

Summer 2015
Vol. 47, Issue 3

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The “Clean, Drain and Dry or Kiss the Fish Goodbye!” bumper sticker is part of a multi-faceted public education campaign launched this summer by OCCA. Bumper stickers are available at the OCCA office.

OCCA celebrates invasive species awareness week with CDD pledge

In honor of New York State’s Second Annual Invasive Species Awareness Week, July 12-18, the Otsego County Conservation Association kicked off a multi-week public education campaign aimed at stopping the spread of aquatic invasive species.

“Clean, drain and dry or kiss the fish goodbye” is the cautionary message in a series of newspaper ads highlighting preventive measures to help keep New York State water bodies free of invasives. A television commercial designed by Blue Water Studio reinforces that message.

OCCA has also introduced an online pledge asking signatories for their commitment to help stop the spread of aquatic invasive species within Otsego County and beyond its borders. OCCA’s “Pledge to Clean, Drain and Dry” is modeled after the Invasive Species Council of British Columbia’s Clean Drain Dry Ambassador program.

Invasive plants and animals can impact boating, fishing, swimming, and the environment. New statewide regulations require boaters to inspect and remove any visible plant or animal material from their watercraft, including canoes, kayaks, and jet skis, before launch as well as before leaving a water body at the end of the day. This means all parts of the watercraft, as well as the trailer and all equipment or gear. These regulations also require dumping out canoes and kayaks, and draining water from bilges, bait wells, ballast tanks, and so on.

“Aquatic invasive species are a common problem throughout New York, the U.S. and the world,” said OCCA Executive Director Darla M. Youngs. “People can help OCCA reach as many people as possible and recruit signatures from across the U.S. for our Pledge to Clean, Drain

and Dry by sharing the website links and by taking the pledge themselves,” Youngs said.

According to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, aquatic invasive plants and animals New Yorkers should be concerned about include: hydrilla, water chestnut, spiny water flea, zebra mussels, quagga mussels and Eurasian watermilfoil, among others.

“Consider the spiny water flea,” said Youngs. “It’s a tiny predator, but a big problem. The spiny water flea eats food that is important to native fishes and clogs fishing lines. The only effective strategy to control spiny water flea is to prevent its introduction in the first place.”

The ecology of Lake George was permanently changed when this species was introduced, and it is believed unlikely that the spiny water flea will ever be completely eradicated there, Youngs added.

OCCA’s newspaper ads, running through September, are supported in part by the Butternut Valley Alliance, Canadarago Lake Improvement Association, Catskill Regional Invasive Species Partnership, Dave Brandt Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society, Otsego Lake Association, Otsego Land Trust, Otsego 2000, Southern Tier East Regional Planning Development Board, and the Village of Cooperstown.

“We can all help stop the spread of invasive species,” urged Youngs. “Find out how and take the pledge to clean, drain and dry at <http://occainfo.org/take-the-pledge-ais-campaign/>.”

To learn more about the clean, drain and dry methodology, visit <http://occainfo.org/ais-campaign/>.

PSC Trial Staff advises no-go for Edic to Fraser power line proposal

In a July 6 report examining issues of environmental compatibility and electric system benefits, New York State Department of Public Service Trial Staff recommended that North America Transmission's proposed Edic to Fraser transmission line be eliminated from consideration. If selected, Edic to Fraser would traverse four counties and 16 municipalities and would travel approximately 40 miles through Otsego County parallel to the existing Marcy South power line right of way.

According to the report (<http://documents.dps.ny.gov/public/Common/ViewDoc.aspx?DocRefId={FB2F769B-7708-4C4F-92AD-C2D2D2612FA9}>), 21 proposals were received from four entities, including five from NAT. Following a comparative evaluation, PSC Trial Staff concluded that all five of NAT's proposed scenarios, including Edic to Fraser, "should be eliminated from consideration. These projects, in comparison to the remaining scenarios, have the potential for greater environmental impacts."

"We are cautiously optimistic," said Otsego County Conservation Association President Vicky M. Lentz in July, as the PSC prepares for a Technical Conference to review the Trial Staff findings and gather additional information.

OCCA completed its own review of NAT's proposed Edic to Fraser transmission line in April, culminating in a 157-page comment report submitted to the PSC on April 22 (<http://documents.dps.ny.gov/public/Common/ViewDoc.aspx?DocRefId={26FA962F-4EF2-4086-AC09-2C11A59ABB25}>).

PSC Trial Staff wrote: "OCCA filed an extensive report outlining the impacts of the proposed Edic to Fraser project to inform the public record and evaluate the project's compatibility with the environmental and community characteristics of Otsego County. The report outlined the concerns of OCCA in relation to need and public benefit, siting, alternative proposals, environmental impact, other impacts, compliance with local laws, and community outreach conducted by OCCA."

"The potential adverse environmental and socioeconomic impacts associated with the proposed Edic to Fraser project outweigh the project's reported benefits," Lentz said, in summarizing OCCA's position.

OCCA Executive Director Darla M. Youngs added that Edic to Fraser would have significant adverse impacts on Otsego County's agricultural, scenic and historic landscapes.

PSC Trial Staff concurred, ranking NAT's Edic to Fraser proposal "high" – anticipated to be the least environmentally compatible –

in the parameters of new right-of-way, expansion of existing ROW, impact to major river corridors, length of ROW in agricultural districts, and visual assessment, among others.

The Edic to Fraser proposal is one of a number of plans being considered by the PSC as it seeks to address reported ongoing electric transmission congestion problems by delivering an additional 1,000 MW of electricity from upstate power sources to downstate consumers. This proposed route includes parts of the towns of Richfield, Exeter, Burlington, New Lisbon, Laurens, Otego and Oneonta.

"The potential adverse environmental and socioeconomic impacts associated with the proposed Edic to Fraser project outweigh the project's reported benefits."

– Vicky M. Lentz, President, OCCA

Project proposals from developers were submitted to the PSC independently in September of 2014, each of which reflected a possible solution to address reported ongoing electric transmission congestion problems by delivering an additional 1,000 MW of electricity from upstate power sources to downstate consumers. At the request of the state, these companies were then given an opportunity to present new or modified proposals that would make greater use of existing transmission corridors and rights of way.

The PSC will now choose from these alternatives, and can decide to use parts of different proposals provided that together they will move the required 1,000 MW of additional electricity. Among the selection criteria to be weighed by the PSC in its review of the alternating current (AC) transmission upgrade proposals are: 1) impact on environment and community; 2) cost to rate payers; and, 3) potential for implementation without excessive delay.

Funded in part by a \$65,000 award from the PSC, OCCA contracted with C&S Companies and Springfield attorney Douglas H. Zamelis to conduct an environmental review of NAT's Edic to Fraser power line proposal. OCCA worked with partner organizations, municipal and county officials, affected landowners, and the public to develop additional data and information pertaining to local environmental, agricultural, historic, and other resources in order to determine any potential impacts and effects this project may have.

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OCCA in the news

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

Edic to Fraser

State Agency Snubs Power-line

Proposal: "The Daily Star" on the Public Service Commission's Interim Report – http://www.thedailystar.com/news/local_news/state-agency-snubs-power-line-proposal/article_a72f9446-be4f-5a1c-b931-b662daa08904.html.

Facebook

Like OCCA on Facebook and Learn About a Variety of Environmental Initiatives:

The prevalence of neonicotinoids in U.S. streams, how climate change may be increasing the spread of nasty plants such as poison ivy, a possible human-friendly vaccine for tick bites – if you haven't "Liked" OCCA on Facebook yet, please check us out to learn more about these and other fascinating environmental topics and upcoming OCCA events. <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Otsego-County-Conservation-Association/51851923557>.

Invasive Species

Check Your Pool for Invasive Species: In this recent "Cooperstown Crier" column, OCCA Program Director Jeff O'Handley discusses the Asian longhorned beetle, the threats this insect poses to a number of important forest species, and DEC's recent pool monitoring program to assess the presence of ALB statewide. To learn more, see: http://www.cooper-crier.com/opinion/occa-notes-check-your-pool-for-invasive-beetle/article_e471f5bd-7ef4-541e-8079-8e307c200c84.html.

Water Quality

OCCA Comments at Public Meeting on Crumhorn Fishing Access Site:

OCCA Executive Director Darla M. Youngs and Program Director Jeff O'Handley attended a meeting in the Town of Milford on August 5 to share concerns about the DEC's proposal to open the Crumhorn Fishing Access Site to launching of motorized boats. For more on the meeting see: http://www.thedailystar.com/news/local_news/dec-responds-to-concerns-about-milford-project/article_aa9c4987-b1ed-5ed6-b5cb-c92923c5d1f2.html. In a letter mailed to DEC in June, OCCA noted that alteration of the character of the FAS, fluctuations in water level and spread of invasive species were among the reasons DEC should think twice about this project as proposed.



**Invasive Species
Eradication**



**Otsego Lake Challenge and
Upper Susquehanna Watershed Programs**



**Environmental Education
Opportunities**

Our Environment. Our Home. Our Challenge.

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



**Nature Walks on
Otsego County Trails**

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

OCCA expands recycling, zero waste info on website

The Otsego County Conservation Association has a long-standing commitment to recycling and waste reduction. Over the past decade, OCCA has collaborated with the Otsego County Solid Waste Department and with municipalities throughout the region to implement and/or improve recycling services for village, town, and city programs. The organization was instrumental in establishing Otsego County's Household Hazardous Waste Day collection, and supports recycling in schools and local businesses countywide, including farms. OCCA's annual "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle" Garage Sale, an Otsego County tradition, draws hundreds of shoppers each April to browse the bargains in more than a dozen different categories.

Continuing to dedicate time and resources to address solid waste issues in the region, OCCA is working on updates to informational materials for Otsego County residents and has developed an expanded recycling section on its website, <http://occainfo.org/>. Committee members and staff are currently making revisions to OCCA's "Recycling: Above and Beyond" publication and are collaborating with the County to update "right way to throw away" information online. OCCA will add a "Don't Trash It" search function to its website that will correlate with these resource materials once they have been amended. Users will be able to type in an item name and instantly find information on the proper means of disposal.

OCCA's recycling section, expanded through a website content development contract with CNY Mobile Marketing, focuses on support for zero waste goals and includes useful resources, links, and videos. Details on area recycling facilities, locations, and hours of operation can be accessed, including current recycling guidelines, and information on composting is available.

A new feature allows users to "Submit a Tip" if they have pointers to help others reduce, reuse, recycle, rethink or recover.

"We're all in this together," said OCCA Executive Director Darla M. Youngs. "Our friends and neighbors often turn out to be our greatest resources. We encourage people to submit ideas and suggestions for ways in which we can reduce our environmental impact."

Tips submitted will be posted on the OCCA website, subject to review and editing. Original ideas or links to relevant existing content can be shared, as well as images and document links. Contributors will be attributed by first name, last initial and town (e.g., Frank L., Worcester, NY). Permission for OCCA to use submitted content is implied.

The screenshot shows the OCCA website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for HOME, PROGRAM AREAS, OUTREACH, NEWS, SUPPORT OCCA, ABOUT US, and CONTACT US. Below the navigation bar is a 'Submit Your Tips' section. It features a 'We're all in this together!' message and a 'Submit Your Tip!' form with fields for First Name, Last Name (with a note that initials will be used), and Email Address. There's also a 'Go' button and a 'Submit Your Tips' button. The page also includes a sidebar with 'Program Areas' and a 'We're all in this together.' image.

A new feature on OCCA's website allows users to "Submit a Tip" if they have pointers to help others reduce, reuse, recycle, rethink or recover.

To view the newly expanded recycling, composting and zero waste information on the OCCA website, visit <http://occainfo.org/recycling> or <http://occainfo.org/zero-waste/>. To submit your tip to help others achieve their zero waste goals, visit <http://occainfo.org/submit-your-tips/>.

OCCA is a private, non-profit environmental membership organization dedicated to promoting the appreciation and sustainable use of Otsego County's natural resources through education, advocacy, resource management, research, and planning. For more information on OCCA, or to support programming, call (607) 547-4488 or visit <http://occainfo.org/>.

CNY Mobile Marketing is a digital marketing company based in Hartwick, NY that provides marketing and communications services to local businesses, including responsive website development for full device compatibility, web and social network content services, messaging programs, digital advertising and more. For more information about CNY Mobile Marketing, call (607) 643-5680 or visit www.cnymobilemarketing.com.

Edic to Fraser

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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 numerous adverse environmental impacts – land-use changes; forest impacts; wetland and riparian impacts; hydrologic changes; soil erosion; impacts to biodiversity, wildlife, and avian populations; land, water and air pollution; changes in electromagnetic fields, increased noise, and more. If the Edic to Fraser project is selected by the PSC, NAT would then have to acquire the necessary right of way whether by voluntary agreement or eminent domain.

The PSC is expected to make a final ruling this fall as to which project or combination of

projects will move forward. OCCA's cover letter, comment report, and associated figures and appendices can be accessed via <http://documents.dps.ny.gov/public/MatterManagement/CaseMaster.aspx?MatterCaseNo=13-t-0454>

Founded in 1968, Otsego County Conservation Association (OCCA) is a 501(c)3 membership group dedicated to promoting the appreciation and sustainable use of Otsego County's natural resources through education, advocacy, resource management, research, and planning. For the last 47 years, OCCA has played a key role in initiating and carrying out programs designed to improve and/or protect Otsego County's air, land, and water, representing more than 800+ members and volunteers.

Report cover letter to PSC: <http://documents.dps.ny.gov/public/Common/ViewDoc.aspx?DocRefId={C234336D-0B17-4BF6->

BE1D-BB3A7FE0CFBE}

Comment report: <http://documents.dps.ny.gov/public/Common/ViewDoc.aspx?DocRefId={26FA962F-4EF2-4086-AC09-2C11A59ABB25}>

Figures: <http://documents.dps.ny.gov/public/Common/ViewDoc.aspx?DocRefId={364BE74B-77BA-45A8-8886-5A832776BA27}>

Appendices A-H: <http://documents.dps.ny.gov/public/Common/ViewDoc.aspx?DocRefId={CBEB9468-0984-4AF1-B671-AC7DF702B76C}>

Appendices I-J: <http://documents.dps.ny.gov/public/Common/ViewDoc.aspx?DocRefId={771B14D7-F7CD-4B77-9AA0-65BA282AAB4F}>

Next OCCA Adopt-a Highway cleanup on St. Hwy. 80 in Springfield is Saturday, September 19. Call (607) 282-4087 to assist.

OCCA submits comments on EPA's drinking water impacts assessment

The deadline for comments on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's draft "Assessment of the Potential Impacts of Hydraulic Fracturing for Oil and Gas on Drinking Water Resources" was Friday, August 28. In its comments to the EPA, OCCA wrote: "The study identifies numerous above and belowground mechanisms through which hydraulic fracturing can impact our nation's drinking water, and it is OCCA's firm belief that the findings of the draft assessment clearly show that hydraulic fracturing poses an unacceptably high risk to this vital resources." In addition to outlining a number of ways in which the study can be strengthened as EPA crafts its final assessment, OCCA recommends that the major findings of the draft assessment should be preceded by a disclaimer and/or discussion regarding the sizeable data gaps and high level of uncertainty associated with the conclusions therein. To read OCCA's comments, see <http://occainfo.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/OCCA-Comments-on-EPA-dAssessment-FINAL.pdf>.

DEC announces improvements to Portlandville fishing access site

A \$40,000 project to enhance the Portlandville Fishing Access site in the Town of Milford was announced by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation last week. A legislative grant obtained by Senator James Seward for the Goodyear Lake Association paid in part for the recent installation of a new universally accessible dock system that will allow for safer and easier access to the water for launching and retrieving car top boats. DEC funded the rest of the project and provided the labor for the upgrades. The Otsego County Conservation Association acted as fiscal agent on

behalf of GLA in administering its grant, which totaled \$20,000 and helped support ongoing eradication of water chestnut. Other improvements to the Portlandville site include an expanded parking lot and construction of an informational kiosk. DEC also thanked the NYS Department of Transportation and ENEL Green Power North America for partnering on this project.

100+ enjoy lunch with OCCA, OLA, FoGSP at Lake Appreciation Day

Just over 100 people ate lunch with the co-sponsors, exhibitors, and vendors of Lake Appreciation Day on Saturday, July 11 at Glimmerglass State Park, while visitors to both the event and the park stopped by throughout the course of the day. LAD, sponsored by OCCA, the Otsego Lake Association, and Friends of Glimmerglass State Park, featured a morning bird walk, aquatic displays, lake-related exhibits, and an OCCA EcoTeam pond biology program. For a pictorial overview of Lake Appreciation Day, see <http://play.smilebox.com/Sprea.../4e4449344e44417a4f54553d0d0a>.

Slide show highlights Earth Festival tenth anniversary event

Attendance at this year's tenth annual Earth Festival on Saturday, April 11 was estimated at 1,000 people. Thanks to former OCCA Social Media/Event Planning Intern Christine Whalen for documenting this milestone event in photos – <http://play.smilebox.com/SpreadMoreHappy/4e4449354d446b784d44453d0d0a> – featuring many but not all of this year's exhibits and vendors. For a full list of Earth Festival 2015 attractions, vendors and exhibitors, see: <http://occainfo.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/2015-Earth-Festival-Information2.pdf>.

Clean, Drain and Dry or Kiss the Fish Goodbye!

Invasive plants and animals can impact boating, fishing, swimming and the environment.

When leaving a body of water, always remember to:

CLEAN Remove all visible mud, plants, fish or other animals from your boat, trailer and any equipment that comes in contact with the water, such as waders and boots, paddles and fishing gear.

DRAIN Empty all bilges, wells and ballast tanks. Tip canoes and kayaks over to empty them.

DRY Allow equipment to dry for at least five days before using in another water body. If this is not possible, **DISINFECT** using hot water, steam, or a solution made with bleach or potassium chloride.

See <http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/50267.html> for more details.

Be part of the solution, not part of the problem.

CLEAN, DRAIN AND DRY or kiss the fish goodbye!"





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O-C-C-YAY!

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OCCA team seeks to raise \$10,000 by September 21

Otsego County Conservation Association has challenged campaign team members to raise \$10,000 by September 21 in support of programs to protect Otsego County's water and land from invasive species. The campaign team – including our Board of Directors, volunteers, and executive director – are working to raise these funds on behalf of OCCA and will be reaching out to friends, business associates, coworkers, and family members in hopes of achieving their personal milestones as well as the \$10,000 overall goal. To learn how you can help OCCA and its partners prevent the spread of invasive species, why this is important, the ways in which your donation will be put to good use, and who some of our team members are, visit our campaign page at: <https://www.crowdrise.com/occa-invasives/fundraiser/occa>.

Feel free to share OCCA's campaign information via Facebook, Twitter and/or other social media, or join our fundraising team. If you prefer to make a donation by check or money order, please mail directly to OCCA at PO Box 931, Cooperstown, NY 13326.

OCCA is comprised of committed, roll-up-our-sleeves and get-things-done kind of people, focusing on water quality, land-use planning and natural resources appreciation, solid waste management and reduction, energy conservation, alternative energy, and environmental education. Your donation today ensures the continuation of OCCA's work tomorrow!

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.