

By the Numbers: The Water Wealth of Oneida County

Oneida County has rich and extremely varied water resources – only Vilas County has more lakes. Studies indicate the lakes and streams are among the county's most important economic resource. Here are some facts about Oneida County's lakes and streams:

- The county has 1,130 lakes with a total of 69,351 surface acres.
- There are 296 streams totaling more than 830 miles, including 77 trout streams (194 miles).
- The lake shorelines total 1,331 miles, and the stream shorelines total 1,661 miles.
- 82 percent of the lakes (938) are less than 50 acres, and 445 are less than 10 feet deep. The deepest is Clear Lake in the Northern Highland American Legion State Forest, at 100 feet.
- The largest lake is Lake Tomahawk at 3,627 acres, and the largest flowage is the Willow Flowage at 5,135 acres.
- Privately owned lake shoreline totals about 1,000 miles, more than three times the publicly owned lake shoreline (300 miles).

The county has a wide variety of lake types: seepage, drainage, drained, spring, and impoundment. In addition, each lake is unique in size; water quality, color and transparency; and fish and wildlife habitat. This variety makes the waters interesting, useful and valuable.

The lakes and streams are also unique in their ability to tolerate pollution. The Hat Rapids Flowage on the Wisconsin River, for example, receives hundreds of pounds of pollution daily from the City of Rhinelander and a paper mill yet still meets water quality standards. On the other hand, many lakes and small streams cannot tolerate even small amounts of pollution.

This is why a one-size-fits-all shoreline protection rule covering all of Wisconsin cannot adequately protect Wisconsin's waters. Local control and science-based rules are best for the waters and the people who enjoy and depend on them.

One in a series of articles sponsored by the Oneida County Lakes and Rivers Association (www.oclra.org). For more information, contact Bob Martini at 715-282-5896 or email to webmaster@oclra.org. OCLRA encourages the use and distribution of this material by lake associations, their members, and other parties concerned about water quality.

Did you know...
In 2015, the Wisconsin legislature took away the right of counties to enact lakeshore zoning rules more protective than the minimum standards set by state law.

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ONEIDA COUNTY
Lakes and Rivers Association