

REPORT CARD

The Eighteenmile Creek Area of Concern Report Card was created by the Eighteenmile Creek Remedial Advisory Committee (RAC). **The purpose of this Report Card is to give a brief overview of the health, improvements and current conditions of Eighteenmile Creek during 2009.** The Eighteenmile Creek Watershed includes – the main branch of Eighteenmile Creek, Gulf Creek Tributary, East Branch of Eighteenmile Creek (Red Creek), and augmented flow from the NYS Erie Barge Canal.

Scientific data and research that was referenced during the development of this Report Card can be found at the Area of Concern website:

WWW.EIGHTEENMILERAP.COM

This Report Card offers six “indicators” related to the management of the creek’s overall health. They are: 1) Water Quality; 2) Contamination; 3) Fish & Wildlife; 4) Public Access & Recreation; 5) Remedial Action Plan; and 6) Environmental Education & Public Involvement.

Each indicator has been further divided into several “sub-categories” to assess how specific concerns are being addressed. Each sub-category has been assigned a **letter grade** based upon past successes, current health conditions, and trends over the past few years. The last column identifies action steps or immediate concerns to be addressed in order to meet restoration targets for the Area of Concern. This Report Card will be updated annually.

EIGHTEENMILE CREEK BENEFICIAL USE IMPAIRMENTS

- 1) Fish & Wildlife Consumption - **Impaired**
Delisting Targets → **Identified**
- 2) Degradation of Benthic Populations - **Impaired**
Delisting Targets → **Identified**
- 3) Restrictions on Dredging Activities - **Impaired**
Delisting Targets → **Identified**
- 4) Bird/Animal Reproductive Problems - **Likely**
Delisting Targets → **Identified**
- 5) Fish Tumors/Other Deformities - **Not Impaired**
Delisting Targets → **Identified**
- 6) Fish & Wildlife Populations - **Under Review**
Delisting targets → **Identified**

Report Card				Current Conditions				Trend		Steps Needed for Problem Resolution							
Categories	Grade	Successes & Improvements		Current Conditions													
Water Quality	C	Overall Water Quality in the Creek		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NYSDEC is currently studying contaminant loadings to Lake Ontario. A Stressed Stream Analysis was completed in 2009 which identified numerous sources of nutrient and soil loss within the watershed. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The AOC is a Class B/C stream indicating that the primary use is contact recreation and fishing. NYSDEC monitors water quality through the Rotating Intensive Basin Study (RIBS) program and State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) program. 		↔		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A citizen water quality campaign should be deployed within the watershed. Contaminated sediments within the watershed must be remediated. Annual “Clean-Sweep” events should continue to occur throughout the watershed. Unknown sources of water quality impairment must be identified. 							
		Quality of Stormwater Entering the Creek		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Floodplain data was updated by FEMA in 2009. Storm drains have been mapped in the Town of Newfane and drain markers have been placed. Storm water outfalls to the creek have been identified and mapped in a GIS. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Between 2003 and 2005, the mean storm event concentrations of phosphorus and total suspended solids were more than double than the mean concentrations during nonevent conditions. 13 Combined Sewer Overflows remain in Lockport. 		↔		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All storm water outfalls should be sampled and monitored for illicit discharges to the creek. Remaining Combined Sewer Overflows must be eliminated. Continue with the storm water education campaign. 							
Contamination	C	Spills, Discharges & Leaching of Contaminants		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An online Pollutant Generator Database and mapping portal have been completed. NYSDEC continues to investigate and manage Inactive Hazardous Waste Sites that potentially impact the creek. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 Inactive Hazardous Waste Sites in the watershed still have the potential to negatively influence the AOC. Unknown nonpoint source discharges negatively affect the creek. 		↔		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist farms in the watershed through the NYS Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) program. Continue to remediate Inactive Hazardous Waste Sites and other sources of contamination. 							
		Contaminated Sediments in the Creek		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Eighteenmile Creek Corridor Site has been added to the NYS Superfund Registry. A Record of Decision for the site is expected in early 2010. In 2009, over 200 sediment samples were collected from the creek utilizing Great Lakes Legacy Act funding from USEPA. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sediments in the AOC exceed NYS standards for a variety of contaminants, including PCBs, lead, etc. Contaminated sediments within the watershed continue to influence the overall health of the AOC. A number of historic power generation structures present in the creek act as “sinks” for contaminated sediment. 		↑		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of deep water creek sediments behind Burt and Newfane dams should commence in 2010. Utilize Legacy Act to remediate the present contamination. Continue to update and improve the online Pollutant Generator Database. Continue to identify new funding sources for sediment related work in the watershed. 							
Fish and Wildlife	D	Contaminant Levels in Fish & Wildlife		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Trophic Trace food web study commenced in 2009 which will assist in determining the status of current use impairments and identify potential human health and ecological risks due to bioaccumulation of sediment-associated contaminants. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fish consumption advisories exist for the AOC, upper watershed and Lake Ontario. Contaminated sediments within the AOC are extremely bio-available to wildlife. 		↔		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remediate upstream sources and contaminated sediments. Commit to monitor contaminant levels in fish and wildlife present in the AOC and watershed in an attempt to establish a more current baseline of data prior to any potential remediation. 							
		Fish & Wildlife Diversity & Populations		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over 130,000 Chinook and Coho salmon and 7,000 Steelhead stocked by NYSDEC in 2009. A recent study indicated diverse fish and wildlife populations in the AOC. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large concentrations of coho and chinook salmon and brown trout migrate from Lake Ontario each fall. The area supports substantial natural reproduction by bass, northern pike and black crappie. 		↔		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to support Olcott Harbor Pen Rearing Project. Monitor wetland bird and amphibian populations through the Marsh Monitoring Program. Contaminated sediments affecting fish & wildlife require attention. 							
Public Access & Recreation	A	Public Access to the Creek & Adjacent Areas		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fisherman’s Park was improved with additional angler access to the creek through the completion of the Phase II Habitat Restoration/Angler Access Project. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The AOC is accessible for anglers and general recreation activities from Fisherman’s Park and Olcott Harbor. Majority of the AOC is secluded by a steep ravine. Limited access to boaters in the upper watershed. 		↔		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the options for land acquisition and conservation easements for properties adjacent to the AOC. Access improvements are needed upstream of the Burt Dam to accommodate canoe enthusiasts and other recreational users of the creek. 							
		Aesthetics of the Creek & Adjacent Riparian Areas		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cub Scouts participated in a “Clean-Sweep” of the AOC which yielded the collection of 32 lbs of trash. Anglers have begun to “Pitch In” and not leave large amounts of debris, as previously observed. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Town of Newfane routinely monitors Fisherman’s park for litter and other debris. A large majority of the creek flow originates from the City of Lockport Waste Water Treatment Plant, causing an excess of submerged aquatic vegetation within the AOC. 		↔		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue with annual AOC “Clean-Sweep” events. Educate and encourage recreational users of the creek to “Pitch-In” and promote a healthy ecosystem. Continued storm water education and outreach to various communities in the watershed. 							
Remedial Action Plan	B	RAP Management		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 NY AOC workshops occurred in 2009, providing a forum to discuss mutual goals & objectives. Planning has begun to complete a Use Impairment delisting strategy for the AOC. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EPA Region 2 has funded NCSWCD to manage the Eighteenmile RAP until 2011. New York AOCs have begun to collaborate as a group to identify common challenges and goals to recovery. 		↔		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular Status Reports and updates should continue to be completed. Grant fund acquisition should continue to be ongoing. Completion of a remedial strategy to delist use impairments is critical to securing future funding under the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. 							
		RAC Management		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final delisting criteria was developed for all Beneficial Use Impairments. The RAC has begun to complete a revised Stage II RAP document. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The RAC is comprised of a diverse group of original members and representatives from newer interests. The RAC meets to discuss various aspects of the RAP and to explore new opportunities to de-list the AOC. 		↔		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a remedial strategy to delist all impaired beneficial uses by 2011. Continue the assessment of Beneficial Uses for the creek. Complete a revised Stage II RAP in 2010-2011. 							
Trends	Grading	Environmental Education															
 Conditions Improving  Conditions Unchanged  Conditions Worsening	A Excellent B Good C Fair D Poor F Failure	Public Awareness				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16 watershed identification signs were erected and 3 large format AOC education kiosks were constructed throughout the watershed. A social media campaign began in 2009, incorporating a Facebook page and other online media. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every year the AOC is utilized as an “outside classroom” for elementary, secondary and collegiate education activities and field trips. Despite a fish consumption advisory, the AOC is visited by 12,000 anglers annually. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to engage the public utilizing educational tools like the annual report card, various education events, internet mapping database, AOC website, newsletters and press releases. Increased media attention regarding NY AOCs and other local natural resources is crucial to providing awareness to the public in the future. 			
Watershed Stewardship				 40 volunteers participated in the 2009 AOC “Clean-Sweep,” collecting 32 lbs of trash.		 Volunteers placed 125 storm drain markers in the Town of Newfane, NY.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is an increasing but still limited amount of participation from the public related to the AOC. The Marsh Monitoring Program has attracted volunteers interested in environmental issues. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with sportsmen clubs/local residents to promote AOC stewardship. Continue with annual AOC “Clean-Sweep” and education events to keep youth interested in stewardship. 							

WHAT IS THE EIGHTEENMILE CREEK AREA OF CONCERN (AOC) ?

Local, state and federal officials identified a section of Eighteenmile Creek as one of 42 “Areas of Concern” (AOC) in the Great Lakes Basin. Eighteenmile Creek received this designation because of poor water quality and contaminated sediments present throughout the watershed. Eighteenmile Creek’s long history of use by major industries in the area, especially near the City of Lockport and Town of Newfane, has played a large role in the present condition of the creek.

WHAT IS THE EIGHTEENMILE CREEK REMEDIAL ACTION PLAN (RAP) ?

A RAP is an integrated, whole ecosystem approach to remediating impaired water bodies. The RAP first identifies use impairments, their causes, and contaminant sources, using existing studies and data. Next, existing cleanup and regulatory programs which apply to the water body are identified. A coordinated cleanup strategy is then developed to eliminate the use impairments. The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation produced the Stage 1/2 RAP in 1997 in an effort to restore the integrity of the creek’s ecosystem.

WHAT IS THE EIGHTEENMILE CREEK REMEDIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (RAC) ?

The Eighteenmile Creek RAC is comprised of a group of local, state and federal stakeholders, representing industries, organizations and local communities with a vested interest in the health of Eighteenmile Creek. The RAC is responsible for implementing the RAP, monitoring restoration efforts, and assessing ongoing needs and conditions. After a brief hiatus, the RAC reconvened in 2005 and is currently making progress in moving the RAP forward.



FOR MORE INFORMATION
Contact:
**Niagara County Soil & Water Conservation District
U.S.D.A. Service Center
4487 Lake Avenue
Lockport, NY 14094
Phone: (716) 434-4949
Fax: (716) 434-4985
Website: www.eighteenmilerap.com**



EIGHTEENMILE CREEK AREA OF CONCERN REPORT CARD 2009

