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Habitat Restoration



is Key to a Healthy and Sustainable Onondaga Lake

What Makes a Great Habitat?

Habitat is the physical and biological surroundings that make up the natural environment of an organism. It is the area where plants and animals live, grow, feed, and reproduce, for a portion of their life cycles.

These surroundings provide fish, birds, mammals, and other organisms with the necessary elements for life, such as space, food, water, and shelter.

The Onondaga Lake Habitat Restoration Plan successfully addresses the complexities of creating, maintaining or improving the quality and diversity of habitats while promoting public access and recreation. Habitat restoration is an integral component of the Onondaga Lake remedy and, in fact, is one of the cleanup's most significant elements.



Honeywell continues to make great strides toward achieving the community's vision of a restored Onondaga Lake with the development of a Habitat Restoration Plan. The plan includes wetlands, shoreline improvements, and a robust habitat layer for the lake bottom. It is the result of extensive work by a team of national and local experts with input from those who use and care about the lake. It includes conceptual designs for habitat restoration and enhancement. The plan must be approved by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) following public comment.

The habitat plan builds on progress at sites in the lake's watershed to ensure a comprehensive approach to the restoration of Onondaga Lake. When completed, the various projects will create rich wetlands along the lake's southern shoreline, provide diverse habitats, and increase public access.

These lake-sustaining projects include:

- Twelve thousand newly-planted trees and native plants now thriving in restored wetlands around the former Linden Chemicals and Plastic Company site in Geddes
- More than 100,000 new plants at a Shrub Willow Farm, on the former Solvay basins, creating a sustainable and effective natural cover while increasing biodiversity and creating a source of biofuels for the region

Plans for new forested wetlands along Geddes Brook and Nine Mile Creek will ensure an increase in wildlife and recreation opportunities.

Onondaga Lake continues to progress toward returning to the thriving and dynamic natural resource and community asset that it once was. This comprehensive habitat restoration plan is another important step in that vision.

Improved Fishing Access and Rich Wetlands

The habitat plan provides a comprehensive approach to restoring habitat in and around the lake. The design respects natural processes and conditions to create suitable habitat for various species while allowing for public access to the lake and surrounding areas.

Key plan benefits:

- Providing deep water near shore for improved fishing access
- Increasing the size and diversity of shoreline wetlands
- Creating conditions suitable for a variety of native species
- Discouraging the establishment of invasive species
- Promoting fish spawning in adjacent wetland areas
- Providing suitable conditions for transient cold water fish and game fish, like brown trout and bass
- Establishing habitats that are currently lacking in the lake, like floating aquatic plants



Habitat Plan Identifies Wide Range of Species

The habitat plan identifies representative species from groups of fish, plants, mammals, amphibians, reptiles, and birds whose habitat requirements were used to guide the restoration designs.

Each species represents a larger group that share similar habitat requirements. For instance, the semipalmated sand piper represents shore birds that would share similar habitats and needs to thrive.



MAMMALS

Muskrat
Mink
Otter
Beaver
Indiana Bat

AMPHIBIANS/ REPTILES

Spotted Salamander
Mudpuppy
Leopard/Wood/
Green Frogs
Red Spotted Newt
Northern Water
Snake
Snapping/Painted/
Musk Turtles

BIRDS

Mallard
Bank Swallow
Red-winged
Blackbird
Belted Kingfisher
Osprey
Great Blue Heron
Green Heron
Common
Goldeneye
Spotted Sandpiper
Semi-palmated
Sandpiper
Common Tern

FISH

Northern Pike
Lake Sturgeon
Small/Large
Mouth Bass
Walleye
Brown Trout
Pumpkinseed
Sunfish
Golden Shiner
Emerald Shiner

AQUATIC PLANTS

Floating Vegetation
Emergent
Vegetation
Salt Marsh
Vegetation
Wet Meadow
Vegetation
Forested Shrub
Vegetation
Submerged
Vegetation

Working Together to Restore Onondaga Lake Habitat and its Watershed

The habitat plan was developed by members of the Habitat Technical Work Group with input from many organizations that use the lake on a regular basis. This technical group is comprised of representatives from DEC (Bureau of Remediation and Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources), EPA, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Honeywell, State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry, Mississippi State University, Terrestrial Environmental Specialists, AnchorQEA, O'Brien & Gere and Parsons.

This extensive team of local and national experts represents several hundred years of collective experience in areas of wetland ecology, limnology, biology, restoration ecology, fisheries biology and sediment remediation.

Each wetland species has habitat requirements, including water depth, wave energy, structure and vegetation cover, rooting or burrowing depth, and/or water quality.

The habitat designs were developed using many different criteria, including the integration of habitat needs with the dredging and capping cleanup plan selected by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and DEC. The habitat plan goes beyond simply meeting the requirements for restoration. The approach will result in improved conditions for a wide variety of species in and around the lake.

Community Input is a Key Component of Habitat Restoration



Habitat restoration and enhancement are important community benefits for the remediation of Onondaga Lake. That's why Honeywell, in partnership with DEC, created a working group with local habitat, conservation, and community organizations. Over the past several years, opinions and perspectives from these groups have helped identify and resolve key issues for inclusion in the plan.

The group includes members from Audubon Society, Ducks Unlimited, Citizens Campaign for the Environment, Salt City Bassmasters, New York Wildfowlers, Onondaga County Federation of Sportsmen, Sierra Club, Izaak Walton League of America and DEC.

Honeywell is committed to continuing to work with community leaders, environmental groups, fishing and wildlife enthusiasts, interested stakeholders and citizens so their input, recommendations, comments, and perspectives can be thoroughly evaluated by the Habitat Technical Work Group.

For more information please visit www.onondaga-lake-initiatives.com or call us at **315.552.9784**.

