

# NYSDEC – Finger Lakes Region

## April, 2011

### INTRODUCTION

The Economic Development Councils' (EDC) Finger Lakes Region is comprised of 8 of the 11 DEC Region 8 Counties – Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne and Yates, plus Wyoming County. The Finger Lakes Region is extremely diverse, being home to several urban areas, a large suburban population, and many smaller, rural communities. It has large expanses of open land, the eco-tourism opportunities provided by the Finger Lakes and its Wineries, Letchworth and many other State Parks, and countless outdoor opportunities, including hunting, fishing, hiking, skiing, and boating. Some facts about the Finger Lakes Region include:

- Over 1 million people
- Tens of thousands of acres of State Forests and Wildlife Management Areas
- 100 miles of Lake Ontario Shoreline
- 8 Finger Lakes and the Genesee River Corridor
- Dozens of miles of Public Fishing Rights and public access /parking sites
- Major Industries – Agriculture, Kodak, Xerox, Bausch & Lomb, Tourism, nearly 100 wineries.
- Largest Employer – University of Rochester
- Approximately 300 active, permitted mines
- 4 permitted MSW landfills, including the largest in the Northeast
- Dozens of CAFOs, hundreds of dams, and dozens of large permitted air emissions (Title V) Facilities

### MAJOR REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS / ISSUES

#### 1. Science and Technology Advanced Manufacturing Park (STAMP), Alabama (T), Genesee (C)

This project involves the construction of an office and manufacturing development on approximately 1,312 acres adjacent to the Tonawanda State Wildlife Management Area (WMA) to the north and John White WMA to the southeast. The GCEDC has expressed interest in acquiring all or part of the John White WMA for the project. The site also borders the Tonawanda Indian Reservation to the west. At full build out the project is estimated to create approximately 9,300 jobs. In addition to potential impacts to state listed wildlife and state lands, the project will require various permits from the DEC, including SPDES, public water supply, and Section 401 Water Quality Certification. Staff attended a recent meeting to provide information regarding our permit responsibilities and to provide input to help the project sponsors design the project with as few environmental issues or concerns as possible.

#### 2.. Eastman Kodak Company (Kodak) / Eastman Business Park, City of Rochester, Town of Greece Monroe (C)

Kodak is certainly not the same company it once was, in terms of size, production, number of employees, or economic impact to the area. But it remains a major employer, and as it continues to convert Kodak park to the Eastman Business Park, opportunities for further development and job creation remain. At least 25 different companies now occupy space that

was once part of Kodak park operations, and they are aggressively marketing to bring in more. The company's transformation continues to need DEC involvement as it seeks to transfer properties and otherwise move the Park forward, while continuing to resolve issues from over 100 years as a chemical plant. Current issues with which staff is involved include permit modifications, assisting in shovel-ready determinations, and the granting of a variance for sewer work. The Park's location, available space, the opportunity to re-use existing infrastructure, and its built in assets (water, sewer, power, rail) make it a strong candidate to focus economic development projects going forward.

### **3. Port of Rochester Terminal & Marina, proposed by City of Rochester, Monroe(C)**

The City of Rochester is proposing to develop a 6.8 acre, 118-slip, marina basin in an existing upland area adjacent to the Genesee River. The project also involves about 23 acres of mixed-use retail, residential, hotel and restaurant development. The project will require an Article 15 permit for the connection to the river and the proposed docking facility, a Beneficial Use Determination for the handling of contaminated material, and possibly a 401 Water Quality Certification and SPDES permit. Funding opportunities will be a key for the City of Rochester, and some of the proceeds from the sale of the Hemlock and Canadice watershed lands to New York State may be used to fund the City's project.

## **UNIQUE RESOURCES / CHALLENGES**

**Finger Lakes** – The unparalleled beauty and character of the Finger Lakes create both recreational and economic opportunities not found elsewhere. From the tourism created by our nearly 100 wineries to the bustling tourist business in the lake communities during the summer, they are special. In June of 2010, DEC completed the purchase of the 7,000 acres of land surrounding Hemlock and Canadice Lakes, the last two undeveloped Finger Lakes, which will only add to the recreational opportunities in the Region. All of the DEC R8 Finger Lakes are in this EDC region, except the southern most parts of Keuka and Seneca Lakes.

**Universities** - While many areas have quality colleges, few can match the University of Rochester / RIT combination for growth potential. Uof R (with its Strong Memorial Hospital affiliation) is the area's largest employer, and RIT, home of the Pollution Prevention Institute (funded in large part by DEC) continues to grow and its focus on science and technology make it a prime influence on helping start up and other business be competitive and stay in NY.

**Solid Waste / Minerals Management** - The Finger Lakes Region has 4 large MSW landfills, including Seneca Meadows, which is the largest in the Northeast. We also have nearly 300 permitted mines. The number, size and location of these facilities are both economic drivers (Seneca Meadows, for example, is the largest employer in Seneca County) and the frequent target of opposition by the public. Issues such as truck traffic or other nuisance conditions result in public complaints, particularly if a project is located near one of the lakes. The possible onset of Marcellus Shale exploration (mentioned in the Southern Tier Regional report) will increase these challenges exponentially.

**Native American Relations** – As more private property is bought up by Native Americans, primarily the Cayugas in Seneca County, there will be an increasing number of issues as to plans for those properties, regulatory and legal relationships between DEC and the owners, etc.

