

Chautauqua Watershed Notes  
From the Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy  
February 1, 2009

Area Sites Listed in Open Space Plan  
By John Jablonski III, Executive Director  
Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy



*Wooded shorelines control sediments and nutrients that contribute to nuisance plant growth.*

I have been privileged to represent Chautauqua County on the New York State Region 9 Open Space Committee since 2001. Last spring, Gil Randell, Zen Olow and I participated in multiple meetings across western New York to gather input and provide recommendations to update the New York State Open Space Conservation Plan. Chautauqua County's open space assets such as parks, lake access sites, and trails play a vital role in our local economy.

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation have issued the Draft 2009 New York State Open Space Conservation Plan for public comment. The "Plan" was developed with the help of nine Regional Open Space Committees with citizen representatives and various state agencies. The plan emphasizes that success in implementing Plan projects is built upon "multi-faceted partnerships" between State agencies, all levels of government, private conservation organizations, citizens groups and land owners, which, "go way beyond the fundamental policy of protecting land through acquisition."

The plan states, “The following priority objectives have been identified as critical concerns by DEC and OPRHP, and are addressed in this... Plan:

- Responding to Climate Change;
- Fostering Green, Healthy Communities;
- Connecting New Yorkers with Nature & Recreation; and
- Safeguarding our Natural & Cultural Heritage.”

Here are some of the questions on which the Commissioners ask for public input regarding the Plan:

- How can we better protect riparian (waterside) areas in an era of increased storm intensity and flooding?
- How can we improve the capacity of local governments to develop and implement local open space protection programs?
- How can open space contribute to the goal of increasing carbon capture to reduce global climate change?
- How can we use open space protection to ensure the continuation of important natural resource-based industries including forestry and farming?
- How can we protect our wildlife species in greatest need of conservation?
- How do we best reconcile the need for economic development and growth with the need for open space conservation?

Several “Priority Conservation Projects” are listed as proposed for Chautauqua County. They include the following:

#116 - Allegheny River Watershed, which exhibits streams with high biological diversity and the need for additional public access

#119 - Chautauqua Lake Access, Vistas, Shore Lands and Tributaries, for securing public access, preserving shoreline habitat for the continuance of the world-known muskellunge fishery, and conserving tributary and headwater forest habitats to protect lake water quality

#120 – Ecological Corridors, to protect ecological corridors linking public lands and important habitats

#123 - Inland Lakes, to protect undeveloped shoreline, associated wetlands and critical tributary habitat or improved access at Findley Lake, Bear Lake and Cassadaga Lakes

#124 - Lake Erie Tributary Gorges, to acquire public access

#125 - Trails & Trailways, to protect existing lineal corridors and provide for additional linkages between existing trails.

Statewide priority initiatives include protecting State forests & wildlife management areas (#128) and State Parks (#131), working forest lands (#130) and farmland protection (#132).

Statewide Small Projects include acquiring public fishing and waterway access, conserving rare habitats, acquiring stream buffer easements and conserving Important Bird Areas. Some previously completed area Plan projects have included the conservation of the Cheney and Stow Farm lakeshores, and Alder Bottom Pond.

Along with the DEC and Parks Commissioners, I encourage you to review the Plan and send your comments by 4:45 PM February 27<sup>th</sup> to Francis E. Sheehan, Assistant Director, NYS DEC Division of Lands and Forests, 625 Broadway, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Albany, NY 12233-4250 or

[osp2009@gw.dec.state.ny.us](mailto:osp2009@gw.dec.state.ny.us). This draft Plan can be viewed online at [www.dec.ny.gov/lands/47990.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/47990.html), or on paper at the Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy at 413 North Main Street, Jamestown. Please call 664-2166 to set a time.

The Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy is a local, private, not-for-profit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization with the mission to preserve and enhance the water quality, scenic beauty and ecological health of the lakes, streams and watersheds of the Chautauqua region. CWC relies on membership donations to undertake its conservation activities. Its annual membership campaign is underway. For more information or to support these efforts call 664-2166 or go to [chautauquawatershed.org](http://chautauquawatershed.org).