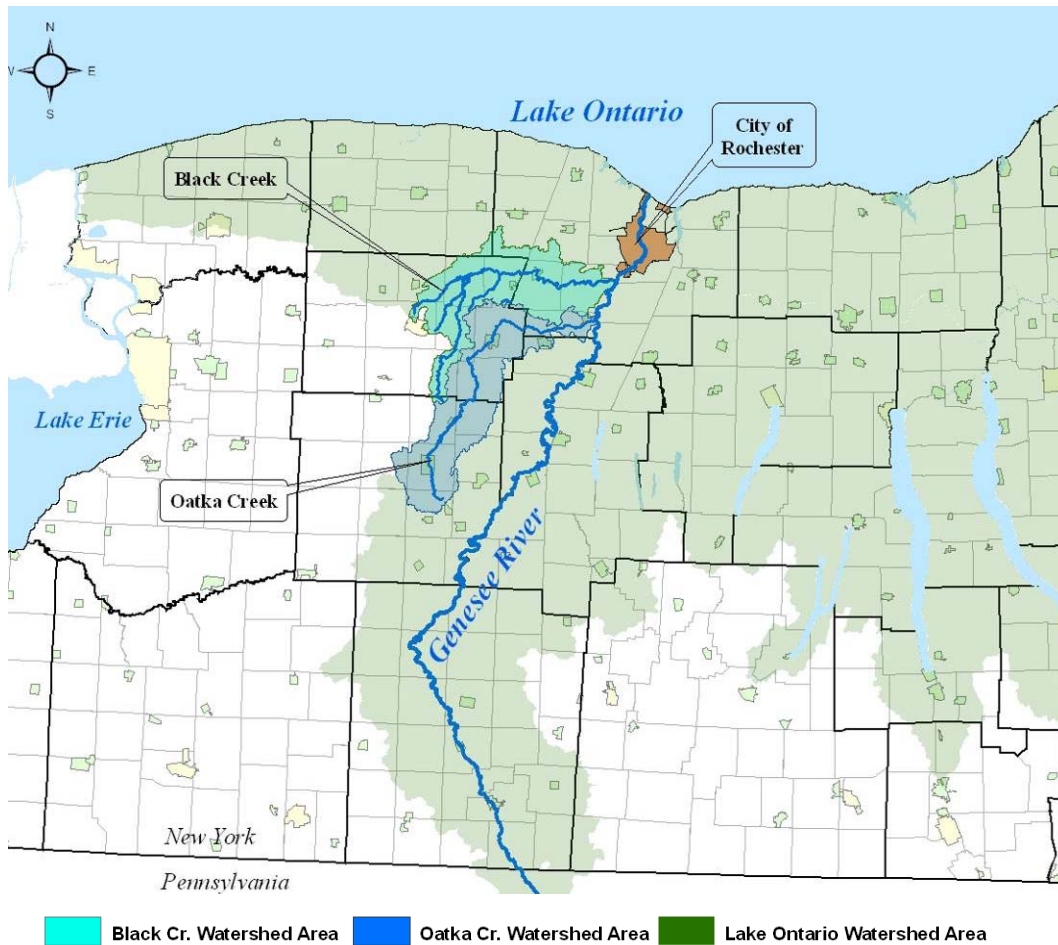


II. INTRODUCTION

The Black and Oatka Creek watersheds are adjacent sub-drainage basins that comprise a significant portion of the Lower Genesee River drainage basin. Eventually all of the water contributed by these two watersheds enters the Genesee River, where it then flows north through the City of Rochester and into Lake Ontario at the lake's southern shore, known locally as the Port of Rochester.

Human activity within all watersheds can have a direct impact on land and water use patterns. If improperly managed, these activities can have cumulative, negative impacts on local and regional water quality. Recognizing the importance of protecting area land and water resources, concerned citizens, local governments, and public and private organizations have been putting forth significant efforts over the past three decades to better understand the physical, chemical and ecological complexities of the Black and Oatka Creek watersheds.

Overview of the Black and Oatka Creek Watersheds/Lake Ontario Drainage



Through the efforts of the Black Creek Watershed Coalition, the Oatka Creek Watershed Committee, various public agencies and area academic institutions, watershed characterizations (also called “state of the basin” reports) have been completed for each watershed. A watershed characterization is intended to be a comprehensive assemblage of the wide body of data that is available relative to the health and function of a drainage basin. Chemical, physical, ecological, demographic, historic and other types of pertinent data are collected on the focus area in an effort to establish baseline information and to better understand how these various attributes function, interact and change over time.

After this data has been adequately reviewed, the next logical step in the watershed planning process is the development of a watershed management plan. Watershed management plans are intended to develop a framework and implementation strategy for the future management of water resources within an area of concern. Along with municipal support and stakeholder involvement, watershed management plans depend on a body of reliable and robust data from which to draw conclusions from. The watershed management planning process, when conducted in a comprehensive and equitable manner, will ideally lead toward the efficient implementation of watershed management goals that are intended to benefit local water resources and the overall public good.

In the process of moving from a watershed characterization report to a watershed management plan in the Black and Oatka Creek watersheds, it is important that every stakeholder recognize the wide array of water quality issues that have been identified thus far. Tasks 2, 3 and 5 of this *Controlling Sediment in the Black & Oatka Creek Watershed* project are an integral part of this process. Task 2 produced the *Identification & Analysis of the Riparian Corridor in the Black & Oatka Creek Watersheds* report, which studied and made recommendations on many of the severely eroded streambanks in the two watersheds. Task 3 produced the *Municipal Law Review and Analysis* assessment report, which presented a comprehensive inventory of the regulatory mechanisms that govern land use and ultimately water resources in the 28 municipalities that are present within the two watersheds. Task 5 provided technical assistance and local law review to the Towns of Bethany, Sweden and Warsaw in an effort to address and integrate water quality best management practices.

Task 5: Revising Local Laws provided technical assistance to municipalities that expressed interest and commitment to revising their local laws. Each one of the 24 municipalities in the two watersheds (the watersheds share parts of six municipalities) could receive assistance from Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (G/FLRPC) in revising their local laws based on the assessment and the models in Task 2 and 3 in relation to their existing local laws, existing State and Federal laws and regulation, assessment and recommendations of the riparian corridors, and land use patterns, issues and concerns. This involved an initial meeting with each municipality’s town/village, and planning board to explain the assessment and analysis process and to seek a working relationship. Applications were distributed to all municipalities in the watershed for Assistance to Municipalities in Revising Local Laws. The deadline for applications was October 3, 2005. Four municipalities sent in an application requesting assistance. G/FLRPC staff worked with three of those towns.

The following compilation is intended to satisfy the requirements of *Task 5: Revising Local Laws*. The document brings together major findings from the technical assistance work Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council provided to the Towns of Bethany, Sweden, and Warsaw.
