good idea
to filter water from private wells,” Hasbargen
advised.

“Virtually none of the samples contained
detectable quantities of organic molecules
associated with gas drilling activities,”
Hasbargen noted, “implying that the natural
background is very low, and so future detec-
tion of such molecules is likely to be a result
of human-caused contamination.

“An ensemble of chemical parameters
including total dissolved solids, alkalinity,
specific conductance, pH, and chemical oxy-
gen demand greatly strengthen the perception
that Otsego County has an abundance of high
quality drinking water,” he wrote.

The full “Report on Drinking Water
Chemical Analyses for OCCA’s ‘What’s In
Our Water?’ Campaign” will be unveiled and
made available to the public at the Otsego
Lakes Festival on Saturday, July 12 at
Lakefront Park in Cooperstown. For more
information, e-mail admin@occainfo.org or
call (607) 547-4488.

Edic-Fraser
continued from page 2

“Interested persons who
choose not to sign up to receive
e-mail notifications, can view the
PSC web site at their conven-
icence to check on the status of a
case. All documents filed by par-
ties, correspondence, hearing
issued by the Commission in a
website for that case. In addition,
we need to change that.

continued from page 6

don’t end up in the landfills. But
many people don’t use this phrase in their everyday life and I think
we need to change that.

One way to get people to apply
this to their everyday life would
be to educate them in the world
around them. This way more peo-
ple would realize that their
actions matter and making the
right choice can help the environ-
ment. Many people don’t try to
help the environment because
they don’t see one little act mak-
ing a difference in this big world,
or they just don’t know enough
about the planet. The kids now
are the adults of the future so we
need to learn how to take care of
our planet. Many people around
the world have health problems
because of the health of our plan-
et. The environment that they are
in might be polluted, which could
lead to serious health issues. One
thing you could do in your area to
inform people about the earth
would be to form a “Going Green”
club with your school. This way
kids can get a better understand-
ing about the earth they live on!

Another way people can apply
this phrase to their everyday life
would be to conserve energy.

Ways to do this would be to stop
driving everywhere. Sometimes
you could walk, ride a bike or ride
a bus. This saves our oil and does-
.n’t pollute the air we breathe. Air
pollution in Beijing, China has
reduced its residents’ lifespan by
an average of 15 years. Experts
say that the air pollution there is
20 times higher than the maxi-
mum recommended by health
officials. Having “Bike to Work
and School Days” are a great way
to save oil and not pollute the air
that we breathe. You will see that
we are coming up with new innova-
tions for conserving our natural
resources, such as windmills, or
the cars that run off electricity or
solar power. Solar power is
another great way to help the
planet. It takes the sunlight and
turns it into energy. Solar power,
wind power and water power are
examples of using resources
around us to help our planet. In
this world we are trying to extract
every last bit of crude oil from
under the ground because of the
amount we are using daily.

Someday we are going to run out
of oil and that’s why you see the
prices getting higher every time
you go to the gas station. That is
why we need to be able to use
our renewable resources instead
of nonrenewable resources to fuel
our lives.

We need to think of the ani-
mals that live on the planet with
us. When you litter, it can end up
in the ocean. Sea creatures will
think that your garbage is food
and will eat it and most likely die.
Any garbage that ends up in the
ocean is called marine debris. A
lot of the trash we throw out ends
up in the ocean. This is not fair
to the creatures that live in the
ocean. They are not the ones
making the mess, yet they are the
ones getting tangled in it and
dying. Animals out of the water
are being affected by our messes
too. The camels in the deserts
think that plastic bags are food
and eat them. The plastic bags
trick camels into thinking they are
full, when they are not and the
camels die of starvation. But there
are ways we can help these crea-
tures. Your community can get
together and pick up the garbage
on the side of the roads or on the
shores of the beaches. The other
animals that live on this planet
would greatly appreciate it.

It is important that we start
thinking globally and acting locally
so the adults of the future can
make responsible choices for the
health of every living thing on the
planet. The earth’s health reflects
on our health. Realize the next
time you decide to help out the
planet that a local action will
inspire others and will become
something bigger. One little
action to help this planet will
make a difference, so never stop
helping this wonderful Earth!
Hundreds participate in Bike to Work Day

By Meghan McCaffrey
Contributing Writer, Cooperstown Crier

Cyclists across Otsego County donned their helmets and rode their bicycles to work or school on May 21 in observation of the Sixth Annual Bike to Work Day in Otsego County. The event was sponsored by The Inn at Cooperstown, with additional support from Five Star Subaru.

The total miles walked and ridden for the day were 379.3 miles with 335 participants. This is a slight decrease from last years’ totals with 416.5 miles walked or ridden and 361 participants.

“It’s always fun to see the participants that biked 298 miles overall and 194 walking participants that walked a total of 81.2 miles.

There were numerous check-in sites this year at various locations across Otsego County. Many of those sites were at schools including: Cooperstown Central School, Edmeston Central School, Greater Plains Elementary School, Laurens Central School, Milford Central School, Morris Central School, Oneonta Middle/High School, Richfield Springs Central School, Schenevus Central School, Valley View Elementary School and Worcester Central School.

Clarvoe said most of the check-in sites were at schools so that children would be encouraged to ride their bikes to school.

“It’s always fun to see the bicycles outside of the school, knowing (the children) are going to ride themselves home,” Clarvoe said.

The greatest overall showing was from Greater Plains Elementary School in Oneonta thanks to the efforts of Julie McKee, a teacher at the school. Over a third of the school students walked or rode their bicycles to school that day with 64 bicyclists and 82 walkers out of a total student population of 305.

“The participation at Greater Plains Elementary is fantastic, we wish all schools had such a high percentage of students getting to school under their own power,” said Clarvoe in a media release.

Clarvoe said she thought their side-street location might have something to do with the high number of participants.

Clark Sports Center and the CCS high school tied for the highest number of bicycle miles ridden with 68 miles each. Clark Sports Center had 10 bicyclists who participated and the high school had 16 participants.

Other check-in sites included: Bassett Healthcare, HealthLinks at FoxCare, the New York State Historical Association and Woodland Cycles in Milford.

ORCA sponsors the Bike to Work Day and is led by President William Walker.

“Each year I look forward to seeing people riding or walking to work, school or just out on an errand,” he said.

“Walking or bicycling is an enjoyable, safe, healthy, environmentally friendly activity for people of all ages and abilities and it’s great to see children learning this skill and we hope it will be a life habit,” Walker continued.

Clarvoe said she bikes to work on her bikes.

“It is a fun activity; I feel like you have reduced your carbon footprint and because she enjoys it.

“It is a fun activity; I feel like a kid on my bike,” she said.

Clarvoe said it is important to have a BTWD because it encourages people to start commuting to work on their bikes.

“You have to change your habits,” Clarvoe said.

Sometimes people need a day to start it and often people continue riding after that.”

Clarvoe continued.

Clarvoe said she personally commutes about nine miles to Cooperstown from Hartwick a couple of days a week.

“It’s a great way to get in your exercise, arriving at work energized and proud that you have reduced your carbon footprint,” Clarvoe said in a media release.

Clarvoe said she would like to invite people to sign up with the National Bike Challenge and record their miles ridden with the Otsego Regional Cycling Advocates local team.

Participants can join at nationalbikechallenge.org and, if they are from Otsego County, their zip codes will link them to the Otsego County local team.

ORCA is a committee of the Otsego County Conservation Association. OCCA is a private, non-profit environmental membership organization dedicated to promoting the enjoyment and sustainable use of Otsego County’s natural resources through education, advocacy, resource management, research and planning.

This article reprinted with permission from “The Cooperstown Crier.”
OCCA

Board of Directors
Vicky Lentz, President
Willard Harman, Vice-president
Martha Clarvoe, Secretary
Jim Hill, Treasurer
Andrée Conklin
Jill Eichler
Eamonn Hinchev
James Patrick
Donna Vogler
Steve Zerby

Staff
Darla M. Youngs, Executive Director and "Lookout" Editor
Jeff O’Handley, Program Director
Sara Buturla, Faith Carney and Deanna Oliveri, Interns

We try to conserve precious resources at OCCA by printing on recycled paper and using soy-based inks when feasible. If you would like to help us do even better, consider being put on our electronic distribution list and receive future newsletters and general correspondence via e-mail.

OCCAcYAY!

Basswood

In addition to trail maintenance, we have two other exciting developments to announce regarding Basswood. As part of her work study project, Faith put together a template for a trail guide to Basswood’s Blue Trail, plotting points of interest, researching the plants and animals of the forest, and highlighting other features of the forest. In addition, Deanna has created a short introductory video to the forest. Working with Faith, she shot footage in late April and is putting the finishing touches on it. Once completed, the video will be posted to OCCA’s website and will serve as a way to get the word out about this beautiful natural area. Many thanks to Faith and Deanna, and to our volunteers for a great and productive day!

Bees

they be used only as a last resort. When absolutely required, we urge users to select products that are not harmful to non-target organisms such as bees, that are unlikely to migrate away from the application site, and will not persist in the environment. Any time pesticides are used, great care must be taken to strictly follow the manufacturer's guidelines.

With spring here, I am again watching the comings and goings of the bees from our tree. Despite my desire to see a bear, I hope one doesn’t successfully break in. More than that, I hope the colony can avoid the mites, diseases and mysterious ravages of CCD.

Next Adopt-a-Highway Clean-up on St. Hwy. 80 in Springfield Set for Saturday, July 19. Call (607) 547-4488 To Assist.