

# FLOWPA FUNDAMENTALS

FINGER LAKES - LAKE ONTARIO WATERSHED PROTECTION ALLIANCE  
FROM STREAMS, TO LAKES, TO GREAT LAKES  
PROTECTING OUR WATER RESOURCES BEGINNING AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

## In This Issue:

This edition of the newsletter highlights successful Water Quality Monitoring Programs and Education and Outreach Efforts implemented throughout the Finger Lakes – Lake Ontario Drainage Basin.

FALL 2021



## MISSION

The mission of the Finger Lakes Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance is to facilitate processes that encourage watershed partnerships and implementation of action plans to protect and enhance water quality based on:

- Local needs assessment
- Holistic approach
- Information exchange and public education
- Measurable goals and milestones

## ABOUT FLOWPA

FLOWPA is a unique, time-tested program comprised of 25 counties located within the Finger Lakes – Lake Ontario drainage basin. FLOWPA members understand the challenges facing New York State due to the COVID pandemic and are aware of the critical role we have in the protection and promotion of New York's State's freshwater resources. Our organization continues to provide funding for locally supported water quality programs that help farmers, businesses, the tourism industry, and local governments. FLOWPA partners develop and implement programs to address specific water quality needs that are consistent with State priorities and watershed plans. Now, more than ever, we need to ensure that all New Yorkers have clean water to drink and safe outdoor spaces to engage in a variety of passive and active recreation.

FLOWPA has been a line-item in the EPF since SFY 1997-98 and has leveraged over \$29 million dollars in matching local, State and Federal funds since 2000. Our membership has made great strides in the protection of New York State's water resources by integrating innovative approaches to reduce nonpoint source pollution at the grassroots level. Many of these initiatives include:

- Implementing stormwater management initiatives;
- Improving agricultural practices;
- Controlling and preventing the spread of invasive species;

- Empowering stakeholders to be better stewards of the land;
- Understanding the causes of harmful algal blooms (HABs);
- Minimizing the water quality impacts of localized flooding; and
- Partnering with local, State and Federal agencies to make the most efficient and effective use of all environmental funds available.

This issue of the FLOWPA Fundamentals will focus on water quality monitoring programs and public education and outreach initiatives that have been implemented throughout the FLOWPA service area to protect New York's freshwater resources and engage the public in environmental stewardship.

## WATER QUALITY MONITORING

Over the past 25 years, FLOWPA funds have been used to assess more than 200 lakes and streams at more than 2,000 sampling locations annually. As a result, over 40,000 water samples have been analyzed to:

- track down sources of pollution;
- prioritize and evaluate management actions;
- document trends;
- guide local decision makers;
- update DEC's Waterbody Inventory; and
- educate people about how their actions impact water quality.

FLOWPA partners often team up with representatives from local lake associations to develop and implement comprehensive sampling programs to measure phosphorus, nitrates, turbidity, temperature, and chlorophyll levels throughout the spring, summer and fall. The water quality data is analyzed for short- and long- term trends that can aid in watershed planning and management, in addition to guiding the selection and implementation of best management practices to improve the health of the waterbody and watershed. Here are a few FLOWPA supported water quality monitoring programs that have taken place throughout the Finger Lakes – Lake Ontario drainage basin.

### CAYUGA COUNTY



The Owasco Inlet is a major tributary to Owasco Lake and has been monitored by Cayuga County for over 20 years. The Inlet's gage station provides the County with near real-time accurate flow data which is used to determine sediment and nutrient loading rates, provide flood warnings, and assist with regulating Owasco Lake levels. Information from the gage station was critical to the Owasco Flats Wetland Restoration and Riparian Buffer Project and is being used in the Owasco Lake Watershed Management Plan Implementation of the EPA Nine Element Project. Over \$20,000 in FLOWPA funds were used to upgrade the Owasco Inlet monitoring station to USGS standards in 2009. Since then, FLOWPA funding has been used, on an annual basis, for the maintenance and operation of the stream gage station.

*USGS Gage Station on the Owasco Inlet.  
Photo credit: M. Wunderlich*

## HAMILTON COUNTY

Over \$10,000 in FLOWPA funding is annually used to support a very robust volunteer water quality monitoring program to collect chemical and physical data on 21 high priority waterbodies for the effective analysis of long-term trends. The data is used to document the current condition of each lake, determine water quality trends, and help county agencies and partners to manage the lakes more efficiently to alleviate issues of concern. Since 1993, the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District has worked with lake associations and local partners such as the Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program, Fulton Chain of Lake Association, Fourth Lake, Sixth Lake/Seventh Lake, and Long Lake Fourth Lake Association to implement this invaluable program.

*Water quality monitoring program.  
Photo credit: Hamilton County SWCD*

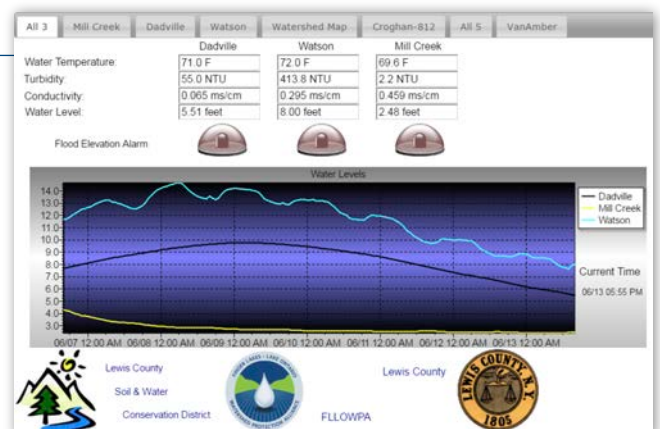


## JEFFERSON COUNTY

The Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation District, in conjunction with the Jefferson County Water Quality Coordinating Committee, has used FLOWPA funding to offset the costs of private drinking water well testing for the past 20 years. County residents can submit samples from their drinking water wells to be analyzed for total coliform bacteria, e. coli bacteria, chloride, hardness, pH, nitrate, and turbidity. Test results and recommendations are provided to each program participant. Each well test location is geo-referenced and sample results are maintained in a database to identify potential areas of concern due to groundwater contamination. The program has helped many people become more aware of their drinking water quality. FLOWPA has contributed over \$100,000 towards this important program for Jefferson County residents.

## LEWIS COUNTY

The Lewis County Soil and Water Conservation District has teamed up with several entities including FLOWPA to implement an early flood detection system that also monitors water quality parameters in the Black River Watershed. There are two gages on the Black River, two on the Beaver River, and one on the Deer River. Water temperature, turbidity, conductivity, and water level are all measured and recorded. This data is very helpful during times of high precipitation, snowmelt and runoff. Stream gage information is available to the public and is also sent to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to be utilized in predicting floods. FLOWPA has contributed over \$75,000 towards this program in the past 10 years, in addition to contributions totaling \$47,000 from Lewis County, Beaver River Advisory Council and New York State.



*Black River Flood Detection Center Website.  
Photo credit: Lewis County SWCD*



# EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

FLOWPA members have used their allocation from the New York State Environmental Protection Fund to provide public education and outreach programs over the past two decades. Member counties have provided technical assistance on a variety of water quality related projects from agricultural best management practices to stormwater management to invasive species prevention and eradication. FLOWPA funds have also been used to create and distribute newsletters, brochures, pamphlets and other literature to educate decision makers and watershed residents. FLOWPA members have also used their funding towards the annual Envirothon competition, which stimulates student's interests in environmental concerns.

In the last 20 years, FLOWPA funds have been utilized for the following:

- Reached/Educated 1,377,984 individuals through mass media
- Reached/Educated 66,489 individuals through direct mail
- Reached/Educated 55,200 individuals through signage
- Reached /Educated 36,186 individuals through DVDs
- Reached/Educated 14,918 individuals through youth presentations
- Reached/ Educated 13,250 individuals through adult presentations
- Reached/Educated 11,270 individuals through presentations to targeted audiences
- Reached/Educated 87,972 individuals through other means



## CAYUGA COUNTY

FLOWPA funding allowed for the construction and installation of a new, educational kiosk at Emerson Park on Owasco Lake. The kiosk was built by the Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District and is located next to the invasive species disposal station between the boat launches adjacent to the Owasco Outlet. The kiosk currently features invasive species identification and prevention information, but the panels can be easily changed out to display other water quality related topics.



*Photos of the old (left) and new kiosk (right) at Emerson Park, Cayuga County.  
Photo credit: M. Wunderlich*

## CHEMUNG COUNTY

The Chemung County SWCD, along with the Chemung County Stormwater Coalition and grant funding through FLOWPA, purchased a 16-foot trailer to create a mobile stormwater education station. The trailer travels to County community events, municipalities, and local schools to educate the community about stormwater using interactive models and games.

To further educating the public about water quality issues, the Chemung County SWCD built a log cabin educational center with the assistance of FLOWPA funds. The project, started in 2002, included the help of sponsoring agencies, county departments, local volunteers and local politicians in order to complete the center, which is used for educational and training events. Since then, FLOWPA funds have contributed to the installation of a rain garden alongside the log cabin to serve as a demonstration site for implementing this water quality technique.

Lastly, Chemung County SWCD utilized FLOWPA funding and contributions from other partners to update the “Best Management Practices During Timber Harvesting Operations Forestry Booklet”, originally created in 1997. This document is helpful to foresters and loggers, as it provides important information on management techniques to reduce erosion, sedimentation, and water quality concerns.



*Photo credit: Chemung County SWCD*



*Photo credit: Kristy LaManche*

## GENESEE COUNTY



*Photo credit: Genesee County SWCD*

The Genesee County Soil and Water Conservation District has consistently used FLOWPA funds to promote watershed and water quality education and outreach to the public. To increase awareness and use of Oatka Creek, the District partnered with the Village and Town of LeRoy, Town of Batavia, and the Town of Stafford to install two canoe and kayak launches. The new launches give canoe and kayak-users unprecedented access to this “Blue Ribbon” trout stream. Oatka Creek spans over 60 miles and provides drinking water, fishing, light boating and recreational opportunities for the numerous towns and villages through which the creek runs.

## HAMILTON COUNTY

With the contribution of FLOWPA funds, Hamilton County has held an annual Adirondack Waterfest for over 20 years. Since the first Adirondack Waterfest, held in Speculator on July 19, 1996 the event has been hosted at different locations across the Adirondack Park to bring attention to the importance of water quality and highlights invasive species threats to the area. Many exhibitors and sponsors provide interesting and valuable exhibits that educate visitors of all ages. Throughout its tenure, Adirondack Waterfest disseminated a large quantity of educational information to thousands of locals, in addition to the seasonal residents that reside in the Hudson and Champlain Valleys.



In addition to Waterfest, the Hamilton County SWCD utilizes their FLOWPA funding to support an extensive public education and outreach program targeted at school aged children and adults. The

District provides information on watershed dynamics, lake ecosystems, stormwater, invasive species, and non-point source pollution, highlighting the data they've collected from their extensive efforts to monitor the water

quality of 21 high priority waterbodies within Hamilton County.

## ONEIDA COUNTY



*Photo credit: Oneida County SWCD*

FLOWPA funds have been used to implement a diverse public education and outreach program by the Oneida County Soil and Water Conservation District to teach students and elected officials about environmental conservation and water resource protection, in addition to training contractors about protecting the County's freshwater resources at job sites to minimize sedimentation, erosion and pollutant loading. FLOWPA funds have also afforded the District the opportunity to use GIS, LiDar and GPS technology to improve their ability to analyze and share resource information and data.

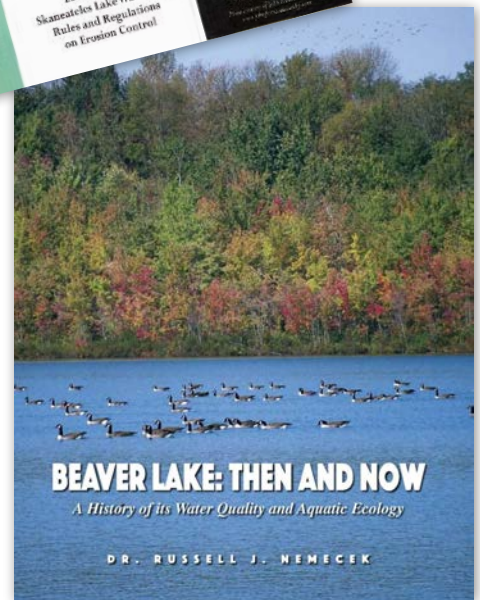


## ONONDAGA COUNTY

Onondaga County's FLOWPA-funded public education and outreach program has focused on a variety of water quality related topics over the past 25 years. Numerous pamphlets and brochures have been created and distributed to residents in the Skaneateles Lake Watershed to help protect Skaneateles Lake, the primary drinking water source for thousands of residents in Onondaga County, from sedimentation and pollution. Skaneateles Lake is one of the few large, surface water supplies in the country that is approved as an unfiltered water supply.

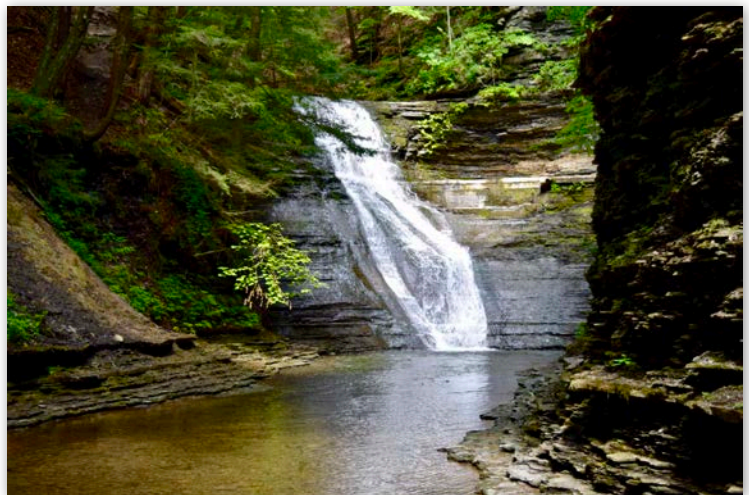
More recently, FLOWPA funding was used to support the creation and development of a comprehensive book about Beaver Lake. Prior years' water quality testing data was used to describe the past and present conditions of this popular environmental education and outdoor recreation asset in Onondaga County. This publication was written by Dr. Russell Nemecek, Onondaga County's long-time FLOWPA representative. Dr. Nemecek's contributions to FLOWPA are greatly appreciated and we wish him well upon retirement!

*Photo credit: Onondaga County Department of Health*



## ONTARIO COUNTY

FLOWPA funds were utilized by Ontario County to fortify a water quality and public access project in Ontario County. Grimes Glen, a popular gorge in Naples, NY was purchased in 2005 by Ontario County in partnership with the Finger Lakes Land Trust, from a private landowner in order to keep the park open to the public for usage. The property had to undergo environmental remediation due to past illegal waste dumping. The remediation plan was implemented by \$463,550 in County funds, \$102,245 in FLOWPA funds and \$80,000 in federal funds for park improvements. Presently, Grimes Glen is an economic driver for the town and is listed on many websites including [visitfingerlakes.com](http://visitfingerlakes.com). FLOWPA provided critical funding to make this project possible.



# FUNDAMENTALS

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Finger Lakes - Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance  
Water Resources Board  
Kristy LaManche, Program Coordinator  
3105 NYS Route 3, Fulton, NY 13069  
315-592-9663 | klama3481@gmail.com  
[www.fllowpa.org](http://www.fllowpa.org) | [www.facebook.com/fllowpa](https://www.facebook.com/fllowpa)



FLLOWPA membership includes the following  
New York State counties wholly or partially in the Lake Ontario Drainage basin:

Allegany, Cayuga, Chemung, Cortland, Genesee, Hamilton, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Livingston,  
Madison, Monroe, Niagara, Oneida, Onondaga, Ontario, Orleans, Oswego, Schuyler, Seneca,  
Steuben, Tompkins, Wayne, Wyoming, Yates

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Water Resources Board  
3105 NYS Route 3  
Fulton, NY 13069