Sterling & Wolcott Creeks
Integrated Watershed Action Plan

Public Meeting #1
March 8, 2022
Use Zoom Chat to Share

• Your name, where you’re from, and any affiliation

• How do you benefit from the Sterling & Wolcott Creeks watersheds?
Reminder of Zoom Controls

- See who is here, which **participant** is talking
- Turns your **camera on and off**. Limiting video use can optimize performance
- Turns your **microphone on and off**. Please mute when not speaking to reduce background noise.
- Zoom chat to ask questions, make comments, and find hyperlinks to resources
Today’s Speakers

**Emily Fell**  
Eastern Great Lakes Watershed Coordinator  
NYSDEC

**Tony Eallonardo**  
Senior Project Manager  
Ramboll

**Andrew Brainard**  
Project Manager  
Ramboll

**Liz Moran**  
Principal Scientist  
EcoLogic LLC

**Sharon Anderson**  
Outreach Specialist  
EcoLogic LLC
Watershed Stakeholder Committee

- Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs), Wayne and Cayuga Counties
- Planning Departments, Wayne and Cayuga Counties
- Wayne County Water and Sewer Authority
- Genesee- Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council
- Central New York Regional Planning & Development Board
- Cayuga County Parks
- SUNY College at Brockport
- NYS Department of State
- NYS Sea Grant
- Municipal Leaders and Bay Associations
Agenda

• Opening Remarks
• Introduction to Sterling & Wolcott Creeks IWAP
• Partners and Schedule
• Progress to Date: Conceptual Model and Goals
• Next Steps and Opportunities for Input
Opening Remarks

Tony Eallonardo (Ramboll)
Purpose:
To identify, protect, and restore key aspects of the Sterling & Wolcott Creek watersheds that support human health and well-being

Vision:
An engaged and empowered community protecting and restoring the watershed based on actions identified through this project. A healthy watershed for families and communities into the future!

Approach:
Science-based, collaborative, focused on ecosystem processes

This meeting:
We’re just getting started!

Introduce project and process, encourage participation, and receive input on goals
Sterling & Wolcott Creeks
Integrated Watershed Action Plan

Emily Fell (NYSDEC)

• Key Concepts and Definitions
• Why Sterling & Wolcott Creeks Selected for IWAP
NY’s Great Lakes Action Agenda (GLAA)
Ecosystem-Based Management (EBM)

A systems approach that strives to balance the needs of people, nature, and the economy through science-based decision making

- Place-based
- Protection of ecosystem structure, function and key processes
- Interconnectedness within and among systems
- Integration of ecological, social, economic and institutional perspectives
- Sustainable human uses of the ecosystem
- Stakeholder involvement & collaboration
- Scientific foundation for decision-making
- Adaptive Management
Why Sterling & Wolcott Creek Watersheds?

- Partner Priority Area under Great Lakes Action Agenda (GLAA)
- Diversity of people/stakeholders – opportunity for engagement to solve local issues
- Land use & land cover, geological features, settlement patterns
- Key issues including water quality, reducing invasive species, fishing, flooding, and erosion
Integrated Watershed Action Plan (IWAP)

• Improve shared **understanding and values** of the Sterling & Wolcott Creek watersheds and the ecosystem services that benefit us all

• Develop **indicators of ecosystem benefits** (e.g., water quality, recreation, forest health, habitat, and connectivity) to track progress

• Identify **“best bet” management strategies, actions, and projects** that maintain ecosystem services

• Increase **local community involvement, partnerships, and funding opportunities**

**Healthy ecosystems for families and communities into the future!**
Potential Outcomes & Actions

- Identify and protect critical areas for ecosystem services
  - Drinking water
  - Fish and wildlife habitat
  - Flood mitigation
  - Food production, medicinal plants, forest products

- Recommend best management practices (BMPs) to reduce risk of pollutant transport

- Enhance opportunities for outdoor recreation

- Restore and revitalize communities

- Promote climate resilient community planning

- Increase community awareness
Summary: Ecosystem-Based Management and IWAP

- Focus on place
- Analyze current conditions and trends, identify risks
- Prepare for change
- Identify opportunities
- Build partnerships

Comments or questions?
Path Forward

Liz Moran (EcoLogic LLC)

Partners:
- Watershed Stakeholder Committee
- Community Leaders
- Involved Public

Schedule:
- Target Completion Date: March 2023
Tasks and Schedule

- **Fall 2021**
  - WSC Meeting 1

- **Spring 2022**
  - Public Meeting 1

- **Winter 2022**
  - Public Meeting 2

- **Spring 2023**
  - Final IWAP

- **Fall 2022**
  - WSC Meeting 3 & Public Meeting 2

- **Winter 2023**
  - WSC Meeting 4
  - Implement Management Action

- **Winter 2023**
  - Evaluate Strategies

- **Spring 2023**
  - Evaluate Outcomes

- **Winter 2022**
  - Monitor Indicators

- **Spring 2022**
  - Develop Indicators

- **Fall 2022**
  - Assess Ecosystem

- **Winter 2023**
  - Analyze Uncertainty & Risk

- **Fall 2022**
  - Define EBM Goals & Targets
Status of IWAP Development

Watershed Reconnaissance
- Toured the watersheds
- Met with some key stakeholders

Convened Watershed Stakeholder Committee (WSC)
- First meeting in November 2021
- Look and Listen Tour: feedback on areas and issues to address in IWAP

Developed Goals and Targets
- Drafted goals and targets for review

October 2021

November 2021

December 2021 - February 2022
• What are your highest priorities for the Sterling & Wolcott Creek watersheds? How might IWAP help?
• What opportunities do you envision arising from this project?
• Who else should be part of the conversation?
• What other initiatives should our team be aware of?
Conceptual Model and Goals

Tony Eallonardo and Andrew Brainard (Ramboll)

- Conceptual Model of Sterling & Wolcott Creek Watersheds
- Place-Based Goals for IWAP
Sterling & Wolcott Creeks IWAP Goals

1. Coastal
2. Wetlands
3. Floodplains, Riparian Areas, and Streams
4. Forests
5. Water Quality
6. Sustainable Working Lands
7. Heritage and Sense of Place
Keep these questions in mind:

- Are the goals clear?
- What's missing from the goals?
- Do some goals resonate more than others?
1. COASTAL:

Manage coastal sediment erosion, deposition, and transport to protect natural features and habitat, sustain recreation and tourism, and help to protect public and private assets

Why?
Coastal areas contribute significantly to the local identity. Management of sediment processes underlie most benefits that coastal areas provide.
2. WETLANDS:

Preserve and restore healthy wetlands to support clean water, biodiversity, and opportunities for outdoor recreation

Why?
Provide numerous, unique benefits to human well-being, and significant habitat for many fish and wildlife species.

Dragonfly Pond. Photo by Jim D'Angelo
3. FLOODPLAINS, RIPARIAN AREAS, and STREAMS:

Enhance functioning of floodplains, riparian corridors, and streams to minimize infrastructure impacts from flood events, improve water quality, support quality aquatic habitat for fish and wildlife, and provide recreational access

Why?
Flooding can cause significant risks within the watershed. Improving floodplain function and streamside habitat provides for a broad range of benefits. Streams are vital to recreational opportunities and overall sense of place.
4. FORESTS:

*Promote healthy and connected forests and upland communities to support clean air and water, biodiversity, opportunities for outdoor recreation, and sustainable use of natural resources*

**Why?**
 Compared to other habitats (e.g., wetlands), there are few regulatory protections for forests. Provide many benefits and contribute to diversity of habitats across the landscape.
5. WATER QUALITY:

*Improve and maintain high quality surface and ground water resources to support aquatic habitat, drinking water supplies, and water-dependent recreation*

*Why?*
Direct requirement for well being and protecting water quality is a catch all for several other environmental benefits.
6. SUSTAINABLE WORKING LANDS:

Promote, implement, and improve sustainable land uses to provide future generations with the ability to use and prosper from natural resources

Why?
Working lands play a major role in the local economies – what is done now can influence characteristics of the watershed for many years to come.
7. HERITAGE and SENSE OF PLACE:

*Inspire and facilitate a connection with nature to support physical, social, and mental well-being*

**Why?**
Growing evidence that suggests a relationship with nature and the out of doors contributes to a happier, healthier life.
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Next Steps

• Near-Term:
  • Email comments on goals
    • SterlingWolcott@ramboll.com
  • Project team will finalize goals, begin to develop indicators
  • WSC Meeting #2: Spring 2022

• Second public meeting Fall 2022:
  • Review indicators and what they tell us about current conditions and trends
  • Discuss strategies, priorities, and projects
  • Explore built-out Conceptual Model and StoryMap

• Check the NYSDEC IWAP website for updates!
  • https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/124314.html
Thank you!

Final questions or comments?

Email: SterlingWolcott@ramboll.com
Website: https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/124314.html

Emily Fell, NYSDEC
emily.fell@dec.ny.gov

Tony Eallonardo, Ramboll
tony.eallonardo@ramboll.com
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