
OEC NEWSLETTER

Official publication of the Onondaga Earth Corps

OEC is excited to announce the release of Syracuse's Urban Forest Master Plan



2018 Fall volunteer tree planting event at Upper Onondaga Park.

The Urban Forest Master Plan (UFMP) was shaped by the input of over 1,500 people which was facilitated largely by OEC young adult participants. The plan lays out 5 and 20-year benchmarks to achieve the following goals: achieve canopy goals and equity, improve urban forest safety, and resiliency, and connect the entire community to the urban forest through educational programs.

This spring, the Parks Department will seek Syracuse Common Council's adoption of the plan. We are reaching out to you to help us turn this plan into action. Stakeholders of the urban forest will engage in virtual meetings for a 4-month period, March- June, to refine strategies to start on the path to implementation. These virtual meetings will be hosted by OEC. We will break into three committees to address the goals. At that time, we will pursue funding to fulfill these goals. If you would like to support our urban forest please join us for these planning sessions.

Please register in advance for the first meeting on March 25th, 2021 from 12:00-1:00 pm: <https://tinyurl.com/SyrUFMPmeeting>
After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing more information about the session and how to join the meeting.

You may access the Syracuse Urban Forest Master Plan here: https://issuu.com/syracuseinnovationteam/docs/syracuse_ufmp_final

We look forward to seeing you!

Kat Korba
OEC Natural Resources Program Coordinator

Past Events:

Creekwalk Public Meeting Mar 18, 2021 at 12PM - 1PM & 6:30PM- 7:30PM EST
Recorded Online Event:
Watch the presentation here
Take an online survey

Upcoming Events:

OEC Virtual Open House
Mar 24, 2021 at 3:30PM - 5PM & 5PM- 7PM EST
Register now!
<https://tinyurl.com/openhouseOEC>

Urban Forest Master Plan - Stake Holder Meeting
Mar 25, 2021 at 12PM - 1PM EST
Register now!
<https://tinyurl.com/SyrUFMPmeeting>

Bottle Bonanza
Apr. 24, 2021 All Day
Brookside Lane & Fayette Manor in Fayetteville and Hampton Rd. in Syracuse

Brunch-N-Munch Virtual Fundraiser
Apr. 26 2021 at 11:30AM - 12:30PM EST
Registration TBA at www.onondagearthcorps.org

Thank you to our Sponsors

Syracuse University- Office of Community Relations
Kornbluth-Coon Family
Rare Earth Nursery
Landscapes East
Webucator

Accepting Applications for Youth and Young Adult Program Employment Now!

Onondaga Earth Corps is accepting applications for our Youth (ages 15-18) and Young adult (ages 19-25) programs until March 26th. Applications can be submitted online at www.onondagaeearthcorps.org/jobs or in person at 910 Montgomery Street for temporary and limited in-person visiting hours for Feb-March 2021. A mask must be worn to enter the building.

Mon 1-3 pm | Tues 9-11 & 1-3 pm | Wed 1-3 pm | Thurs 9-11 & 1-3 pm | Fri 1-3 pm

Applicants and applicant representatives call our office for frequently asked questions. I hope to address those questions here. If these FAQs do not answer your questions, we encourage you to sign up for our last Virtual Open House sessions on March 24th which can be found on our website.

OEC Program Application FAQ

- I am 14 years old, can I still apply for the program?
 - Unfortunately, applicants must be 15 years of age or older at the time of hiring in order to qualify for our program positions.
- The application asks for a cover letter and resume, what if I don't have one?
 - All applications must be submitted with a cover letter and resume.
 - Simply put, a cover letter should address who you are, why you hope to work with OEC and why you think you are a good fit for the position.
 - If you have never had paid work experience, a resume can contain any of the following: extra curricular activities, volunteer work, education or training experience, or skills you might have. If you're still unsure about how to write either document, contact our office.
- I'm representing a group of potential applicants, can you come and speak with them (in person or zoom)?
 - Yes! Contact our office to set up a time for us to speak with them directly.
- I submitted an application, but I haven't heard back, can you give me a status update?
 - We are continuously accepting and reviewing applications as they are submitted. As we get closer to the application deadline (March 26th), we will contact you to let you know if we need further information. After our deadline we will contact applicants about interviews. If you're still unsure of your application status, contact our office.
- I don't live in Syracuse, can I still apply?
 - Yes, applicants that do not live in the City of Syracuse can still apply.

Please help us get the word out by sharing this information. We look forward to reading any new applications that come our way.

For more information visit our website at www.onondagaeearthcorps.org/jobs or email us at info@onondagaeearthcorps.org

Personal Development Mentorship

BY JESS ALIGHIERI

Onondaga Earth Corps (OEC) is gearing up for another fantastic year of environmental conservation, team work, community outreach, and our new and improved Mentor Program! Through the hard work of our Personal Development team and the shared experiences of our valued community partners, we are ready to launch our mentorship program designed to support our Young Adult (YA) crew members for the 2021 spring, summer, and fall seasons.

OEC YA crew members are paired with local community volunteers who will help to guide them through the process of identifying, planning, and executing personal, educational, or professional goals. Mentors will reinforce learned skills in personal development through the integration of Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely (SMART) goals.

SMART goals help YA crew members identify all the goals they may have while simultaneously learning to prioritize them based on content covered while working with OEC. OEC is unique in that we offer an earn to learn program that couples industry specific work opportunities with a personal development programming covering a variety of life skill topics. Our mentorship program applies a final touch of personalized encouragement and one on one guidance in the art of decision making in hopes of inspiring and motivating our crew members onward onto their next big employment or educational opportunity.



2020 Young Adult Crewmembers forest bathing at Green Lakes State Park.

So it is with great excitement that we embark on our improved mentorship program designed to see them succeed and learn how to reach their goals, further empowering our crew members into the next phase(s) of their lives.

If you are interested in volunteering to become a mentor with OEC or would like more information, please email our personal development crew leader, Jess Alighieri at jalighieri@onondagaeearthcorps.org or check out our online application at <https://onondagaeearthcorps.org/volunteer/>

Facilities Update

BY GREG MICHEL



Volunteer Charles Rivers, Natural Resource Coordinator Kat Korba, and Crew Leader Taj Martin, painting the walls at new office space at 910 Montgomery Street.

Before the pandemic, OEC was gearing up to make facility improvements where our field operations are based at 910 Montgomery St. We are finally sprucing things up and getting organized! Upgrades include removal of old carpets, painting office spaces, a tool repair station and more. We aim to have round one of improvements complete before our spring crews are on-boarded in April.

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OEC Volunteers collecting large bags of returnables during a bottle and can drive in Fayetteville, NY.

Bottle Bonanza

I'm pleased to report that since its inception in early 2020, Bottle Bonanza has raised, including matching funds, \$910.00. Our thanks to those who visited one of our four redemption centers within the last year. Let's keep it going!

To facilitate the exposure of the Bottle Bonanza program, OEC has planned four bottle and can drives in 2021 in three neighborhoods: Brookside Lane and Fayette Manor in Fayetteville and Hampton Rd. in Syracuse. The drives are scheduled for March 20, celebrating the first day of spring and St. Patrick's Day, April 24th, celebrating Earth Day, June 19, celebrating Juneteenth, and October 30, celebrating Halloween.

For supporters who wish to, we have made it easy to host a bottle and can drive in your neighborhood. Visit the OEC website, Onondagaeearthcorps.org, select "Donate" - "Bottle Bonanza" to access instructions and a fillable flyer to announce your drive. Promote and donate to Onondaga Earth Corps and help keep returnables out of the waste stream.

Going forward, Onondaga Earth Corps will be soliciting local small businesses to offer bottle and can collection services on a scheduled basis. Information about this program will be available through the website/Bottle Bonanza page in the next few weeks.

Again thank you to our supporters for participating in Bottle Bonanza.

Pieter Keese
skeese@twcny.rr.com
315-289-6776

Meet Aneesah Evans OEC's New Admin Assistant



"I'm Aneesah Evans and I recently assumed the role of Administrative Assistant for the Onondaga Earth Corps. Having been born, raised, and educated in the City of Syracuse, I am pretty vested in the Central NY community. As a homeowner and mother to five children (You read that right... 1-2-3-4-5 children!), I have always been interested in the nonprofit organizations that improve the quality of life in our neighborhoods.

As a teen, I volunteered in the main office at Henninger High School and am proud to say that it enabled me to build a fulfilling professional career. It served as the catalyst for my interest in providing quality administrative services and in taking pride in every task. The lessons learned in the Syracuse City School District positioned me well in high school, in college, and life in general.

In my leisure time, I enjoy spending time with my family, gardening, reading a good book, working with youth, and trying new foods. My primary objectives as a member of the Onondaga Earth Corps team involve learning more about the agency's mission and work, while connecting more of the city's youth to the programming."

Transforming the Westcott Reservoir Landscape

by Maren King

The Onondaga Earth Corps is collaborating with the Westvale Neighborhood Association (WVA), the City of Syracuse Water Dept, the City Arborist, and the SUNY ESF Center for Community Design Research (CCDR) to improve the appearance and ecologic function of the landscape of the Westcott Reservoir. Located just west of the city, the reservoir is an important part of the city's drinking water system as well as an iconic landscape feature for the neighborhoods that surround it. The current 50-acre landscape consists largely of mown lawn. WVA representatives submitted a request for design assistance to the CCDR to explore alternative designs for planting trees to provide shade, visual interest, and diversity. Concurrently they established a relationship with OEC, who provided advice on maintenance of a small grove of trees neighbors had planted close to the reservoir site.



Westcott Reservoir Pit Excavation

A team of ESF landscape architects and environmental science students facilitated a workshop with neighborhood residents in February 2020, just before the COVID pandemic. They shared information about ecosystem services and explored with participants how changes to the landscape, including planting trees and reducing the amount of mown lawn, could provide multiple environmental benefits

while maintaining the valued characteristics of the landscape identified by residents. Using design studies prepared by the students and approved by the City Water Dept, the WVA submitted several grant applications. With OEC as their partner and fiscal sponsor, a "test" planting of 30 trees was awarded funding from the CNY Community Foundation. Another grant from the Syracuse Parks Conservancy will allow for planting an additional 10 to 12 evergreen trees.

This tree planting is scheduled to occur in late April 2021. Organized and accomplished primarily by OEC staff and crew, there will be opportunities for neighborhood residents and students from the ESF team to take part. This project is an excellent example of how OEC's ability to form effective partnerships can result in action and change that improve the neighborhood environmental quality and quality of life of neighborhood residents.



Westcott Reservoir Workshop

Tree Felling with National Grid

BY KAT KORBA

The weather was warm (40°Fs) and sunny on Friday, March 12th, 2021 for our tree felling day with arborists from National Grid, Lewis Tree Service and Nelson Tree Service. This was an experientially rich hands-on learning day for the OEC staff and our advanced young adult crewmember, Jahkella Holmes-Porch. We started off the day by filling out a hazard site assessment with Jim Maloney from National Grid, making sure we all acknowledged site hazards and how to mitigate them. Next, we learned rope guiding and tree felling techniques from Dan Curry from Nelson Tree Services. He demonstrated the steps to fell the tree exactly where he intended it to land. Very impressive! We were also impressed by the tree chipper demonstrations that took place next once the first tree was down. They tied up the entire fallen tree by its trunk with a rope attached to the chipper and it would pull it over into the hopper and grind it up like a small twig. This was a good size invasive tree of heaven at 12" in diameter, estimated to be 35'-40' tall.

Our staff and crew were able to learn how to buck trees and safely fell trees using open notch cutting techniques. Jahkella made an excellent open notch cut and a back cut, see her photo below, with close guidance from Dan Curry. Aneesah Evan, a new member of our team, was able to gain her first experience operating a chainsaw working closely with Jim Maloney. Overall our staff had an excellent experiential day of growth and empowerment learning how to safely operate chainsaws. We are extremely proud of our staff and crew for their willingness to learn new skills and improve on their existing skill set. A special Thank You to our partners at National Grid for their ongoing support!



Top: Personal Development Team Leader, Jess Alighieri cutting branches from a limb for easy removal under supervision; Bottom left: Admin Assistant, Aneesah Evans practicing her chainsaw skills by cutting "cookies"; Bottom right: AYA Crewmember Jahkella Holmes-Porch making the final cut to a large tree.

We Want Your Input on the Creekwalk Restoration Project

BY TAY STENSON

Onondaga Earth Corps (OEC) and the City of Syracuse Department of Parks, Recreation & Youth Programs hosted two virtual public information sessions for residents on the South Side. This is an opportunity for the community to offer input on the Habitat and Greenway Enhancement Project coordinated in partnership with OEC.

Both information sessions took place on Thursday, March 18th. This is in collaboration with the Syracuse Parks Department and Applied Ecological, the ecological design consultant for the project. At these meetings, the team presented the entire scope of the project and design concepts.

Onward, fence removal from Colvin Street to the South Ave bridge began the week of March 8th & will continue until April 1st. A contractor will remove an estimated 300 dead, dying, and invasive trees inside the fence. Additionally, a new 4-foot fence will be installed to match the fence along the new Creekwalk. Lastly, in May, OEC will deploy crews to plant over 500 native trees and shrubs to replace what was removed.

Additional input is being gathered from residents through targeted neighborhood outreach and an online poll.

For more information, to view the recording of the public meeting visit, and to take the online poll, please visit <https://onondagaeearthcorps.org/creekwalkextension/>



2020 Crewmembers and Staff celebrating after planting one of many trees along the creekwalk.

Donate:

For more information on the donation options listed below, please visit: www.onondagaeearthcorps.org/donate

Amazon Smile

Use smile.amazon.com when making amazon purchases, and select Onondaga Earth Corps as your current charity.

Fund-A-Truck

Donate towards our fleet vehicles. Fund-A-Truck goal: \$50,000

Bottle Bonanza!

Redeem your returnable bottles and cans to one of our new redemption center partners: F-M Returnables, Express Bottle Return, Bottle and Can Retrieval, Papa Cans and Bottle Return. Ask them to deposit the \$ to the Onondaga Earth Corps Account.

Donate Now!

Venmo @EarthCorps
Paypal @EarthCorps

Contact Us



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ABOUT THE ONONDAGA EARTH CORPS

When the Eli MacDonald Green Team was restructured in 2005 as the Onondaga Earth Corps (OEC) for local communities, OEC was formed to:

- Help youth understand the relationship between people and the urban ecosystem
- Engage youth in hands-on community and environmental service learning projects
- Train youth for future jobs and careers in environmental fields
- Empower youth by developing their leadership abilities that help them analyze situations, solve problems and implement strategies to improve their communities