

**NYSDEC
Region 7
Central New York ESD Region**

Regional Overview/Unique Natural Resources

The five counties located in the Central New York ESD Region are all located in DEC Region 7 (encompasses the 9 County Central New York area of Onondaga, Cortland, Madison, Oswego, Cayuga, Tompkins, Chenango, Broome and Tioga Counties) The total area covers over 4 million acres and the population of the Region exceeds 1 million. The region stretches North to Lake Ontario and South to the Pennsylvania border.

Each of the five CNY counties has unique natural resources and DEC facilities as follows.

Onondaga County: Includes the Finger Lakes of Skaneateles and Otisco, the South Shore of Oneida Lake, part of the Seneca River system, Onondaga Lake and several premier trout streams, including Nine Mile Creek, Limestone Creek and other small tributaries. DEC owns and manages the Camillus Unique Area which provides public access for various out recreation. In total there are over 16 miles of public fishing rights in the County. DEC's Region 7 headquarters is located in Syracuse.

Madison County: Includes the South Shore of Oneida Lake, Cazenovia Lake and several smaller lakes and streams. DEC owns and manages approximately 25,000 acres in Madison County including several State Forests, a Wildlife Management Area, and approximately 3 miles of public fishing rights.

Oswego County: Lake Ontario and the Salmon River are the major natural resources which attract anglers from all over the world. Because of these fisheries, Oswego County leads the New York State in fishing license sales and economic and tourist benefit generated from fishing. DEC owns and manages over 40,000 acres of State land in the County, in addition to over 100 miles of public fishing rights. DEC also operates two fish hatcheries in Oswego County.

Cayuga County: Includes all of Owasco Lake and parts of Cayuga and Skaneateles Lakes. Cayuga County's northern border also includes Lake Ontario. Part of Cayuga County includes the Montezuma wetlands system and the Seneca River system. DEC owns and manages approximately 15,000 acres in Cayuga County including about 30 miles of public fishing rights.

Cortland County: The major waterway in Cortland County is the Tioughnioga River, but the County has several unique small lakes and tributaries. DEC manages over 30,000 acres of State land including 12 miles of public fishing rights. DEC's main suboffice is located in Cortland.

Regional issues/major projects

Onondaga Lake – Once known as one of the most polluted lakes in the nation, this small urban lake in Syracuse is on the path to recovery with several ongoing projects (totaling more than \$1 billion) including:

Remediation Efforts - Honeywell International is currently implementing a \$ 451 million dredging plan to address contamination in the lake sediments. There will be significant construction activity in 2011 to prepare for the anticipated start of dredging in 2012. In addition to the work on the dredging project, Honeywell is undertaking several other cleanup projects at sites upland to the lake.

Wastewater Treatment Issues – Under a Federal Amended Consent Judgment (ACJ) Onondaga County is undertaking several projects to address wastewater issues impacting the lake. Significant upgrades have been completed at the County’s Metropolitan Wastewater Treatment Plant resulting in the best water quality in the lake in over 50 years. In addition, the County is undertaking several projects to reduced Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) impacting the Lake and its tributaries. These projects include numerous “green infrastructure” projects under a recent agreement with the County to pursue new green technology as an alternative to more traditional regional treatment plant solutions. Up to 50 green infrastructure projects are being planned for the upcoming year.

DestiNY USA - This proposal to construct a large tourist/retail/recreational facility near Onondaga Lake and the City of Syracuse Inner Harbor has been a significant Central New York debate for several years. The Pyramid Companies constructed the Carousal Center in the area in the early 1990s and is now proposing to expand the center over several blocks into a large facility known as DestiNY. The original mall was built on a brownfield site and the proposed expansion would cover an area known as Oil City where significant petroleum contamination has occurred. The company’s first phase of the project was a large addition to the current mall. The project has stalled at about 90% completion due to lack of tenants and a dispute with the lender.

DestiNY sought eligibility into the Brownfields Cleanup Program (BCP) for tax credits for the entire project. The Department denied its eligibility in part and DestiNY has won its court challenge allowing the project into the BCP program in full. Since part of the project was started without full investigation and cleanup, the Department is attempting to work with the company to determine how it can proceed towards the Certificate of Completion necessary to receive its tax credits.

Marcellus Shale Issues – The Southern portion of Region 7 is an anticipated hotbed for Marcellus Shale gas exploration. If and when high volume hydraulic fracturing is permitted in NYS, it is likely that the majority of gas exploration will be in Region 7. Predrilling activities such as pipelines, wastewater treatment plants, and the sale of wastewater for fracking are starting to be proposed in the Region’s Southern Tier. Although the bulk of gas development will likely be in the Southern Tier, this issue has generated much attention in the CNY area.

Madison County Agriculture and Renewable Energy Business Park - Madison County IDA and Solid Waste Department are working on a project to include business expansion around its existing landfill operations. The project includes utilizing landfill generated methane for the production of electricity and to add renewable energy businesses in the area.

FEMA Flood Insurance Maps – Under a nationwide effort to update its flood insurance maps, FEMA has undertaken two major projects in Region 7. The remapping of flood areas in the Binghamton and Syracuse areas have resulted in thousands of new properties being included as flood insured property. The result could mean significant increases for local residents for new or upgraded flood insurance policies. Several local, State and Federal officials have raised issues with the FEMA process and currently the Binghamton and Syracuse map finalizations have been delayed.

Native American Issues – There are three important Native American communities in Region 7: The Cayuga, Onondaga and Oneida. Each has a unique perspective on Regional environmental issues and permits and the Region has regular contact with each Nation as part of the DEC's relatively new consultation policy.

Erie Canalway Corridor National Heritage Commission – This Commission was established by Federal legislation several years ago. NY's Governor nominates representatives from several State agencies, including DEC, to serve on the Commission with numerous Commissioners appointed by the Secretary of the Interior. The Commission is working on the implementation of a Canalway Plan adopted by the board.

Onondaga Lake Partnership – The OLP was formed by Federal Statute to oversee the cleanup activity on Onondaga Lake. Led by the Army Corps, the OLP includes the DEC, AG, EPA, City of Syracuse and Onondaga County. As the lead regulatory agency for the lake the DEC plays a very active role in OLP activities. The OLP mainly helps decide how federal dollars are spent on lake issues, but also plays an active role in public outreach and addressing other lake issues such as watershed planning, recreation, habitat restoration and addressing non-point source discharges.