

OTSEGO COUNTY WATER QUALITY COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Scope: Local

Location: New York

SCOPE:

- » Counties across New York State
- » The Otsego County Water Quality Coordinating Committee (WQCC) is one of about 25 similar committees in different New York counties that meet on a regular basis to discuss water-related issues.
- » The Otsego County WQCC is composed of people representing state and local government agencies, non-profit organizations, academic institutions, and lake associations. The members have technical expertise and knowledge and are committed to working to improve and maintain the quality of water in Otsego County through the reduction of nonpoint source pollution within its boundaries.
- » Lake Otsego the source of drinking water for Cooperstown, NY, and also the headwaters of the Susquehanna River, thus the source water for Binghamton and any other municipalities that draw on it--all the way down to the Chesapeake Bay.

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[WaterQualityCC.html](http://www.otsegoilandwater.org/WaterQualityCC.html)

COLLABORATIVE FORMATION:

- » The Otsego County WQCC was established in 1992 as a sub-committee of the Otsego County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), as a result of seed money from EPA Clean Water Act Section 319 money passed through New York State Department of Environmental Quality (NYSDEC) and given in turn to New York State Agriculture and Markets Department.
- » Initially, Ag & Markets invited the Otsego County SWCD to develop a water quality strategy so that it could receive mini-grants of about \$2,000 to \$5,000. Since pass through of CWA Section 319 mini-grants ended in 2004, and in order to better satisfy the educational component of its mission, the Otsego County WQCC restructured its monthly meetings in 2010 to include free public information sessions and has taken on a primarily educational function.
- » Committee membership is ad hoc and is open to any agency, organization or individual demonstrating an interest in non-point source water pollution and source water protection.

MEMBERS (PARTIAL LIST):

- » Otsego County Soil & Water Conservation District
- » Otsego County Planning Department
- » Regional Planning Association
- » Otsego County Conservation Association
- » Natural Resources Conservation Service, county level
- » Otsego, Goodyear Canadarago & Arnold Lake Associations
- » Otsego Land Trust
- » NYS Dept. of Health (NYSDOH)
- » NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC)
- » Cornell Cooperative Extension
- » SUNY Oneonta Biological Field Station
- » Village of Richfield Springs Wastewater Treatment Plant

WATER CONCERNS:

- » Stormwater runoff
- » Non-point source pollution
- » Hydrofracturing

STRATEGIES:

- » Identify countywide non-point source water quality concerns
- » Discuss water issues of interest to members
- » Invite experts to speak on topics of concern
- » Inform town and county legislative officials about potential actions
- » Apply for available grant money to monitor and improve water quality.

RESULTS:

- » Promoted and provided educational outreach, including water festivals, and Envirothons, public presentations.
- » Monitored for nutrients (nitrates, phosphorus), then for water quality parameters in 14 watersheds across the county to provide a baseline should hydrofracturing proceed in the state.
- » Developed and implemented watershed and lake shore protection plans, protecting Lake Otsego through the following projects:
 - Replacement and upgrading of septic systems along Otsego Lake to reduce phosphorus loading
 - Dredging a pond that feeds into the lake, thus eliminating a sediment plume that would otherwise continue to enter the lake.
- » Initiated water quality projects such as: stream clean ups, riparian buffers, wetland restoration, extension of the no-wave zone inward 200 feet from the lake shore, and winter road maintenance programs.