

**onondaga**  
**creek**  
CONCEPTUAL REVITALIZATION PLAN  
appendix a: workplan

Onondaga Lake Partnership  
Project Proposal  
**Onondaga Creek Subbasin Conceptual Revitalization Plan**  
**FFY 2003**

**1. Proponent's Information**

- a. Edward M. Michalenko, PhD.
- b. 100 S. Clinton Street, Suite 541  
P.O. Box 7136  
Syracuse, New York 13261-7136
- c. 315-472-2150
- d. emmolcc@dreamscape.com
- e. Onondaga Lake Cleanup Corp. (OLCC)

**2. Problem Statement.** Revitalization within the Onondaga Lake watershed is a priority of the Onondaga Lake Partnership (OLP). The OLP is sponsoring several on-going pollution mitigation projects concerning the Tully mudboils (USGS, 1998) and non-point source pollution (OCSWCD, 1999a, 1999b) in the Onondaga Creek sub-watershed. The impetus for these projects was to reduce pollutant loads to the lake, but they also serve to improve water quality in the creek. Integration of projects within the Onondaga Creek sub-watershed that have been conceived or designed for restoration purposes would provide added cultural and environmental benefits. The effort to enhance the ecological integrity of the Onondaga Lake watershed is also a concern of the Onondaga Nation. The cultural heritage of the Onondaga Nation is intrinsically linked to the ecological integrity of the Onondaga Lake watershed. The Onondaga Nation considers restoration of the Onondaga Creek sub-watershed a priority.

The City of Syracuse and Onondaga County have proposed an Onondaga Creek Walk in the city, conceived to be contiguous with the Onondaga County Parks and Recreation Department's planned loop-the-lake trail system, and potentially a key segment of the New York State grand vision of a continuous Erie Canal trail extending from Albany to Buffalo. In the city of Syracuse, the creek is currently largely channelized, providing very little wetland and floodplain habitat. Significantly improved water quality in the waterway would enhance aesthetic and recreational enjoyment of the proposed creek walk. Consistent with the OLP's priority, the Onondaga Creek trail project could be coupled with a timely program to improve conditions in and around Onondaga Creek. A creek restoration planning project is currently underway for an urban segment of Onondaga Creek (Endreny and Leopold, 2002); findings will be incorporated into this proposed conceptual plan.

A clear need exists in the Onondaga Creek watershed for integrated planning to attain and sustain economic, aesthetic, recreational, ecological, and regulatory goals and for coordinated efforts for targeted study and restoration of various aspects of the system. In April, 2003, CANOPY conducted a visioning forum of local community leaders at the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF) to lay the groundwork for developing an Onondaga Creek restoration plan. Recommendations from, and elements of, that forum were referenced in developing this proposal. A coordinated planning effort will lead to identification of common goals amongst diverse interests, and outline a process towards achieving those goals in revitalizing Onondaga Creek.

**3. Project Objectives.** A consortium of non-profit organizations, a local university, and the City of Syracuse propose to initiate a watershed restoration planning process for the Onondaga Creek watershed. This proposal addresses the following objectives:

- (1) establish an Onondaga Creek Restoration Advisory Committee (hereafter referred to as the Advisory Committee), chaired and coordinated by SUNY ESF;

- (2) compile a comprehensive inventory and directory of studies and other information pertinent to Onondaga Creek watershed restoration;
- (3) conduct educational programs to promote public and educator awareness and participation in the process;
- (4) solicit and compile issues and goals from a broad spectrum of participants, stakeholders and interested parties; and
- (5) develop a conceptual plan<sup>1</sup> for restoring Onondaga Creek based on community goals.

Work elements proposed below are designed to address these objectives. Proposed work elements will be overseen by the newly established Advisory Committee, and implemented by OLCC, City of Syracuse, SUNY ESF, Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) for Onondaga County, and Atlantic States Legal Foundation (ASLF).

**4. Scope.** The project proposed herein consists of five major components: A. Organize an Onondaga Creek Watershed Restoration Planning Advisory Committee; B. Conduct an information inventory; C. Conduct public awareness/education and educator training programs; D. Solicit and compile issues and goals; E. Develop a conceptual plan. The geographic scope of this project will be the Onondaga Creek drainage basin.

**5. Benefits to Watershed.** Integrated restoration planning for the Onondaga Creek watershed will serve the residents of the watershed by enhancing the cultural, economic, recreational, and ecological viability of the entire watershed.

## **6. Work Elements.**

**A. Organize an Onondaga Creek Watershed Restoration Planning Advisory Committee.** An Advisory Committee will be convened to develop recommendations to the OLP for Onondaga Creek restoration. The committee will be chaired and coordinated by Dr. Richard Smardon of SUNY ESF. The committee chair will be responsible for establishing the procedures in formulating the Advisory Committee. SUNY ESF will also establish Advisory Committee meeting agendas and schedules, coordinate times and locations of meetings, keep and distribute meeting minutes, and document and distribute operating protocols (bylaws and parliamentary procedures, if necessary). The OLCC will serve as a non-voting committee member and will facilitate the Advisory Committee by performing management and administrative tasks such as organizing meetings, facilitating routine communications, developing and distributing contact lists, tracking budgets, distributing materials and reports, procuring professional mediation services, etc.

---

<sup>1</sup> The plan would include recommended strategies for preservation, enhancement, or revitalization of various stream segments; identification of data gaps, prioritization of data needs, recommendations to fill datagaps; alternative conceptual restoration models, milestones for planning and implementation, and potential funding sources.

The Advisory Committee will be comprised of federal, state, and local governments, regulatory and natural resource agencies, academic and not-for-profit institutions, business and environmental organizations, and neighborhood groups. Representatives from organizations including (but not limited to) the following will be invited to participate in formulating the Advisory Committee: Onondaga Nation; Onondaga Lake Partnership; US Environmental Protection Agency; US Geological Survey (USGS); NYS Department of Environmental Conservation; Onondaga County; City of Syracuse; Towns of Tully, Lafayette, and Onondaga; school districts within the watershed; Onondaga County Soil and Water Conservation District (OCSWCD); Cornell Cooperative Extension of Onondaga County; Onondaga County Environmental Health Council; Canopy; Partnership for Onondaga Creek; Atlantic States Legal Foundation; Project Watershed; the Water Environment Federation, and business groups and other stakeholders. The Advisory Committee Chair will formulate a list of candidate members for OLP Projects Committee approval. The OLP Projects Committee will review the list of candidate committee members for conflicts-of-interest.

The diversity of organizations will serve to maximize inclusiveness of opinions and maximize community support of committee decisions. Although diversity in committee participants lends credibility to decisions made by the committee, it also has the potential to slow the decision-making process due to the possibility of frequent disagreements. To enhance efficiency of committee decision-making, the continuous or intermittent presence of an objective professional mediator may be required<sup>2</sup>. The Advisory Committee Chair will identify the need for a professional mediator. The mediator would be subcontracted through the OLCC.

**B. Conduct an Information Inventory.** A compilation of relevant background information concerning the watershed is a logical step in developing a watershed restoration planning process. The OLP's online library<sup>3</sup> will be used and updated as part of the review of existing information. The background information will be utilized by the Advisory Committee during an interactive planning process, in the public education components of the planning process, and in developing content for public forums during issue and goal solicitation. The OLCC, with assistance from a SUNY ESF graduate student, and ASLF will conduct an inventory of information necessary for successful Onondaga Creek watershed restoration planning and provide the compiled information to the Advisory Committee in the following series of summary documents:

(1) *Conceptual restoration alternatives and case studies.* The ASLF will compile a summary document that includes (a) case studies of successful watershed restoration planning efforts, (b) conceptual alternatives for the Onondaga Creek watershed, and (c) any ongoing efforts to restore Onondaga Creek and deliver the document to the Advisory Committee. The ASLF serves as repository of historical restoration planning efforts for Onondaga Creek.

(2) *Applicable government and regulatory jurisdictional guide.* The OLCC (in cooperation with

---

2

To resolve discord and to ensure impartiality, the mediator would not be affiliated with any of the organizations represented on the committee. The mediator could be updated on issues and participant perspectives through regular attendance of meetings, and would function to assist in conflict resolution as issues arise, at the request of the committee chair.

3

The OLP's Project Management Information System maintains an online repository of lake improvement project data and existing applicable documents pertaining to the Onondaga Lake watershed.

ASLF) will compile a summary document of the federal, state, and municipal jurisdictions and regulatory roles and responsibilities (including topics concerning landuse, zoning, planning, transportation, parks & recreation, hazardous wastes, health & safety, flood plains, wetlands, soils, NPDES/SPDES, TMDLs, TSCA/CERCLA/CWA issues, etc.), and deliver the document to the Advisory Committee. The ASLF serves as repository for regulatory information.

(3) *State of Onondaga Creek*. The OLCC will compile a summary document of the current state of Onondaga Creek (including watershed size, stream and tributary lengths, landuses, geology and soils, hydrology, water flows, weather, water quality, sediment quality, wetlands inventory, floodplains, etc.), and deliver the document to the Advisory Committee.

(4) *Relevant Information Directory*. The OLCC will compile an archive of most relevant information, a bibliography and directory of repositories of existing information (including information summarized in above documents, as well as paper and electronic maps, previous and on-going studies, existing datasets, etc.), and a summary of relative data gaps<sup>4</sup>, and deliver the document to the Advisory Committee.

The Advisory Committee will review and forward approved documents to the OLP. Upon OLP approval, the OLCC will release documents to all participating organizations and local libraries, and make the documents available to the public at cost of reproduction, processing, and delivery. Should a web site be available or cost-effective, the OLCC will publish the four documents to the web.

The Advisory Committee will identify principal findings from the summary documents to be utilized in the public education, issue and goal solicitation, and planning efforts.

**C. Conduct Public Education and Educator Training.** Education and training work elements are hands-on activities designed to complement information presented to the public concerning the information inventory (see above) and are intended to precede solicitation of issues and goals. The CCE and SUNY ESF will lead an education program to raise public awareness of, and encourage public involvement in, issues in the Onondaga Creek watershed. All public education efforts will be coordinated and approved through the OLP's Outreach Committee. The Advisory Committee will identify informational elements to be incorporated into the public education efforts. Among the type of activities to be considered, the program may consist of the following elements:

The CCE and SUNY ESF (in cooperation with Project Watershed, Canopy, the Onondaga County Environmental Health Council, and possibly the City of Syracuse Department of Public Works) proposes to lead public education programs intended to encourage broad public awareness and participation in urban creek restoration. Educational efforts conducted by CCE will be targeted to foster civic and public participation in the planning process over the breadth of the watershed. Activities will involve local governments, neighborhood and regional groups, stakeholders and the general public. In addition, SUNY ESF will lead an effort to train local school educators in urban watershed-related activities for students that is intended to precede solicitation of issues and goals. The focus of such educator training will be environmental (both cultural and natural) history, water quality measurement and riparian/stream ecology with an urban ecosystem's focus. The objective will be to build awareness through school teachers and

---

<sup>4</sup> Irrespective of the importance for implementing a remedy for achieving a restoration goal, information will be identified that exists for one stream segment and the same information may not exist for another stream segment.

students about Onondaga Creek history, why it is what it is, the water quality issues, its current ecological functions, as well as future functions with restoration as an improved urban water body.

**D. Solicit Issues and Goals.** The OLCC will compile issues and goals relevant to restoration of the Onondaga Creek watershed under the oversight of the Advisory Committee (chaired by SUNY ESF), from stakeholders and other interested parties. Compilation of issues and goals specific to Onondaga Creek would complement those compiled for Onondaga Lake under a separate proposal (Eckhardt, 2003). Issues and goals will be solicited from stakeholders and interested parties including (but not limited to) the following: Onondaga Nation; Onondaga Lake Partnership; US Environmental Protection Agency; US Geological Survey (USGS); NYS Department of Environmental Conservation; Onondaga County; the City of Syracuse; the Towns of Tully, Lafayette, and Onondaga; Onondaga County Soil and Water Conservation District (OCSWCD); Cornell Cooperative Extension of Onondaga County; Onondaga County Environmental Health Council; Canopy; Partnership for Onondaga Creek; Atlantic States Legal Foundation; Project Watershed; Water Environment Federation; Pyramid Company; Lakefront Development Corp.; Syracuse 20/20; Metropolitan Development Association; Armory Square Business Association; Syracuse United Neighbors; NAACP, City Council, 4H-OCSWCD, Sierra Club, Audubon Society, Focus Greater Syracuse, religious groups, agricultural groups, and possibly other interested organizations.

The OLCC will compile findings in a report and deliver the document to the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee will review and upon Advisory Committee approval, the report will be forwarded to the OLP. With OLP approval, the OLCC will release the document to all participating organizations, and make the document available to the public at cost of reproduction, processing, and delivery.

A number of approaches may be utilized in the visioning and issue and goal compilation process to encourage wide participation and communication. Individual forums and meetings will be preceded by advertising campaigns or targeted telephone canvassing to encourage attendance. Work elements related to issue and goal solicitation for Onondaga Creek may include the following:

(1) SUNY ESF will conduct seven or eight smaller, customized “mini-forums” covering residents of separate creek reaches in the City of Syracuse to provide opportunity for more in-depth communication concerning visions for creek restoration. This information will be made available for subsequent larger forums. The mini-forums will bring together information gathered under the information inventory (Part B) and sort it by stream stretch. Individual mini-forums by stream stretch will be organized by community interest to match community goals and objectives against feasibility of stream ecological restoration and physical/visual access improvements in a realistic fashion. The Onondaga Creek Watershed has eight distinct sections. Each section of Onondaga Creek will be a focus area for the roundtable/mini-forum format. The sections are:

2. *The Inner Harbor* (From the Lake shoreline to Kirkpatrick St.)
3. *The Business District* ( From Kirkpatrick St. to the intersection of Clinton St. and Onondaga St.)
4. *The Southside* (from the intersection of Clinton St. and Onondaga St. to West. Brighton Ave.)
5. *The Valley* ( From West Brighton Ave. to Dorwin Ave. {The City Limits})
6. *Nedrow* (From Dorwin Ave. {The City Limits} to the Onondaga Nation Boundary)
7. Onondaga Nation (The Onondaga Indian Reservation)

8. West Branch (The west branch of Onondaga Creek to the Onondaga Nation Boundary)
9. Tully Valley (South of The Onondaga Indian Reservation)

The results of the mini-forums will then be aggregated into an overall Onondaga Creek revitalization strategy.

(2) Canopy (in cooperation with CCE and the Centers for Nature Education) will coordinate and conduct at least two public forums to elicit public visions for the creek from residents throughout the watershed, and to foster watershed-wide communication and understanding among interested parties regarding restoration.

(3) The OLCC will conduct stakeholder meetings to solicit goals and issues. Meeting elements will include (a) a standard opening presentation of compiled information; content will be specified and approved by the Advisory Committee based on findings compiled under the information review (see above), (b) goals and issues elicitation using the standardized survey approved by the Advisory Committee, (c) an open forum for additional public comments concerning creek restoration, and (d) a videotape recording of meetings for subsequent compilation of meeting minutes. Stakeholder meetings will also be conducted by stream segment and may be conducted along with the mini-forums.

(4) The OLCC will compile issues and goals solicitation data into a report and deliver the document to the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee will review and comment, possibly require modifications, and forward the document to the OLP for approval. The OLCC will distribute the OLP-approved document to organizations that participated in its development and to local libraries, and make the document available to the public at cost of reproduction, processing, and delivery.

(5) If a web site is available or cost-effective, the OLCC will publish the document to the web.

**E. Develop a Conceptual Plan.** The Advisory Committee will develop a conceptual plan for restoring Onondaga Creek. The OLCC will facilitate the Advisory Committee in developing the plan by assisting in document preparation. Work elements related to developing a conceptual plan may include the following:

(1) The Advisory Committee will utilize the information summaries developed by the OLCC and ASLF throughout planning process and in developing the conceptual plan, including conceptual restoration alternatives and case studies, applicable government and regulatory jurisdictional guide, the state of Onondaga Creek, and a relevant information directory [see above].

(2) The Advisory Committee will utilize the issues and goals solicited and compiled as part of the planning process [see above]. Means to resolve issues and achieve goals for the restoration of Onondaga Creek will be the basis of the conceptual plan.

(3) The Advisory Committee will develop a draft conceptual plan, including elements such as issues and goals, recommended strategies for preservation, enhancement, or revitalization of various stream segments, identification of data gaps, prioritization of data needs, study recommendations to fill datagaps, establishing working groups with specific tasks (if needed), identification of potential funding sources<sup>5</sup>,

---

<sup>5</sup>

Potential funding sources will be identified in consultation with the OLP Resource Committee.

development of alternative conceptual restoration models, developing milestones for planning and implementation. The draft conceptual plan will be outlined in a summary document.

(4) The OLCC will reproduce and distribute the Advisory Committee's draft conceptual plan including a summary of planning tasks to the Advisory Committee and the OLP for approval. The OLCC will distribute the approved document to organizations that participated in its development and to local libraries, and make the document available to the public at cost of reproduction, processing, and delivery. If a web site is available or cost-effective, the OLCC will publish the draft document to the web.

(5) Release of the document will be announced through the local media. A public information meeting will be conducted upon public release of the draft conceptual plan, at which the Advisory Committee will present its plan to the public. A public comment period will be 180 days to allow groups and organizations that meet monthly or infrequently the opportunity to comment. The OLCC will compile all public comment and the Advisory Committee will prepare a response to public comment, and modify the document as necessary. The final document will then be delivered with comments and responses to the OLP for approval. The conceptual plan will be developed by the Advisory Committee with input from the general public, interested parties, stakeholder groups, jurisdictional regulatory agencies and local, state and federal governments, and under the auspices of the OLP; therefore, the conceptual plan should meet general acceptance and illicit expectations towards implementation amongst the general public, interested parties, stakeholder groups, jurisdictional regulatory agencies and local, state and federal governments, in particular, the OLP. Hence, the OLP may chose to incorporate the conceptual plan for the revitalization of Onondaga Creek into the overall management plan for Onondaga Lake.

**F. Grant Administration.** The OLCC will perform management and administrative functions with respect to operation of the grant, including such tasks as preparing a project workplan (in cooperation with the project team), submitting an application package to the USEPA, maintaining contractual arrangements, etc. Grant Administration costs will be covered under the OLCC's CCWI FFY2003 Project Management budget.

**7. Timeline for Project Milestones.** The following timeline pertains to an information inventory, issues and goals compilation, public education program, and conceptual plan development which will be completed within 24 months of receipt of the first project payment.

- Month 1: Commence organization of Advisory Committee membership and conduct kickoff meeting. Initiate information review.
- Months 2-3: Establish operating procedures for Advisory Committee meetings, obtain OLP approval of committee membership.
- Months 4-5: Prepare standardized approach (e.g., forms and meeting format and presentation materials) for issue and goal solicitation.
- Months 6-12: Conduct issue and goal solicitation using stakeholder meetings and public visioning forums.
- Month 9: Deliver *Conceptual Restoration Alternatives and Case Study* (draft for comment).
- Month 12: Deliver *Applicable Governmental and Regulatory Jurisdiction Guide* (draft for comment).
- Month 15: Deliver *State of Onondaga Creek* (draft for comment).  
Deliver *Issues and Goals Compilation* (draft for comment).
- Month 18: Deliver *Relevant Information Directory* (draft for comment).
- Month 24: Deliver *Draft Onondaga Creek Conceptual Revitalization Plan* (draft for comment) to

- Month 27: OLP. Release OLP approved draft document for public comment, conduct information meeting.
- Month 30: Compile all public comment, finalize Conceptual Plan, and prepare response to public comment.
- Months 1-30: Conduct Advisory Committee meetings and all tasks associated with meetings (e.g., communications, setting schedules and agendas, distributing meeting minutes, etc.). Conduct public education and educator training programs (in cooperation with the OLP Outreach Committee).

## 8. Funding

**Required Funding Amount (amount requested in this proposal - 55% of total).** \$245,000.

**Matching Funding Amount (45% of total).** \$200,455.

**Estimated Total Cost.** \$445,455.

**Budget Summary Table**

Work Element	Required Funding Amounts							In-kind Services <sup>2</sup>
	ASLF	SUNY ESF	CCE	Canopy	OLCC	Direct Costs	Total	
Organize/Facilitate Advisory Committee		\$15,000			\$24,255	\$6,300	\$45,555	\$37,270
Conduct Information Inventory	\$19,265	\$5,000			\$38,520	\$2,200	\$64,985	\$53,175
Conduct Public Education and Educator Training		\$18,750	\$36,875		\$6,400		\$62,025	\$50,750
Solicit Issues and Goals		\$5,000		\$8,115	\$14,650	\$3,440	\$31,205	\$25,530
Develop Conceptual Plan	\$7,000	\$5,000			\$26,330	\$2,900	\$41,230	\$33,730
Grant Administration					\$0		\$0	\$0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$26,265</b>	<b>\$48,750</b>	<b>\$36,875</b>	<b>\$8,115</b>	<b>\$110,155</b>	<b>\$14,840</b>	<b>\$245,000</b>	<b>\$200,455</b>

- Grant Administration costs will be covered under the OLCC's CCWI FFY2003 Project Management budget.
- In-kind services will be contributed to the extent possible by participating team members including the OLCC, City of Syracuse, SUNY ESF, CCE for Onondaga County, and ASLF. Category totals are estimates and may not be actual.

## 9. Personnel

### Principal Organization:

Onondaga Lake Cleanup Corp. (OLCC) (Dr. Edward Michalenko, Principal Investigator, and staff) - grant administration, information compilation, report preparation, Advisory Committee facilitation, issue and goal solicitation, and clerical support.

### Project Team Members:

Canopy - issue and goal visioning forums

SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (Dr. Richard Smardon and graduate student) - Advisory Committee coordination, educator training, and mini-forums

Atlantic States Legal Foundation (ASLF) (Mr. Samuel Sage and staff) - local neighborhood group liaison, environmental planning, and information compilation

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Onondaga County (CCE) (Ms. Amy Samuels and staff) - public education

City of Syracuse (Mr. William Owens)

Contributing organizations will participate in planning, information collection, and assist in various aspects of report preparation; assignments will be relegated based on areas of expertise (as indicated above). The participation of the USACE, USEPA, USGS, OCSWCD, NYSDEC, Onondaga County, and other potential contributing organizations is anticipated, although funding for these organizations is not included in this proposal.

## 10. Additional Information. None.

C:\emmm\olcc\USEPA\Grants and projects\CCWI\FFY 2003 CCWI grant\Onondaga Creek Revitalization Plan\OLP FFY2003 proposal - Onondaga Creek conceptual revitalization plan - U.wpd