

ONONDAGA COUNTY OFFICE OF THE ENVIRONMENT

2027 EXECUTIVE BUDGET WRITTEN STATEMENT

SECTION 1:

2026 INITIATIVES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In 2026, the Office of the Environment (OE) continued its work addressing water quality issues in the County's many lakes and rivers. Projects include:

- Drinking Water Sources - Skaneateles Lake and Otisco Lake - The Onondaga County Office of the Environment worked alongside partners on both lakes to protect each as a drinking water supply as well as to protect the natural systems and beauty of each lake.
- Reducing total phosphorus levels in county waterbodies by:
 - Working with the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board (CNYRPDB) to reduce erosion of sediment and phosphorus loading on the Oneida Lake Watershed Advisory Committee as part of drafting a Nine Element Plan for the lake;
 - Partnering with CNYRPDB to update to the Otisco Lake Watershed Management Plan, a State-grant funded project;
 - Developing an engineering study to identify conditions leading to Harmful Algal Bloom formation in the Jamesville Reservoir;
 - Administering the County's grant program for aquatic nuisance species harvesting on Otisco Lake, reducing in-lake phosphorus contribution; and
 - Installation of the model Streambank Stabilization Project in the Winding Way neighborhood on Skaneateles Lake, a 2024 Water Quality Improvement Project (WQIP) grant from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC).

OE continued its efforts to prevent and manage nuisance and invasive species, specifically:

- Administering the County's water chestnut management program on the Seneca River as implemented by our partners, the Onondaga County Soil & Water Conservation District;
- Administering the County's Ash Tree Management program to address the loss of ash trees on the County's property and right-of-ways from the impacts of the emerald ash borer;
- Administering the County's grant program for aquatic nuisance species harvesting on Otisco Lake, reducing in-lake phosphorus contribution; and
- Administering the County's Deer & Tick program; and
- Coordinating with the Finger Lakes Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM) to track existing non-native and invasive species as well as identify and survey newly found species, such as the Carolina Fanwort.

OE continues to lead the effort for County compliance with the General Permit for the Syracuse Urbanized Area Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4), including updating the County's Stormwater Management Plan.

In 2026, OE's consultant completed the most recent Greenhouse Gas Inventory (GHGI) for Onondaga County operations. Completion of the GHGI made Onondaga County eligible to be Climate Smart Communities Bronze certified.

2026 BUDGET REVIEW

The 2026 Office of the Environment budget is sufficient and included funds for substantial projects to help support compliance, water quality protection, climate action, and natural resources conservation. These projects are multiyear and are expected to lead to additional projects and programs to maintain and improve the quality of the County's environment.

SECTION 2:

2027 BUDGET OVERVIEW

The Office of the Environment's 2027 budget includes standard salary and wage increases consistent with the baseline budget approach.

The Office of the Environment's Travel and Training appropriation remains flat for 2027 and supports professional conferences and training focused on water quality, solid waste, recycling, and emerging environmental best practices.

The 2027 Transfer to Grant Projects appropriation decreases by \$120,000, as previously allocated funding for the Deer and Tick Program is sufficient to continue the program through 2027. The remaining 2027 appropriation supports continuation of the County's Water Chestnut Program.

SECTION 3:

2027 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

In 2027, the Office of the Environment will continue to pursue projects and programs to improve water quality and prevent invasives species, like water chestnuts, further expanding efforts for working with regional and State partners.

A move to a web-based Stormwater Management Plan, hosted by the Office of the Environment, will increase availability to the public of the County's efforts to protect water quality in the Syracuse Urbanized MS4.

Implementing recommendations in the County's Climate Action Plan will continue to reduce the County's impact on Climate Change. Working with CNYRPDB and the Central New York Stormwater Coalition OE will make public mapping of the stormwater infrastructure throughout the Syracuse Urbanized Area MS4.