Fall…a time when we take notice of the changes in nature. We see the browning of the grass, the fallow fields awash with the brilliant yellows of the goldenrods, the rusty hues on tree leaves, hinting of the spectacular colors that will paint our hillsides in the coming days.

Like nature, OCCA has been making some changes. I am delighted to welcome our new Executive Director, Leslie Orzetti. Leslie’s experience in natural resource conservation and in teaching will bring new perspectives to our organization. I am looking forward to working with her and exploring the possibilities of what OCCA can do. Rest assured, OCCA will continue to do the great work that we have been doing for nearly 50 years.

But, as in the past, our future depends on our members and their contributions. Whether it is money or volunteer time or just telling others what we do, our members are what make us great. Our Annual Dinner is coming up in November and I look forward to be able to visit with everyone and share with you the accomplishments of the past year. OCCA continues to be a leader in environmental conservation education and advocacy. Come join us as we celebrate nearly 50 years of great work and help us plan for the future.

Hello valuable members. My name is Leslie Orzetti, and I am the new Executive Director of OCCA. I have been here for about three months now, and am very excited to be a part of this wonderful association! As we enter our 50th year, OCCA is proud to continue our work in the areas of water quality, recycling, and education as well as to continue sponsoring wonderful events such as Earth and Lakes Festival.

As new Executive Director, I plan to more involve the community with our programs. Right now, we have a great volunteer base without which we could not do half of the great work we currently do. With STEM education so vital to the success of our young people, I am looking forward to forging new educational partnerships with schools, youth groups, and camps as a way to help bolster education and environmental literacy. I am also looking forward to collaborating with several groups on a citizen science program monitoring water quality and stream biota in Otsego County. This project will involve local and regional groups as well as local Otsegans in the preservation of our waterways.

With such a great staff and board of directors, I cannot wait to continue the great work that OCCA is known for, and create new partnerships and opportunities with residents around the County. Please feel free to reach out to me at any time with opportunities you feel could benefit Otsego County’s natural resources. Be safe, be happy, and be sustainable!
Public Hearing on Dominion Transmission, Inc.’s “New Market” Project Raises Questions, Gives Perspective

By Danny Lapin

Imagine living your day-to-day life and, one day, you hear of a large-scale natural gas infrastructure expansion project coming your way. To some, such a project may bring the prospect of employment through construction jobs—something that is sorely needed in upstate New York. To others, however, natural gas infrastructure could pose a distinct threat to the health, environment, and character of their communities. Accidental releases of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) and Nitrous Oxide (NOx) into the air can place people at risk of being exposed to known carcinogens. Noise from “blowdowns” have the potential to violate local noise ordinances. Conflicts associated with the siting and review process of compressor stations have been known to fracture communities and pit neighbor against neighbor. The mix of emotions resultant from these concerns: fear, optimism, concern, and empathy were on display on a warm Thursday evening in the Village of Canajoharie.

Representatives from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) held a public hearing on September 1 in the Canajoharie High School auditorium regarding draft state air facility permits for a project proposed by Dominion Transmission, Inc. The “New Market” project involves the expansion of existing pipeline systems located in New York State. In particular, the project will result in the construction of two new compressor stations, the expansion of an existing compressor station, the modification of two existing compressor stations, and the construction of a metering station. The purpose of the proposed project is to provide an additional 112,000 dekatherms per day of capacity to meet growing demand for natural gas in New York. This is roughly enough natural gas to heat 1,088 New York homes.

Approximately 60 people sat in the large auditorium, clearly divided by their respective faction: project opponents at the front of the room, supporters in the back. The hearing opened with statements from local elected officials. Allegra Schecter, representing the Otsego County Town of Roseboom, spoke out against the proposed project siting and its potential health impacts associated with the emissions from compressor stations. Sara Niccoli, the Supervisor of the Montgomery County Town of Palatine, said that the hearing was not advertised in the newspaper, leading to many people not having the opportunity to attend the hearing. Niccoli herself heard of the hearing just hours before it began.

From the minute public testimony began, the mood in the room was tense. Opponents prepared technical, well-researched statements urging the DEC to deny the Air State Facility permits for the Dominion “New Market Project.” Representatives from Otsego 2000 and other commenting groups demonstrated how Dominion Transmission, Inc. did not appropriately account for all sources of air emissions, ignored the relationship between local topography and air quality, failed to consider environmental justice-related impacts, and did not appropriately study the public health impacts associated with the project. (continued on pg. 5)

Nature Quote of the Month:

“There is a pleasure in the pathless woods, There is a rapture on the lonely shore.”
— James Fenimore Cooper
OCCA Launches E-Fundraiser

By Leslie Orzetti

Help OCCA this year through our e-fundraiser. This year's theme is "Go Wild With OCCA!" We're sending staff member Danny Lapin into the wild woods of Otsego County to show us how beautiful our natural resources really are. Danny will visit our "adopted" forest at Basswood Pond State Forest, hike through Hick and Arnold State Forests, and enjoy the local history at Robert V. Riddell State Park. While on these hikes, Danny will be sporting a Go-Pro camera to document his adventures via FaceBook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube so you can learn about the many adventures that you to can have right here in our very own Otsego County.

By donating to this campaign, you will help OCCA continue its important mission of promoting the appreciation and sustainable use of Otsego County's natural resources through education, advocacy, resource management, research, and planning. In our 50th year, we plan to expand our reach into the environmental education sector through the development of new in-classroom "field trips", a lecture series, and member only nature hikes. However, we cannot further develop these programs without your help. Even the smallest donation can help. Please consider donating and becoming a member today. Check out our webpage and our Crowdrise site today at https://www.crowdrise.com/

The Circuit Rider Planner Program Can be a Boon to YOUR Community

By Danny Lapin

One of the most important things to remember when approaching members of Town Boards, Planning Boards, and Zoning Boards of Appeals is that these members are just like you. They have families, full-time jobs, and enjoy what our great county has to offer. More often than not, municipalities in Otsego County rely on volunteer boards to develop policies, strategies, and initiatives that shape the future of their Towns. Many planning challenges facing New York State municipalities are ongoing and can put a real strain on Town budgets.

Many Otsego County municipalities have expressed a need for more dedicated, in-depth support with land-use issues, sustainability initiatives, environmental reviews, and development challenges. To meet this need, OCCA's Circuit Rider Planner Program provides both continuous and project-specific land-use planning support for municipalities at minimal cost. In today’s uncertain budgeting climate, municipalities are more interested than ever in improving efficiency, and working toward specific planning goals. The CRP can help!

Over the past two years, OCCA's Circuit Rider Planner Program has been active in the realm of environmental and land-use planning. We have assisted the Town of Oneonta with the formation of their Watershed Protection law, aided a citizen task force in the Town of Worcester with land-use issues related to Caryls Lake, are helping the Town of Edmeston examine and strengthen its zoning ordinance, and are assuming a lead role in updating the 1999 Otsego County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan.

We are dedicated to continuing our long-standing practice of providing communities with planning support. As such, all municipalities in Otsego County are entitled assistance on occasional planning related questions and projects at no charge with other more extensive services provided for a nominal cost. It is the ultimate goal of the Circuit Rider Planner Program to ensure that planning initiatives improve the social, economic, and environmental welfare of our clients.
Upper Susquehanna Watershed Forum Comes to Oneonta

By Leslie Orzetti

Thanks to the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay and several coordinating entities, the Upper Susquehanna Watershed Forum will be held at SUNY Oneonta on November 3. This event is open to the public, and gives residents the ability to learn about what is going on in our watershed. Presenters include scientists and policy makers from local and regional governments, for profit and non-profit groups. The forum will discuss the state of the Upper Susquehanna, give examples of successful partnerships and projects in our area, and have lunch time roundtable discussions on hot topics in watershed management in our area. The one day event will culminate in a discussion on funding for resource conservation projects, advocacy, and a field trip to a local success project. Following the field trip, all are invited to a networking happy hour at the Depot Restaurant in Oneonta. The event is free and open to the public. You can pre-register at https://allianceforthebay.org/?s=forum+plus

OCCA Annual Member Dinner and Meeting
November 15, 2016
Templeton Hall, Cooperstown
Watch Your Mail!
**Butternut Creek Stream Assessment a Go**

**By Leslie Orzetti**

This spring, the Otsego County Soil and Water Conservation District received funding from the Upper Susquehanna Coalition and the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay to carry out a physical stream assessment of Butternut Creek. The project is being done in conjunction with the Butternut Valley Alliance and OCCA.

The purpose of the project is to identify areas along the stream where conservation projects could be done to help curb eroding banks. Eroding banks can not only impact landowners along the stream through property loss, but can also degrade water quality at the site and further downstream.

Butternut Creek was chosen as the first site for this type of project in Otsego County because of the presence of the Eastern hellbender salamander as well as being a Class C stream with spawning trout populations. This watershed is one of the few areas left in New York State with naturally occurring Easter hellbender salamanders, and this amphibian is listed as a species of special concern by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Because the stream is home to some ecologically sensitive species, it is important to conserve their habitat through the use of stream bank restoration projects where needed. This project will identify these areas, document them in a Watershed Management Plan, and allow for future funding efforts to help mitigate erosion along the banks.

The project is kicking off with a series of public information meetings at the New Lisbon and Morris Town Halls as well as training sessions for stream team leaders. Volunteers are needed for the project, and you do not need to be trained, only willing to get a little dirty in the stream and have some fun learning about one of Otsego County’s beautiful streams. For questions about the project, please contact Jordan Clements at the Otsego County Soil and Water Conservation District clementsj@otsegosoilandwater.com.

**Dominion (continued from pg. 2)**

While these statements yielded rounds of applause from supporters, they failed to resonate with citizens at the meeting.

Supporters expressed relief and gratitude when speaking of the potential job opportunities awaiting them should the project be approved. One supporter said, with the Section 401 Water Quality Certificate for the Constitution Pipeline Project being denied earlier this year, his family has struggled financially. Others expressed anger and frustration toward environmentalists who, in their mind, sought to delay crucial natural gas projects.

Tensions nearly came to a head when a former union member reprimanded the supporters for advocating for such a divisive project. During a brief intermission, Environmental Conservation Officers had to interject themselves when supporters accosted the speaker. After the hearing reconvened, the mood seemed to take a more empathetic tone.

A local librarian spoke of her interactions with various members of the community who would be affected by the proposed project. Air quality, she said, affects everyone. She urged those in attendance to think of the long-term impacts of the proposed project. Local union members expressed a desire to protect air and water quality stating that they would act to prevent environmental impacts from occurring. Supporters and opponents alike proceeded to call for collaboration in addressing the project’s potential air quality impacts. One speaker called for the DEC to consider the economic costs and benefits associated with the project.

As the meeting adjourned and people filed out of the auditorium, I began to reflect on what I witnessed. First, it is not easy by any stretch of the imagination to wade through air quality permitting information. Those who are capable of self educating, on both sides, are truly valuable. Second, people who are capable of standing up in front of a hostile crowd to deliver an oral statement are incredibly brave. Lastly, people on both sides of the natural gas conflict are tired. Rather than fighting, perhaps it’s time to come together to chart a clear path forward for the future of our nation’s energy mix.

**Conservation Factoid of the Month**

September, 2016 marked the month where global CO₂ levels permanently passed 400 ppm.
OCCA In The News
Visit www.occainfo.org to catch up on or revisit announcements, news items and reference materials from OCCA.

OCCA seeks help fighting invasive plant
OCCA, in conjunction with the Goodyear Lake Association and Headwaters Youth Conservation Corps works to eradicate water chestnut from area waterways.

Group asking hunters to switch ammunition to protect eagles
Program Director O’Handley is interviewed along with Tom Salo of DOAS regarding lead the use of lead ammunition.
http://wamc.org/post/group-asking-hunters-switch-ammunition-protect-eagles

OCCA gets funds for boat wash
OCCA received grants from the Environmental Protection Fund to help combat the spread of invasive species in Otsego and Canadarao Lakes.

OCCA assumes lead role in ag plan revision
OCCA signed a MOU with Otsego County Soil and Water Conservation District to take the lead in updating the County’s Ag and Farmland Protection Plan.

---

Solar Developers Reach Out to Upstate New York with Land Lease

By Danny Lapin

In response to the extension of the federal Solar Investment Tax Credit and Governor Cuomo’s progressive solar policies, landowners across upstate New York are being contacted by solar energy developers seeking lease options on parcels of farmland spanning 20 acres or more. In Otsego County, several landowners have been contacted by Cypress Creek Renewables—a Santa Monica, California-based firm. There are reports of landowners being offered $1,500-$2,000 per acre, with leases lasting 20 years or more. While this may seem like a windfall, there are numerous reasons to be cautious.

Entering into a lease agreement is a significant decision for any landowner. As a first step, landowners should always seek legal and tax counsel. At the same time, landowners should take the time to understand the terms of the proposed agreement, how it will affect their property, how long it will take for a project to be built, and develop a list of questions to ask developers. For example, it will be important to determine who pays for taxes and other expenses (e.g., landowner insurance premiums, property taxes, and conversion fees if you are in an agricultural district). Another important question to ask is how rent is calculated. Understanding this calculation will help you, as the landowner, know how much you stand to make off a windfall, there are numerous reasons to be cautious.

Entering into a lease agreement is a significant decision for any landowner. As a first step, landowners should always seek legal and tax counsel. At the same time, landowners should take the time to understand the terms of the proposed agreement, how it will affect their property, how long it will take for a project to be built, and develop a list of questions to ask developers. For example, it will be important to determine who pays for taxes and other expenses (e.g., landowner insurance premiums, property taxes, and conversion fees if you are in an agricultural district). Another important question to ask is how rent is calculated. Understanding this calculation will help you, as the landowner, know how much you stand to make off a lease agreement. The Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA) recently released a guide on how to approach land leases for solar energy systems. It can be found at: http://www.seia.org/sites/default/files/resources/SEIA%20Guide%20to%20Solar%20Leases%20for%20Solar_July%202027%202016.pdf

While solar energy systems may be beneficial on certain types of land, such as a closed landfill or fallow farmland, it may not be the best land-use on parcels like prime farmland, ecologically sensitive meadows and heavily forested areas. Further, not every parcel is suitable for solar energy development. Typically, developers look for rolling, south-facing parcels with access to three-phase transmission lines and infrastructure for access roads. As such, verifying your land’s suitability for a solar array should be a top priority, should you be interested in pursuing a land lease.

Many communities have been caught off guard by the rapid deployment of solar energy systems across the state. In Otsego County like the Towns of Springfield and Edmeston are currently evaluating how to plan for solar energy. As a landowner, it will be important to monitor local land-use decisions as zoning decisions regarding solar energy may significantly affect the prospects of having solar on your property. Some towns may also place moratoriums on solar energy development in order to have some time to think about how they want to regulate it.

The rapid deployment of solar in New York State is fueled by two (continued on pg.7) state-level policies: the Clean Energy

---

Photo Credit: CCE Schoharie County
OCCA Supports Education Campaign on Dangers of Lead Ammunition to Eagles, Humans

By Jeff O’Handley

Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society has teamed with the American Eagle Foundation to create a video on the dangers lead bullets pose to eagles in New York and elsewhere. The 13-minute video, "Lead Ammunition: A Needless Danger to Eagles and Ourselves" features interviews with hunters and their families, as well as wildlife biologists and rehabilitators. It encourages hunters to switch to non-toxic ammunition.

Lead bullets typically break apart when striking a target, scattering fragments as far as 18 inches from the bullet’s path. Eagles that scavenge on gut piles—the entrails left behind by hunters—or on unrecovered carcasses may ingest these fragments.

A highly toxic metal, small quantities of lead can cause damage to the central nervous system. Symptoms of lead poisoning in eagles include tremors, convulsions, and organ failure, leaving the birds unable to fly or feed. Lead-poisoned eagles frequently die from starvation or predation. Two bald eagles—one dead and one severely debilitated—were found this past winter on a Delaware County farm. One eagle survived after receiving emergency veterinary care and rehabilitation. Most lead-poisoned eagles, however, are never found. Bald eagles aren't the only species to suffer. Recent studies showed over 60 percent of eastern golden eagles tested had lead levels twice as high as the acceptable threshold for children. In addition, the smallest fragments of lead often go undetected in processed venison, placing humans—particularly children and pregnant women—at risk.

The video shows the effectiveness of alternative types of ammunition, such as solid copper bullets. These bullets do not break apart on impact and pose no danger to eagles or humans. Field testing has shown these bullets are as effective and accurate as traditional lead bullets, and are highly-rated by hunters.

The video, created by La Paloma Films of Oneonta, is part of a larger public education campaign by DOAS which aims to reduce lead poisoning of bald eagles. The campaign includes a full-color educational display, brochures and more. DOAS volunteers will be traveling throughout the region with the display and video to promote alternatives to lead ammunition at fairs, gun shows, and sportsmen's expositions. In addition, the student chapter of The Wildlife Society at SUNY Cobleskill will be sponsoring a screening of the film along with a panel discussion on the issue, featuring hunters, wildlife biologists, and others (October 20 at 7 p.m. in room 101 of the Center for Agriculture and Natural Resources).

To view the video, visit Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society’s website: http://doas.us/lead-ammunition-a-needless-danger-to-eagles-and-ourselves-video/. The video and public education campaign is funded in part by a grant from the American Eagle Foundation Eagle Grants Program. AEF is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to care for and protect the bald eagle and other birds of prey.

OCCA is providing administrative support and services through an agreement with DOAS, and has written press releases, created print advertisements, and arranged for radio interviews.

Solar (Continued from pg. 6)

Standard (CES) and the NY-Sun program. The CES established a mandate for 50% of our state's electricity consumption to come from renewable energy sources by 2030. The NY-Sun program, part of Governor Cuomo’s Reforming the Energy Vision (REV) initiative, seeks to add more than three giga-watts of installed solar capacity in the State by 2023. According to the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), that is enough energy to power roughly 400,000 homes.

For some landowners, solar energy systems can have a real upside. Profit margins are razor thin for many farmers in Otsego County, and the prospect of a land-lease for solar energy may be too hard to pass up. Solar energy systems also have the potential to reduce costs for energy-intensive operations like dairies and, with the incorporation of best management practices, land used for solar can be restored for planting as well.

Given New York’s commitment to renewable energy generation and the looming threat of global climate change, there needs to be a conversation at the state and local level about how to approach entering into land leases for solar energy and how solar energy should into our local planning landscape.

The Otsego County Planning Department is holding a workshop on October 20 for municipal officials on Land Use Planning and Zoning for Solar. Contact Tammie Harris at 547-4225 for details.
Ag Plastic Recycling Hits New High

By Jeff O’Handley

In early 2016, two tractor trailers loaded with baled agricultural plastic rolled out of the Southern Transfer Station in Oneonta. The trailers, bound for a recycling plant in Brooklyn, carried 89 bales of plastic with a combined weight of more than 30 tons. That is 30 tons of plastic that will not end up in landfills, buried on farms, or burned in backyard barrel or pile.

The plastic was collected during 2015 through the Recycling Agricultural Plastics Program (RAPP). A program of Cornell University, RAPP is funded in part by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. Since early 2013, OCCA has served as the local outreach coordinator for RAPP, working with the Otsego County Soil and Water Conservation District to educate farmers on the importance of recycling their plastic and training them in the proper way to handle and store their plastic so it can be accepted by recyclers. The plastic is recycled into a variety of products, including plastic lumber, construction materials, and bags.

Cornell estimates New York farmers use more than ten million pounds of film plastic per year, with about 10% being recycled per year. Otsego County has sent more than 200 bales to recyclers since the project began here. The number of bales produced here has more than tripled in the last three years, augmented by increased recruitment, the inclusion of wood pellet bags, and a partnership with the Otsego County Department of Planning and Solid Waste, and Casella Resource Solutions to establish ag plastic drop-off days each spring and fall. Last May, farmers brought enough plastic to generate eight bales to the two collection days offered.

This fall, OCCA, County Solid Waste, Casella, and Otsego Soil and Water are holding two drop-off dates for ag plastic. The first is on Saturday, November 5 at the Southern Transfer Station in Oneonta, from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. The second day is Thursday, November 12, from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the Northern Transfer Station in Cooperstown. Acceptable materials include bale wrap, bunker cover, silage bags, greenhouse cover and wood pellet bags. The program is free, but pre-registration is required. Contact Program Director Jeff O’Handley at OCCA for instructions by calling (607) 282-4087.

Did You Know?

- 200 bales of plastic recycled
- 67 TONS of plastic recycled
- Recycled plastic used for: plastic lumber, construction materials, and bags
OCCA Receives Funding for Boat Wash, Lake Stewards

By Jeff O’Handley

This spring, OCCA, acting on behalf of multiple municipal and not-for-profit organizations in the area, received funding through the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation’s (DEC) Aquatic Invasive Species Spread Prevention (AIS) Program. The three-year grant provides just over $130,000 to AIS spread prevention measures on Otsego and Canadarago Lakes by installing a permanent boat decontamination station in Cooperstown’s Lakefront Park, purchasing a portable boat decontamination station for Canadarago Lake, and expanding the number of hours boat launch attendants are on site to inspect boats and educate boaters.

In announcing the grant, Governor Andrew Cuomo said, “This money will help safeguard lakes and rivers in every corner of this state, protect local ecosystems, and ensure that visitors can experience New York’s natural beauty and wonders for years to come.”

The State committed more than $2 million dollars from the Environmental Protection Fund. Twenty-four projects were funded.

Program Director Jeff O’Handley, who helped write the grant with former Executive Director Darla Youngs said, “OCCA has a long history in the fight against invasive species. These projects fit very well with DEC’s stated goals for the AIS Spread Prevention Program.”

DEC announced the grant program in late 2015. OCCA convened a committee that included the Canadarago Lake Improvement Association, the Otsego Lake Association, the Town of Springfield, the Village of Cooperstown, SUNY Biological Field Station, and the Catskill Regional Invasive Species Partnership. Due to the grant requirements, OCCA had to submit separate proposals for each lake.

New DEC regulations require users to take “reasonable precautions of cleaning, draining, and treating” watercraft and floating docks before launching into public waterbodies. Using hot, high pressure water is one of the most effective methods of removing invasive species and preventing their spread. Early this summer, workers installed a concrete apron and drainage system that is connected directly to Cooperstown’s wastewater treatment facility next to the public restrooms on Fish Road in Cooperstown. A high temperature pressure washer is used to wash boats, with the wastewater draining to the treatment plant. Construction issues delayed the opening of the decontamination station until September.

The Canadarago Lake boat wash is scheduled to become operational in 2017. This system is comprised of a high temperature pressure washer, a rubber containment mat, and a pump and filter used to treat and recirculate the water. It is portable and can be moved to different locations as needed.

In addition to the boat wash stations, the grant also provides funds to expand coverage by boat launch attendants on both lakes. The Town of Springfield, Village of Cooperstown, and Canadarago Lake Improvement Association have been employing the attendants for several years. The attendants have inspected thousands of boats since the program began, successfully preventing the spread of invasive species in and out of our lakes.

“Boat attendants are the primary point of contact with lake users,” said O’Handley. “Not only are they the first line of defense against AIS, they play a valuable role as educators.”

This project has been funded in part by a grant from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Invasive Species Spread Prevention Grants Program through appropriations from the New York State Environmental Protection Fund (EFP).
2016 was a busy year for OCCA. Among our favorite activities were the many hikes that we have taken, our invasive species pulls, trail maintenance, Earth Festival, our annual garage sale, and household hazardous waste day. All these events would not be possible without our wonderful volunteers and the generous donations from members like you.

Left and below: Steve Kent shares the history of Riddell State Park in February; An unexpected snowstorm in April couldn’t hold hardy hikers back from hiking in Hick State Forest.

Left: Volunteer Addy Harmon is all smiles as she helps with paint recycling at Household Hazardous Waste Day.

Right: Fabulous volunteers and board members help out at the 2016 garage sale.

Above: SUNY Oneonta students help out with trail maintenance at Basswood Pond State Forest.

Above and right: Volunteers help contain the spread of invasive species.

Above: OCCA board members show their pride in OCCA by volunteering at the annual Earth Festival.
Recycling Update

By Martha Clarvoe, Jeff O’Handley

Recycling is a moving target. New technologies arise that change not only what can be recycled, but how we send them to the recycler. It wasn’t all that long ago that we had to separate our cardboard from our paper, our plastic from our glass, and our glass by color. Newspapers in a bundle to the left, cardboard to the right, metal in the middle. It was complicated business. Thanks to advances in technology, we can put all of our recyclables in one bin and have them sorted out by machine, while new companies find creative ways to expand recycling even further.

In our ongoing effort to reduce waste, OCCA has been involved for years with two businesses that collect unusual or difficult to recycle items: Planet Green Recycle, and TerraCycle.

Planet Green Recycle collects and remanufactures inkjet cartridges, toner cartridges, and small electronics, such as cell phones, GPS units, and cameras. Remanufactured goods are sold to consumers. A portion of the proceeds from sales are designated to non-profits, schools and other charitable organizations. Since forming in 2000, Planet Green estimates they have kept millions of pounds of e-waste out of landfills, and have helped raise money for hundreds of charities across the country, including OCCA.

TerraCycle is a New Jersey company that partners with brands, manufacturers and retailers around the world to creatively recycle a whole host of materials that would normally end up in the landfill. TerraCycle has turned juice boxes into backpacks, chip bags into shower curtains, toothbrushes into park benches. Like Planet Green, they provide a rewards program to participating organizations.

OCCA is currently collecting the following items for TerraCycle:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cereal bags</th>
<th>Writing implements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cereal bags and white / clear cereal bag liners - must stretch not tear</td>
<td>Pens, magic markers and mechanical pencils</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dental care items—used, non-electric toothbrushes, toothbrush packaging, empty toothpaste tubes and caps, dental floss containers. Please empty toothpaste tubes as completely as possible and clean excess toothpaste off the outside of the container.

Writing implements—pens, magic markers and mechanical pencils. No wooden pencils of any kind, or crayons, cray-pas, etc.

Wine corks—natural cork only!

TerraCycle items can be dropped off in the container located to the left of the entrance to the Cooperstown Farmers’ Market, 101 Main Street, Cooperstown. In addition, you can also place Planet Green items in this bin. OCCA currently accepts used inkjet cartridges, cell phones, and small, hand-held electronic devices such as tablets, pagers, and GPS units. Inkjet cartridges should be placed in a separate plastic bag before being placed in the container. Please note we are not accepting toner cartridges of any kind! Most manufacturers have a mail back program.

Planet Green e-waste collection boxes are also located in Community Bank, 62 Main Street, Cooperstown; Community Bank, 5378 State Route 80, Cooperstown; KeyBank, 103 Main Street, Cooperstown; Cooperstown Country Abstract, 196 Main Street, Cooperstown; and Otsego County Chamber of Commerce, 189 Main Street, Suite 201, Oneonta.

The items listed above are the only ones that should be placed in the TerraCycle and Planet Green bins. In the past, OCCA accepted cheese wrappers, snack chip bags, candy wrappers, and diaper packaging; due to changes in the TerraCycle program, these items are no longer accepted by OCCA.

OCCA Accepts ONLY These Items!

Plastic bags and other films are not to be placed in this container. Reuse or return plastic bags to your grocery store.

Note: None of these TerraCycle items are brand specific. www.TerraCycle.com
By Jeff O'Handley

In 2006, OCCA and the Goodyear Lake Association, responding to a population of water chestnut (Trapa natans) that covered multiple acres of the lake’s northernmost region, organized hand-pulling events to eliminate the plant. In those first few years, volunteers removed water chestnuts by the ton, and clearing the lake seemed like little more than a dream.

How times have changed! This summer, 115 pounds of water chestnuts were removed from the lake, an all-time low. Just as a low golf score is good, so is this. It’s a sign that the program is actually working.

This year, hand-pulling began on June 29. In response to the shrinking water chestnut population, five collecting days were organized this summer, down from eight two years ago. Each session lasted between three and six hours, for a total of 22.5 hours spent on the water. Nineteen unique volunteers, ranging in age from eight to 62, participated, along with a number of uncounted people who pulled water chestnuts independently. At the end of each day, all water chestnuts were composted at Mohican Farm in Springfield.

Unlike the early days of water chestnut pulling, the plants are now much harder to find. Aside from one concentration of plants on the southeastern side of the Stump Lot, and a second, smaller population in the cove behind Wightman’s Specialty Woods, water chestnuts are widely scattered, requiring a great deal of paddling and a careful eye to find the plants. No plants at all were found in the lake proper or upstream.

This is good news, of course, but it doesn’t mean we can leave the lake alone. For one thing, there are always plants that are missed, thus there’s a strong chance that some fresh seeds were dropped this year. Second, water chestnut seeds can remain viable in sediment for up to twelve years. Even if we successfully pulled every single plant that had the nerve to sprout this year, it’s likely that there will be new growth for a number of years. Leaving the lake alone now would likely see a rapid return to 2006 levels of infestation, maybe worse. Look for OCCA and the Goodyear Lake Association to be back on the water next year, and please consider joining us.

OCCA is grateful for the assistance of Kaylie Allen, Ed Bugel, Duncan Campbell, Olivia Clark, Hannah Foster, Ethan French, Jack Gollihofer, Marjorie Grap, Larry Hackett, Barbara Heine, Leslie Orzetti, Sharon and Tom Pickard, Tim Pokorny, Mandy Robinson, Vince Stayter, and Jennifer, R.P. and Wyndham Withington. Thanks also to the Goodyear Lake Association, SUNY Oneonta Biological Field Station, and Canoe & Kayak Rentals and Sales of Portlandville.
The Lookout

By Roseanna Peloso

With fall comes many long-awaited pleasures: falling leaves, crisp sweater weather, apple cider, and pumpkin pie. Even more highly anticipated by many upstate New Yorkers is hunting season, which is something that many active hunters look forward to all year long. If you are a resident of New York State who is interested in hunting waterfowl and/or other migratory game birds, like woodcock, ducks, geese, brant, rails, snipe, coots, gallinules, or sea ducks, do not forget to register with the Migratory Bird Harvest Information Program (HIP). If you have not registered yet and your hunting season has already begun, don’t worry. You can register online right now and still be able to go hunting today!

HIP is a federal program created by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) that became nationally used in 1991. It is a legal requirement for any person who wishes to hunt migratory game birds. After registering for HIP, hunters must carry proof of their participation on them at all times when out in the field. Not carrying proof of registration is equal to hunting without a license, which is a violation of state and federal law.

When registering for HIP, hunters provide information on the species of birds they have previously hunted. Using this registry, the USFWS selects participants for harvest surveys. These decisions are based on whether that bird species is of interest or accessible to you. HIP is beneficial to both migratory game birds and hunters. The USFWS uses HIP to monitor the harvest of migratory game birds, which aids in the protection of their populations by ensuring that they are not overhunted. This monitoring program helps maintain healthy breeding populations of birds, and is an extremely valuable tool for establishing hunting regulations.

It is important to note that even though registering for HIP is free, you must purchase an Annual Hunting License beforehand. In fact, you must have an active Annual Hunting License before you can register for HIP. If you are interested in purchasing a hunting license or you would like more information on the topic, you can visit: http://www.dec.ny.gov/permits/6094.html.

To register for HIP, you can visit www.ny-hip.com. The dates for registration are July 1st through June 30th every year. Registration is good for one year, so do not forget to re-register annually. Anyone age 12 and older can participate. Remember, beginning dates of hunting seasons are not always set in stone so make sure you check to see when the particular season you’re interested in begins every year. If you are interested in becoming a hunter or would like to learn more about hunting seasons and/or regulations, the 2016-2017 Waterfowl Hunting Seasons and Regulations Guide is available to download and print online at: http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/28175.html.

The Harvest Information Program and Its Importance to You

Do you love the hikes that OCCA is able to do?

Do you appreciate the assistance that we are able to give our local policy makers?

Do you love our dedication to eradicating invasive species?

Do you like our recycling programs?

If the answer is yes to any of these questions, then we need your help!

Please consider visiting our Crowdrise Campaign, “Go Wild With OCCA” to donate now!

Come on an adventure as we explore the trails of Otsego County so you can see for yourself how beautiful our county is.

This campaign will help fund our valuable educational, research, and policy programs that can help preserve this beauty for generations to come.

Go to: https://www.crowdrise.com/go-take-a-hike
In order to help us reduce costs and conserve resources, we are trying to move towards an electronic newsletter. If you would like to receive future issues electronically please send us your email address.