

Lake Ontario Embayments

Social Science Findings

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Two parts

- First, an overview of landuse history in the area to relate findings from the other segments of the research
 - International Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River Water Level Study, completed in 2005
 - “I don’t mean looking at it through your eyes. I mean looking at it through the eyes of the people living there.”

Two Parts

- Second, attending public meetings and interviewing local stakeholders
 - Contact with a variety of individuals in the research locations – personnel from the Sea Grant program (affiliated with USDA and Cornell Cooperative Extension), local citizens, and municipal officials. Focus groups will help determine how best to convey our findings and the outlets through which this should occur.
 - Rather than focus on more written materials, our social science research revealed a need to convey the project findings to local town boards and other municipal organizations. All stakeholders expressed an interest in this mechanism for outreach.

Little Sodus Bay

- disconnect between residents' relationship to the local water body and Lake Ontario, depending on the embayment connection to the Lake.
 - “Lake Ontario is too large for a sense of ownership [by local residents].”
 - concentration on access to the bay
 - the approximately four hundred residences on the bay are very protective of it
 - “There is one building inspector but five hundred watchers.”

South Sandy Pond

- As with other embayments, the focus here is on the bay, not Lake Ontario
 - more attachment to North Sandy Pond than South Sandy Pond due to North Pond's direct connection to Lake Ontario
 - “South Pond is just a hole in the wall”
 - local focus is on sewage issues not in terms of Lake Ontario but in terms of the embayments
 - “People who lived here don't want regulations – people moving in want it. Newcomers, therefore the creation of a tax base, so it is good, but the bad part is that they want services.”

Juniper Pond

- Juniper Pond does not seem to have an obvious constituent group
- many stakeholders including county soil and water conservation district employees and local municipal officials did not even know where Juniper Pond was located

General comments

- bays are treated like a lake, and there does not seem to be direct community concern about Lake Ontario
- “localized interest in the bays – no groundswell; people don’t understand the connection.”
- increased regulation is generally unpopular with local residents of this area

Remaining outreach work

- focus groups will take place in late summer or early fall 2007
- a need to convey the project findings to local town boards and other municipal organizations