

Class:

Name:

Date:

The Onondaga Lake Watershed from the Mid-1700s to the Present

In the left column of the chart below are major causes of environmental damage to Onondaga Lake. For each cause of environmental damage, list its specific environmental effects in the right column.

Major causes of environmental damage to the lake	Specific environmental effects
Salt production	<i>Forests cut down; salt marshes expanded</i>
Dredging of lake's outlet	<i>Water level lowered; swamps drained</i>
Development of lakeshore	<i>Lakeside habitats destroyed; plants and animals suffered</i>
Industrial pollution	<i>Salt marshes buried; fish harmed; decrease in lake's volume; lake water was made saltier and lost oxygen; toxic chemicals contaminated fish and lake sediments; organisms living on bottom of lake were poisoned</i>
Municipal sewage pollution	<i>Increased levels of nitrogen and phosphorous; caused too much algae to grow, turning the water cloudy; fish and other aquatic organisms harmed</i>



How Have People Interacted with Onondaga Lake Through History?

Directions: Use the chart to answer the questions below.

Historical Interactions with Onondaga Lake	Present Day Interactions with Onondaga Lake
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sacred and historic site ● Link to travel, trade, and communication routes ● Source of food (animals and plants were harvested) ● Source of ice and drinkable water ● Recreation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Swimming ○ Boating ○ Lakeshore attractions ○ Sport fishing ● Source of raw materials for industry and for sale at markets (Examples: salt, fish) ● Waste disposal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sacred and historic site ● Link to travel routes ● Recreation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Boating ○ Lakeshore attractions ○ Sport fishing ○ (Swimming in Onondaga Lake is not encouraged because of unhealthy levels of pollution.) ● Waste disposal ● Strict limits on the amount of local fish that people can eat because the fish have been contaminated with toxins

What are some differences between the ways that people interacted with Onondaga Lake in the past and the ways they interact with the lake today? *People no longer get their ice or drinking water from Onondaga Lake, swim in Onondaga Lake, rely on the lake for their food, use the lake for communication or trade, or use the lake's resources for industry or commerce.*

How do you think those changes have affected the people living in the lake's watershed? *Possible answers: People living near the lake have to bring in their food and water from someplace else. People who want to go swimming need artificial pools or must travel to other bodies of water. Far fewer people depend on the lake to make their living.*

