

BLACK CREEK WATERSHED COALITION



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Check out our
interactive
watershed map at
blackcreekwatershed.org!

Village of Churchville has Plans

Black Creek has played an important role the Village of Churchville since its settlement in 1806 when Samuel Church purchased 897 acres in what was known as West Pultney. Church constructed a sawmill and grist mill along the banks of Black Creek in 1808 and 1810. The mill was moved to the Star of the West flour mill location in the village years ago – that mill is still in operation.

The Village of Churchville contracted with the Rochester Regional Community Design Center to prepare a vision plan for the village. A major component of developing the plan was holding a Charrette -- a one-day event where community members meet in small groups

and work with planning professionals in a dynamic and interactive exercise in brainstorming to create a community consensus on a vision for the future. Each group focuses on a specific area of the village. One of the primary focus areas was Black Creek.

Mayor Nancy Steedman presented the village plans and vision for Black Creek to the Black Creek Watershed Coalition members at a recent meeting. The plans include additional walking trails along the shoreline of Black Creek that would connect with existing trails; greater access to the creek and reclamation of a former industrial site adjacent to the creek. The plans are available for viewing at the Village Hall.

Watershed Care

- *Don't litter (this includes cigarette butts!)*
- *Pick up pet waste.*
- *Sweep fertilizer off sidewalks and driveways to keep it from going down the storm drain and into the stream.*
- *Call your County to dispose of oil, paint and other toxics appropriately.*
- *Leave some vegetation along the edges of waterbodies to slow storm water runoff, reduce erosion, filter runoff before it enters a stream or pond and to discourage geese.*
- *Keep your septic tank in good working condition.*
- *Wash your car on the lawn or at a car wash.*

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JULY 2008 Newsletter

Black Creek Watershed Coalition Remaining 2008 Meeting Dates

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC!!

July 30 (annual picnic at Genesee County Park)

August 25

September 30

October 30

November 18

December 15

Meetings begin at 5:30 p.m.

Meeting locations announced in each month's agenda and at blackcreekwatershed.org

Call 753-2034 or email rbell@monroecounty.gov for more information.

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Grants Awarded for Watershed Planning

The Town of Wheatland received a \$150,000 Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) grant from the NYS Dept. of State for the preparation of Watershed Management Plans for the Black and Oatka Creek watersheds. The Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (G/FLRPC), Oatka Creek Watershed Committee (OCWC) and Black Creek Watershed Coalition (BCWC) are the main collaborators in this process.

Comprehensive watershed management results in sustainable natural resource management, intermunicipal coordination and cooperation, enhanced qual-

ity of life and land value, and prioritized issues and funding targets. This is done by assessing current watershed conditions, reaching consensus on desired future watershed condi-

Watch your local paper and www.blackcreekwatershed.org for information about the watershed planning process and how you can get involved.

tions, identifying actions to achieve goals, and creating an implementation strategy which defines how to get things done and directs implementation dollars into our communities.

The \$150,000 EPF grant

must be met with in-kind support and approximately \$37,500 in cash from each watershed group. Since securing the EPF grant, BCWC members have raised over \$1,500 in donations (see page 2) and over \$16,000 in grants (two from the Finger Lakes-Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance (FL-LOWPA) and one from the Rochester Area Community Foundation. The matching funds are being used to publish this newsletter, a watershed map guide (you'll love it!) and two brochures; they also pay for website support.

Streambank Stabilization in Chili

Severe streambank erosion is occurring near the Stottle Road bridge in the Town of Chili. This site is causing excessive sedimentation and poses a potential threat to the existence of the bridge and a section of the roadway.

To address this problem, Monroe County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and the Town of Chili secured a grant from the Great Lakes Basin Commission grant for \$60,000 to repair the streambank. A 25%

match was more than met with the in-kind contributions of the Town and the SWCD.

This summer, the streambank slopes will be reduced and stabilized by armoring with rock. Native vegetation will also be planted.

Genesee Land Trust's Brookdale Preserve

Sigurd Olson wrote "Despised and avoided by man, the swamplands keep their old primordial ways free from intrusion from cities and roads, from the sounds of industry. They are like forgotten islands in time where a person can still sense the ancient presence of nature absolute."

This, essentially, is the Brookdale Preserve, a 275-acre parcel, part of the Genesee Land Trust's (GLT; www.geneseelandtrust.org) mission to preserve and protect natural lands. This landscape of connected slow moving waterways is a remnant of shallow glacial lake beds of more than 10,000 years ago. In contemporary time this

land became a farm and wood lot. Today the land is reverting to its more natural state of forest and wetlands. It is at the confluence of Black Creek and the Genesee River, which flood extensively in spring.

The Preserve includes a number of ecological communities in succession; marshlands, shrub swamp, shrubland, sedge meadow, old field, floodplain forest, Northern hardwoods, and is home to extensive terrestrial and aquatic wildlife.

While the "sounds of industry" are a part of Brookdale Preserve, given it lies in the flight path of

the Greater Rochester International Airport, this may have unwittingly contributed to its lack of further development, along with the extensive wetlands that cover the site. Visits to the Preserve in the wet seasons are for the more dedicated and hardy.

The Genesee Land Trust is pleased to manage this natural site inhabited by common and uncommon species. The Preserve is no longer an island forgotten in time, the ancient presence of nature can still be experienced. Its presence reflects the significant role of land preservation in our lives.

Funding Available for Farmers

The Agricultural Non-point Source Abatement & Control Grant Program was established in 1994 by New York State to assist farmers in preventing water pollution from agricultural activities by providing technical assistance and financial incentives. Soil & Water Conservation Districts apply for competitive grants on behalf of farmers and coordinate

funded activities. Grants can cost-share up to 75% of project costs.

Any farmer interested in applying for this funding must enroll their farm in the AEM (Agricultural Environmental Management) program. This program provides a cost free, confidential environmental risk assessment of your farm. After assessing your farm, the planning phase follows which

can include project specific planning or nutrient management planning. A small sample of eligible projects include composting areas, agrichemical mixing and storage areas, barnyard improvements, manure management projects, fencing, and livestock watering facilities.

Let your SWCD help you help the watershed!

Generous Donors Support the Watershed

Soon after the Black Creek Watershed Coalition members learned they had been awarded an EPF grant and needed to raise \$37,500 in cash, they developed a fundraising letter to distribute and to post on www.blackcreekwatershed.org. The general fundraising drive raised \$508 for the BCWC for its projects.

A former Chili resident now living in Colorado – and newly married – saw the appeal letter on website. He called to say he had fond memories of growing up on Black Creek and asked about the mission of the BCWC. He called back to say he was bringing his bride back to New York for their wedding reception and that they were asking friends

and family to make a donation to the Black Creek Watershed Coalition in lieu of gifts.

Thanks to the generosity of Aaron Fodge, Margit Hentschel and their family and friends, the Coalition has another \$1080 to protect and preserve Black Creek and its tributaries for future generations.

Black Creek Watershed Coalition Activities

The Black Creek Watershed Coalition likes to get out and enjoy the watershed *almost* as much as they like sit around a conference table and talk about it!

Members have enjoyed guided tours of the Bergen Swamp and visited Trestle Park after a meeting in Byron (meeting locations rotate throughout the watershed).

A canoe trip from Bergen to the dam in Churchville was a big hit (even though it did rain a bit). It was exciting to see evidence of river otters during our paddle.

The annual potluck picnic at the Genesee Co. Park & Forest is eve-

ryone's favorite gathering. Our members are some of the best pizza-buyers and dessert makers in the watershed!

A walk at the Drew Nature Center in Bergen gave the group's naturalists a chance to teach the others about wildflowers, invasive plants, woodpeckers and why ponds situated on marl (lime-rich mud) are so clear.

No one will forget the late July hike down the Genesee Valley Greenway Trail to look at the historic bridge over Black Creek. Did someone say, "Bring the bug spray! Wear long pants! Wear long sleeve shirts! Cover your

head with a net or smoke a cigar!" That is advice worth heeding.

The BCWC has four display boards that have traveled with members to conferences and festivals from the headwaters of the Genesee River in Pennsylvania to the confluence of the Genesee and Black Creek. The Churchville - Chili High has a board on permanent display.

When Monroe County built a mitigation wetland at Black Creek Park in Chili, the BCWC toured the site and offered invaluable technical assistance to the project team.

Watershed Leaders Meet in Scottsville

The Town of Wheatland, the Village of Scottsville and the Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council co-hosted a meeting in February with leaders from municipalities in the Black and Oatka Creek watersheds to discuss the opportunities afforded by receipt of the \$150,000 EPF for the preparation of Watershed Management Plans (see page 1).

Linda Dobson, Wheatland Town

Supervisor, welcomed everyone and introduced David Zorn, Exec. Dir. of the G/FLRPC, who discussed the watersheds' characteristics and explained watershed management planning.

Larry VerWeir, BCWC Chair, and George Squires, District Mgr., Genesee Co. Soil & Water Conservation District and OCWC member, discussed their watershed organizations' activities,

grant awards and fundraising efforts.

Ed Doherty, VP, Rochester Area Community Foundation, spoke about the Foundation's involvement with watershed planning since the 1990s and the \$10,000 grant they awarded the BCWC & OCWC. Mr. Doherty stressed the importance of municipal financial support for watershed planning and suggested that towns contribute \$2000 and villages contribute \$1000 per year for two years to match the EPF grant.

The Nature Conservancy Studies Black Creek

The Nature Conservancy, the Natural Heritage Institute, the Toronto Region Conservation Authority and Cornell University, with funding from the Great Lakes Protection Fund, created a template for identifying the most feasible and ecologically beneficial improvement and restoration op-

portunities for use by stakeholders to guide restoration work throughout the Great Lakes region. The Black Creek watershed is one of eight watersheds they focused on to develop the template, and members of the BCWC met with staff from The Nature Conservancy and Cornell Univer-

sity to provide input on the template's initial results.

It is valuable to have tools to help focus time and resources on the most beneficial projects and we all benefit from such efforts. Stay tuned for more developments.