

PRESS RELEASE

Black Creek Watershed Coalition Black Creek Watershed State of the Basin Report

January 9, 2004

The Black Creek watershed consists of all the land that drains to Black Creek and its tributaries. This 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. The Black Creek watershed municipalities have organized as the Black Creek Watershed Coalition to work cooperatively on water quality and quantity issues in the Black Creek Watershed.

The Coalition members include municipal officials, staff and board members, representatives from county, state and federal government agencies, institutions of higher education, agricultural interests, environmental groups and businesses as well as concerned and interested citizens.

The Coalition recently published the [Black Creek Watershed State of the Basin Report](#). This report was funded by River Network, a Portland, Oregon-based national river and watershed conservation organization supported by the US EPA. It was prepared by James Zollweg, Whitney Autin and Mark Noll, professors from SUNY Brockport. The [State of the Basin Report](#) is an environmental inventory of the natural and human resources of the Black Creek watershed. The report characterizes the watershed with respect to its physical features and cultural characteristics (including history), identifies valuable resources within the watershed, analyzes current water quality and quantity conditions and identifies critical issues facing the watershed in the future.

A summary of problems and risks that can affect the future of the Black Creek Watershed is included in the report. Water quality risks include nonpoint sources from developed areas (stormwater runoff), point sources discharges and agricultural sources of pollution. Water quantity risks are associated with flooding and low flow conditions; it is recognized that water quantity issues may have relevance to water quality issues.

The report can be obtained online at www.blackcreekwatershed.org. In addition, reports were sent to County, Town and Village Clerks' offices, offices of the Clerks of each County Legislature, local libraries (Drake Memorial Library at SUNY Brockport, Genesee Community College Library; Gillam Grant Center in Bergen, Milne Library at SUNY Geneseo, Town of Bergen Library, Chili Public Library, Mumford Library, Ogden Farmer's Library, Riga Free Library, Scottsville Free Library, Seymore Library), Public Works offices, County Departments of Health and Planning, County Soil and Water Conservation District offices, Cornell

Cooperative Extension offices, and the Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council.

The next step is to develop and implement an integrated watershed management plan. The overall intent for the plan is to offer actions and implementation schemes that would ultimately increase our understanding of the watershed ecosystem and minimize water quality impacts and water quantity problems. The Coalition and the Genesee/Finger lakes Regional Planning Council are working to secure grant money to host a Public Information Meeting, sponsor presentations to each Town and Village Board in the watershed and to prepare a Black Creek Watershed Action Plan. Task groups are identifying gaps in knowledge about the watershed; identifying existing public education and outreach programs to extend throughout the watershed; and preparing model ordinances intended to protect and preserve the watershed ecosystem.

The Black Creek Watershed Coalition is eager to involve new people in the group and invites you to the next meeting on January 28, 2004, at 7:00 PM at the Chili Library meeting room. The Coalition is very interested in your thoughts about the State of the Basin Report and what issues in the watershed are important to you. Look for events in the future including a canoe trip, the International Coastal Cleanup and a guided hike in Bergen Swamp.

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