

BLACK CREEK WATERSHED COALITION



BLACK CREEK WATERSHED UPDATE

Newsletter No. 2

Date: June 10, 2005

Black Creek Watershed Coalition

The Black Creek Watershed Coalition formed in April 2002 to work cooperatively on the development of the Black Creek Watershed Plan.

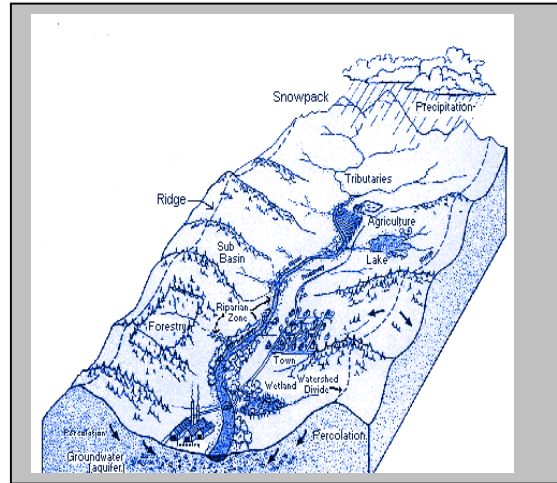
Primary Goal - The Black Creek Watershed Coalition (Coalition) was established in April 2002 and has as its primary goal the development and implementation of a comprehensive and sustainable Watershed Plan for the Black Creek watershed.

What's a Watershed - a watershed is an area of land that drains into a river, river system, or other body of water. A watershed captures precipitation, filters and stores water, and influences where and how water moves. A watershed can be large or small, and smaller watersheds join together in a network to become larger watersheds. Any activity that affects water quality, quantity, or movement at one location can change the characteristics of the watershed at locations downstream. (USFS-Wild-Waters)

Why is Watershed Planning Necessary -

Everyone knows water is essential for life, but often it is just assumed it will always be there and it will always provide for our needs without any conscious thought or action to maintain its quality and quantity (Kathy Harter, Chairperson, Sweden Environmental Conservation Board). We know this is not true. We influence the health of

our watershed daily by how we treat the natural resources in our area – the soil, water, air, trees, wetlands, forests, plants, animals and agricultural lands. But we do not just affect our own backyard; we affect the larger watershed downstream. That is why the Black Creek Watershed Coalition formed this partnership and invites the community to participate in this important initiative.



Building A Strong Watershed Coalition: The active members of the Black Creek Watershed Coalition include federal, state, county, town and village officials, college educators, and local citizens. Our current public interest database includes approximately 480 names. Notices of the meetings and agendas are mailed or emailed to those who have expressed an interest in the project. The Coalition meets once a month at different locations within the watershed to work on the planning process and identify potential funding sources to implement project activities. The Black Creek Watershed Coalition and watershed planning process also helps with the building of

community partnerships. Working together for a common goal in our large watershed, which ranges from suburban Rochester to rural towns, brings communities together and nurtures a sense of community within the watershed. Partnerships like this are needed to build the capacity needed to address and solve watershed wide problems. We are accomplishing this by shifting the focus from political boundaries to watershed boundaries.

For example, through this effort the Coalition has developed a working relationship with the Oatka Creek Watershed Coalition (www.oatka.org). The Oatka Creek watershed borders the Black Creek watershed; some towns and counties have both watersheds within their political boundaries. Due to our common interests, goals and needs the Black Creek and Oatka Creek Watershed Coalitions have pooled resources to work on common concerns.



Encouraging Participation of all Municipalities in the Watershed

- It is essential to involve every watershed municipality in the process. Municipal representatives were contacted to obtain local information and to learn about local problems and concerns. In developing the Coalition database, representatives from every county, town, and village, were included. A Coalition member volunteered to contact municipalities to find out who their official representative would be. In the few cases where a representative was not identified, the Town Supervisor or Village Mayor was considered the representative. Even though every municipality cannot currently be actively involved, in almost all cases the municipalities wanted to be kept up-to-date on Coalition activities. This is done through monthly mailings of meeting agendas and minutes.

Intermunicipal Agreement between Counties - Coalition members from Genesee and Monroe Counties began working on the development of an Intermunicipal Agreement in April 2002. When the draft Intermunicipal Agreement was presented to the Coalition for comment, the group recommended that Orleans and Wyoming Counties (a small area of the watershed is in each of those counties) be approached immediately to see if they were interested in being included in the agreement. Contacts were made in the two additional counties. Orleans County agreed to become part of the agreement immediately. Wyoming County decided to wait. The Intermunicipal Agreement has been approved by the legislatures of Genesee, Monroe and Orleans Counties.

Black Creek Watershed State of the Basin Report

State of the Basin Report - The Coalition completed the first chapter of the Watershed Plan, titled the *Black Creek Watershed State of the Basin Report (July of 2003)*. This report provides a description of the unique features within the Black Creek watershed including topography, geology, vegetation, wildlife, land uses, water quality, and hydrology. The report also provides a collection of existing data related to current water quality and quantity conditions; identifies problems and threats relevant to land use impacts; and summarizes critical issues the watershed faces. A copy of the report was provided to all municipalities and libraries located in the watershed. Also, a web-site was created to make all the information presented in the report available to the public. Included on the web-site and in the report is a map atlas which graphically illustrates data trends across the Black Creek watershed. The data collection also

includes an extensive Geographic Information System data base. This data will provide the Coalition and others the information needed to conduct additional analysis in the future. The report which was developed with the assistance of James Zollweg, Mark Noll, and Whitney Autin, three professors in the Department of Earth Sciences at State University of New York College at Brockport is available on our web-site at www.blackcreekwatershed.org.

Presentation of the State of the Basin Report to the Community

State of the Basin Report, Public Information Meeting - The Black Creek Watershed Coalition hosted a Public Meeting to present the Black Creek Watershed State of the Basin Report to the community. The presentation was held on Wednesday, June 23, 2004 from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at Genesee Community College. The results of the Black Creek Watershed State of the Basin Report were presented by Dr. Whitney Autin. The presentation summarized the State of the Basin Report



**Black Creek Watershed Community Meeting
June 23, 2004**

including recommendations, watershed issues, the need for watershed planning, and ways to get involved. His presentation was followed by a discussion about protecting the positive attributes of the watershed and addressing the problems areas. During the meeting the Coalition gathered additional comments, concerns and opportunities.

Comments from the Black Creek Watershed Coalition Chairperson – The State of the Basin Report will serve as a benchmark for this group, and others like it. “Knowing how our past and current lifestyles have affected Black Creek will help conservationists today and tomorrow



**Black Creek Watershed Coalition - Panel Discussion
Community Meeting - June 23, 2004**

formulate a plan to cohabit the watershed in a way that is mutually beneficial. We may learn how to maximize what we get out of Black Creek while minimizing what we’re putting in.” Dorothy Borgus – Black Creek Watershed Coalition Past Chairperson, Suburban News West Edition April 28, 2003.

Size and Boundaries of the Watershed & Subwatersheds

- The Black Creek watershed is part of the Genesee River Basin that drains to Lake Ontario. The drainage area is about 202 square miles, and the main stream (Black Creek) runs for over 46 miles. The watershed occupies parts of Wyoming, Genesee, Orleans and Monroe counties including parts of the Towns of Middlebury in Wyoming County; Bethany, Stafford, Batavia, Elba, Byron, Bergen and LeRoy in Genesee County; Clarendon in Orleans County; and Sweden, Ogden, Riga, Chili and Wheatland in Monroe County. Its headwaters are in the Town of Middlebury; the main stream flows northerly to the Town of Byron, then turns east and flows to its junction with the Genesee River in the Town of Chili.

State of the Basin Report

- Some Highlights -

Project Scope: The Black Creek watershed consists of all the land that drains to Black Creek and its tributaries.

Towns: Black Creek Watershed encompasses 14 towns: The watershed incorporates all or part of the Towns of Bethany, Batavia, Stafford, Elba, Byron, LeRoy and Bergen in Genesee County and the Towns of Riga, Ogden, Wheatland, Sweden and Chili in Monroe County. Clarendon in Orleans County and Middlebury in Wyoming County also contain small portions of the watershed.

Size: Black Creek Watershed is: 202 square miles which equals 128,358 acres. **Length:** The length of Black Creek is: 46 miles.

Population: 35,030 people living in the watershed, 49% live in the town of Chili. The next highest percentage 15%, live in Riga

PURPOSE:

- ☞ Characterize the watershed
- ☞ Identify resources within the watershed
- ☞ Analyze current water quality and quantity conditions.
- ☞ Identify critical issues facing the watershed

Goals:

- ☞ Municipalities, work together cooperatively on water quality and quantity issues.
- ☞ Waterways meet the best use classification goal set by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.
- ☞ Water quality is such that there are minimal obstacles for local intended uses.
- ☞ Sources of nonpoint pollution are reduced.
- ☞ Natural wetlands and stream buffer zones are preserved in order to protect water quality and manage flooding.
- ☞ Flooding due to natural events and human activities is minimized.
- ☞ There is sufficient high quality habitat for aquatic, wetland and shoreline plants and animals.
- ☞ Development impacts water quality and quantity to the least extent possible.
- ☞ Citizens are knowledgeable about water quality and quantity issues.
- ☞ There are ample water and wetland-related educational opportunities.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ☞ Continue Municipal outreach.
- ☞ Develop watershed protection policies.
- ☞ Evaluate Commercial activities to assess pollution prevention activities.
- ☞ Suggest model ordinances for riparian buffers, floodplains, etc.
- ☞ Develop a Drainage Subcommittee to develop an integrated drainage plan and serve as a liaison between local governments.
- ☞ Develop a Black Creek flood prevention and mitigation plan.
- ☞ Develop a Technical Subcommittee to develop and implement systematic water quality monitoring, gather improved base line data, and assess potential human impacts on water quality.
- ☞ Perform hydrologic analysis and water quality modeling.
- ☞ Additional gauging stations are needed to improve understanding of surface water hydrology.

Land Use Trends:

- Suburban growth southwest of Rochester.
- Farmlands are being converted.
- Modest changes in population.
- Decline in rural population.

Land Use:

- Agricultural/Idle 78.58%
- Residential 1.96%
- Commercial 0.78%
- Industrial 0.02%
- Miscellaneous* 18.66% *primarily forest and wetland areas

Parks

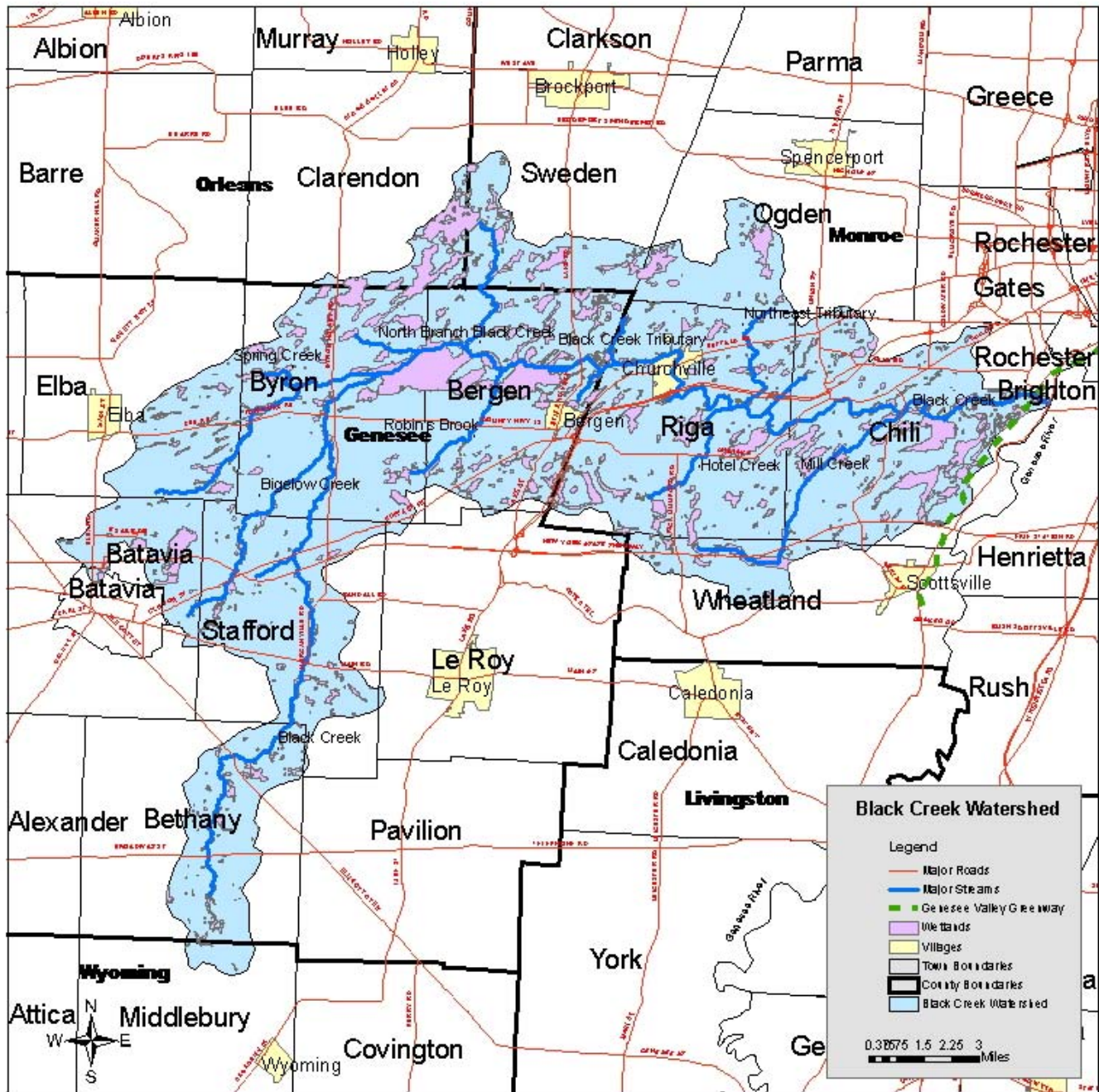
- Black Creek Park, Churchville Park, Genesee County Parks

Special Areas

- The Genesee Valley Greenway, The Bergen Swamp

For more information visit our web-site at www.blackcreekwatershed.org

Black Creek Watershed



www.blackcreekwatershed.org

State of Basin Report Implementation

Great Lakes Commission Grant Funds Studies - A \$100,000 grant from the Great Lakes Commission is helping to implement action items recommended in the *Black Creek Watershed State of the Basin Report*. With assistance from the Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council the Black Creek Watershed Coalition in partnership with the Oatka Creek Watershed Committee applied for and received a \$100,000 grant from the Great Lakes Commission. The funds were used to develop strategies to stabilize stream banks and reduce erosion, study land use regulations and promote proper land use practices by municipalities located in the watersheds. Part of the effort involved educating local officials about the Coalition and demonstrating that we are moving forward toward a management plan aimed at protecting the water quality in Black and Oatka Creeks and the hundreds of small creeks that feed into them.

Current Activities

Building Cooperation among Municipalities: We are actively coordinating outreach efforts to promote cooperation among the municipalities in the Black Creek watershed with the goal that they work together cooperatively on water quality and quantity issues in the Black Creek watershed. This effort includes making a presentation to each individual Town Board in the watershed and identifying a municipal official to serve as the liaison between the Town and the Coalition and asking them to sign a “Call for Cooperation” resolution. This past winter and spring (2005) Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council staff in association with the Black Creek Watershed Coalition made presentations to the 14 Town and 2 Village Boards in the Black Creek Watershed explaining the findings of the Black Creek State of the Basin Report, the role of the Black Creek Watershed Coalition, and seeking municipal involvement in the development of a Black Creek Watershed Management Plan. *The Black Creek Watershed State of the Basin Report encourages intermunicipal agreements as part of the planning process to improve and protect water quality in the Black Creek watershed.*



David Zorn, Executive Director Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council, makes presentation at the Sweden Town Board meeting (3/8/2005)

Identification and Analysis of the Riparian Corridor in the Black & Oatka Creek Watersheds – Under the direction of the Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council in association with the Black Creek and Oatka Creek Watershed Committees, LU Engineers of Penfield NY, completed an analysis, restoration recommendations, concept designs and preliminary cost estimates for selected severely eroded streambanks based on streambank inventories that were completed in 2004 by Wyoming, Genesee and Monroe County Soil and Water Conservation Districts. This study was completed in March 2005.

Analysis of Federal and State Laws and Regulations and Municipal Local Laws, Ordinances and Practices in Municipalities in the Black and Oatka Creek Watersheds - Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council staff, in association with the Black Creek and Oatka Creek Watershed Committees, developed the Municipal Law Review & Ordinances and Practices Assessment Form. The form is being used to assess and analyze municipal local laws and practices. Based on the above Analysis of Local Laws Ordinances and Practices and Issue Prioritization, Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council staff will work with willing municipalities in the two watersheds to revise local laws in accordance with gap analysis and best management practices.

New York State Agricultural Non-point Source Abatement and Control Program (ANSCAP) Funding - The Black Creek Watershed Coalition supported successful efforts to acquire funding by Monroe and Genesee County Soil and Water Conservation Districts through the ANSCAP program. Monroe County Soil and Water Conservation District will administer \$491,297.90 for implementation of Best Management Practices on twelve farms in this multi-watershed, multi-county project to help reduce nutrient runoff to nearby waterbodies. Activities will include implementation of six barnyard runoff management systems, five manure storage systems, and five silage leachate management systems.

Long Range Goals

Complete the Black Creek Watershed Management Plan: The Watershed Management Plan will be based on issues, goals and recommendations developed in the State of the Basin Report and comments received at the Public Information Meetings. We expect the Watershed Management Plan to identify measurable characteristics for water quality improvements and methods to achieve and sustain water quality improvements; present a Monitoring Plan to measure the effectiveness of water quality improvement measures; identify causes of flooding and impediments to recreation; present strategies to reduce flooding and manage stream debris; and to suggest strategies to implement watershed actions and guidelines.

Implement the Watershed Management Plan: Detail the schedule and methods to begin implementing the Watershed Management Plan with actions and guidelines developed in previous phases. Identify funding opportunities for plan implementation and develop partnerships to enhance funding for the plan implementation. Continue to monitor the watershed to evaluate progress and revise plan as needed.

Adoption of Black Creek Watershed Plan: The Watershed Management Plan will be approved and implemented by those in the community because it is based on their needs and goals and for the future of the watershed.

Come Join Us

We invite you to join the Black Creek Watershed Coalition and participate in this watershed planning effort. Who should attend: Residents, farmers, environmental groups, conservation groups, municipal officials and staff and other citizens concerned with the water quality and flooding issues in the Black Creek Watershed. Each person has something to contribute and participation from everyone is welcome. We meet once a month.

For current meeting information visit our web site at www.blackcreekwatershed.org

Or Contact: Black Creek Watershed Coalition, C/O Ms. Rochelle Bell, Environmental Planner, Monroe County Department of Planning and Development, 50 West Main Street, Suite 8100, Rochester, New York 14614, Phone: (585) 428-5464, Email: rbell@monroecounty.gov 