



LAKE · GEORGE
WATERKEEPER[®]

NEWS RELEASE

April 6, 2008

For more information: Dawn Keppler (518) 668-5913 x302

Waterkeeper Releases 2008 Stream Assessment Report

Lake George - The Lake George Waterkeeper Stream Assessment Project released its annual report *2008 Stream Assessment Report: The chemical, physical, and biological data collected in 52 stream sample sites throughout the Lake George watershed*. This report not only provides the actual data collected in streams, but also makes comprehensive assessments on the conditions of tributaries to Lake George. Dawn Keppler, the Stream Assessment Project Director, collected data on a daily basis from early June to the end of September. This is the second annual report produced by the project, which increased the data collected to include 10 additional sample sites as well as other water quality parameters. The report is available on the website www.lakegeorgewaterkeeper.org.

“This project is a major effort to evaluate as many streams as possible throughout the Lake George watershed. Over half of the water in Lake George comes from streams, so stream health has a major impact on the water quality of Lake George. Streams are highly susceptible to impacts from land uses and can change dramatically from section to section depending on surrounding land use activities. This study looks at streams all around the lake and follows state and federal scientific protocols for stream evaluations” said Dawn Keppler, Stream Assessment Project Director for the Lake George Waterkeeper.

“The need to monitor and assess our streams is more critical than ever before,” stated Chris Navitsky, Lake George Waterkeeper. “This research is critical for evaluating the impacts our activities are having on streams and ultimately, the water quality of Lake George. It also clearly demonstrates the need for increased regulations to protect water quality such as stream corridor management.”

This year’s data indicated that over 60% of the sample sites were impacted to some degree. Chemical analysis indicated that dissolved oxygen levels and pH were within

state standards. Conductivity, which is a measurement of instream pollution, varied considerably between streams and tended to be higher in streams located in more urbanized watersheds. Biological data indicated that nearly half of the sample sites were impacted when assessing the aquatic macroinvertebrates living in the stream. Macroinvertebrates are organisms that cling to the rocks on the streambed, are visible with the naked eye and do not have a backbone. They vary in their ability to tolerate pollution and are extremely accurate indicators of water quality because they are constantly exposed to the environmental conditions of the stream. The most impacted streams included the Mohican Road tributary and Finkle Brook, in the Town of Bolton and West Brook, located in the Town of Lake George. These streams had the lowest overall biological scores and were determined to be moderately impacted. Interestingly, in the Mohican Road tributary over 40% of the subsample consisted of sowbugs, which are crustaceans that are classic indicators of sewage pollution and can thrive in toxic situations.

Physical data indicated that the amount of suspended solids, measured by turbidity and total suspended solids, are typically low in all streams during baseflow conditions. However, during storm events this number can increase substantially. Habitat assessments indicated that many sample sites lack adequate instream and streamside habitat. Interestingly, the streams that were determined to be impacted through biological analysis generally had reduced streamside habitat and higher instream pollution. “Although we rely on actual data to make comprehensive stream assessments, I can generally tell before I even step into a stream if it is impacted based on visual observations and my current knowledge of the watershed. Those streams that look impacted and closely border the road, are channelized, and lack sufficient protection are generally the streams that are found to have lower water quality scores,” said Dawn Keppler, the Lake George Waterkeeper Stream Assessment Project Director.

This year Dawn has already begun preparations for the upcoming field season and hopes to add new sample sites to her routine monitoring efforts. “We hope to continue to add new sites every year, until we are routinely sampling each and every stream in the watershed,” said Dawn. If you have a stream on your property that you would like to have sampled, please contact Dawn at (518) 668-5913 ext 302. To access the new stream assessment report or other reports produced by the Lake George Waterkeeper and FUND for Lake George please visit our website www.lakegeorgewaterkeeper.org.

The Lake George Waterkeeper

The Lake George Waterkeeper was launched in 2002 with a mission to defend the natural trust public resources of Lake George and its basin, which provides for the common good of the community and the watershed. The Lake George Waterkeeper is a resource for concerned citizens in the Lake George Basin who are concerned about land use and water quality. The Lake George Waterkeeper is a program of the FUND for Lake George, a not-for-profit, privately funded organization dedicated to the protection of Lake George.