Onondaga L

10,000 years ago

- Glacial activity carves out hills and valleys across Central New York, creating Onondaga Lake.

Over 1,000 years ago

- Earliest recorded date that Indian Nations come together at Onondaga Lake to form the Haudenosaunee Confederacy.

1613

- A treaty between the Haudenosaunee and the Dutch (the Two Row Wampum) establish relations.

1783

- Revolutionary War ends. European settlements develop in Central New York.

1784

- In the Treaty of Fort Stanwix, George Washington asks for peace between the USA and the Haudenosaunee to end fighting and re-establish relations.

1793

- Commercial salt production begins on the lakeshore.

1880s

- Onondaga Lake is a popular resort area with hotels, parks, and bathing beaches. Swimming, boating, and fishing are common activities.

1884

- Solvay Process Company begins production of soda ash.

1896

- City builds sewers and bans backyard privies. Sewage flows directly into Onondaga Creek and Harbor Brook.

1918

- Solvay Process Company begins production of organic chemicals.

1920

- Solvay Process Company merges with four other companies and forms Allied Chemical and Dye Corp.

1925

- City of Syracuse begins the removal of settleable solids from sewage (primary treatment).

1940

- Swimming is banned.

1946

- Allied Chemical and Dye Corp. begins discharge of mercury wastes into the lake.

1958

- Allied Chemical and Dye Corp. changes its name to Allied Chemical Corporation.

1960

- Onondaga County Metro is completed.

1970

- Fishing is banned. U.S. Attorney General sues Allied Chemical Corp. to stop mercury dumping.
- Onondaga County Department of Water Environment Protection establishes annual lake monitoring program.

1971

- Onondaga County bans the use of phosphorus in laundry detergents.

1972

- The Federal Clean Water Act is passed.

1973

- New York State bans phosphorus in laundry detergents.

1977

- Allied Chemical Corp. closes chlorinated benzene plant and Willis Avenue chlor-alkali plant.

1979

- Metro is upgraded to secondary and tertiary treatment.

1981

- Allied Chemical Corp. changes its name to Allied Corp.

1986

- Allied Corp. closes soda ash manufacturing operations.

1987

- Onondaga County implements best management practices for sewer interception.
- Allied Corp. merges with Signal Companies to form Allied-Signal Inc.

1988

- Atlantic States Legal Foundation, New York State Attorney General, and NYSDEC file complaint against Onondaga County alleging violation of its state discharge permit.

1989

- New York State Attorney General and NYSDEC file a lawsuit in Federal court against Allied-Signal Inc. for pollution violations and resource damage.
- A Consent Judgment is entered on February 1, 1989 requiring Onondaga County to perform studies to evaluate the need for upgrading Metro and for providing treatment of combined sewer overflows (CSO).

1990

- Onondaga Lake Management Conference is convened in Syracuse by U.S. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan.

1991

- Onondaga Lake Management Conference begins lake research and remediation projects.
- Pump stations at Liverpool and Ley Creek are modified to reduce raw sewage overflows to the lake.

1992

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers completes the Onondaga Lake Water Quality Technical Report with lake remediation alternatives.
- The Onondaga Lake Management Conference funds study of the Tully Valley mudboils.
- A Federal court approves a consent order for study of industrial pollution and development of a cleanup plan.

1993

- The Onondaga Lake Management Conference (OLMC) drafts “A Plan for Action” which becomes the basis of the Onondaga Lake Management Plan (OLMP).
- The OLMC publishes the first State of Onondaga Lake report.

Lake Timeline

1994

- Onondaga Lake is added to the Federal Superfund National Priorities List (NPL).

1995

- The OLMC implements mudboil remediation projects to reduce flow of sediment to Onondaga Creek.

1997

- The State of New York, Atlantic States Legal Foundation, and Onondaga County reach agreement (Amended Consent Judgment [ACJ]) on municipal wastewater collection and treatment improvements, and a schedule to attain compliance with the Clean Water Act.

1998

- The ACJ is approved by Federal Court and replaces and supersedes the 1989 Consent Judgment.
- The Ambient Monitoring Program is implemented in accordance with the ACJ.

1999

- The OLMC approves a resolution to incorporate the ACJ into the OLMP.
- The NYS Department of Health (NYSDOH) lifts the ban on eating certain species of fish from Onondaga Lake and provides additional guidelines.
- Congressman James T. Walsh initiates legislation in the Water Resource Development Act of 1999 that replaces the OLMC with the Onondaga Lake Partnership (OLP).
- The OLP, led by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, is tasked with implementing lake improvement projects consistent with the OLMP and the ACJ.
- Allied-Signal, Inc. combines with Honeywell, Inc. and changes its name to Honeywell International, Inc.

2001

- Oil tanks are removed from "Oil City" and tenants begin site remediation.
- The second State of Onondaga Lake report is produced by the Onondaga Lake Cleanup Corp with support from the OLMC and the OLP.

2002

- The NYSDEC issues a report detailing the extent of contamination within the lake and assessing the risk to humans and the environment.

2004

- The final stage of the Metro improvements for ammonia treatment come on-line.

2005

- The Actiflo treatment system come on-line at Metro to reduce effluent total phosphorus (TP) concentration.
- NYSDEC and USEPA outline remediation plans for Onondaga Lake's industrial pollution concerns.
- Metro reaches ammonia limit goal eight years ahead of the scheduled deadline.
- Honeywell International, Inc. removes more than eight tons of mercury from the Linden Chemicals and Plastics property.

2006

- The NYS Attorney General's office files a motion to amend the ACJ with U.S. District Court. The amendments reflect changes since the original ACJ was signed in 1998.
- Honeywell International, Inc. completes a groundwater treatment plant at the former Allied Chemical, Willis Avenue site.
- Phosphorus release from Metro to Onondaga Lake is reduced from 200 pounds per day to 50 pounds per day with completion of an upgraded phosphorus removal facility.

2007

- NYSDOH modifies the fish consumption advisory for some species of fish.
- Wetlands restoration at former Linden Chemical and Plastics site is completed.
- Honeywell International, Inc. signs a Consent Decree to perform the Remedial Design and Remedial Action for the Onondaga Lake Bottom Site.

2008

- Honeywell International, Inc. begins construction of the groundwater barrier wall and trench collection system that will capture and transfer groundwater to the Willis Avenue treatment plant.
- Construction of Midland Avenue RTF is completed and addresses three CSOs.
- Atlantic States Legal Foundation, NYSDEC, and Onondaga County obtain a moratorium on construction of the proposed treatment facilities so that alternative methodologies, including green infrastructure, can be evaluated as part of the CSO abatement program.
- A Microbial Trackdown Program is implemented to identify dry weather sources of bacteria discharges to Onondaga Creek and Harbor Brook.
- Onondaga County proposes gray and green infrastructure as a component to its CSO abatement program.

2009

- The draft Onondaga Creek Conceptual Revitalization Plan is released for public review.
- NYSDEC issues the design work plan for the Onondaga Lake Bottom NPL Subsite and cleanup decision documents for the Geddes Brook/ Ninemile Creek Site.
- NYSDEC issues a Citizen Participation Plan designed to enhance public input and involvement in the Onondaga Lake Bottom cleanup project.
- A Fourth Stipulation to the ACJ is adopted and approved by the Federal court, incorporating green infrastructure methodologies into the CSO abatement program.

2010

- The OLP publishes the third State of Onondaga Lake report.