

# Genesee River Basin Summit Summary Report to Participants

February 25, 2014 Update

On February 6, 2014 the Center for Environmental Initiatives (CEI) convened the **Genesee River Basin Summit** as the first public step in the launch of its clean water initiative now branded as the *Genesee RiverWatch* (<http://ceinfo.org/index.php/water> ). The overarching goals of this event were to:

- Begin the process of forging a regional alliance capable of planning and implementing programs that deal with the Genesee River Basin as an integrated system
- Develop action plans to address the highest priority pollution reduction projects identified during the Summit
- Establish the basis for a Genesee River Basin Improvement Action Plan

## Highlights

- 185 people attended the event, representing 84 organizations.
- Four expert speakers framed a vision of the region and the critical role of its water resources, reported on Genesee Basin water quality studies done by SUNY Brockport and the New York State DEC, and outlined the principal project funding sources available through the Regional Council process. (Presentations are available on CEI's website at: <http://ceinfo.org/index.php/water/94-water-loci/water-current-work/248-summit2014present> )
- At breakout sessions, participants outlined priority projects for three sub-watersheds having the greatest leverage on overall Basin water quality.
- Participant feedback has been universally positive with participants eager to keep this initiative moving ahead.
- Press coverage was excellent and has continued after the Summit, focusing public attention on the need to maintain and improve our water assets.

## Post-Summit Work Plan

- Organize participant teams from the breakout session to prepare detailed project proposals in each of three sub-watersheds and submit these to the Finger Lakes and Western New York Regional Economic Development Councils for the next round of funding beginning in May. Project teams are beginning work to develop full proposals in the following areas:

Upper Genesee Sub-Watershed - The *Genesee River Wild* organization agreed to go back to their technical folks and identify three areas along the Genesee River between Filmore and Belmont that they believe incorporate the following criteria:

- Greenway Trail section directly along the river;
- Subject to streambank erosion;
- Involve possible canoe/kayak access;
- Involve local community; and
- Genesee River Wild has good working relationship with stakeholders.

CEI is arranging a meeting in their region to select one of those areas on which to develop a detailed project proposal. CEI will play a leadership role in the development and submittal of the proposal because the Genesee River Wild group is resource constrained at this time.

Canaseraga Creek Sub-Watershed - Two projects were identified, one is associated with restoration of a degraded wetland in the Groveland Flats north of Dansville and the other involved implementation of agricultural BMPs in that area. The group identified two other projects for future consideration involving streambank stabilization and repair/improvement of berms lining the creek that have failed.

Livingston County volunteered to take the lead on further development of a project. CEI has arranged a meeting of the interested parties to select one project for further consideration.

Honeoye Creek Sub-Watershed - The group agreed that upgrading of one or two of the eight NY State-permitted direct discharges in this watershed to incorporate phosphorus removal warranted further attention. They agreed that a closer look at the discharge characteristics of these operations was necessary before a decision could be made. CEI has taken the lead to collect the discharge information and get the appropriate stakeholders together to select candidate facilities.

- Begin preparing the Genesee River Basin Improvement Action Plan based upon the studies and work listed below. This Plan will meet the EPA-defined Nine-Element Watershed Plan Criteria, allowing it to be used by all Genesee River Basin stakeholders as the basis for future restoration funding requests. The inputs to this Plan are the:
  - Genesee River Watershed Project (SUNY Brockport, 2013);
  - Genesee River Basin Action Strategy (Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council, 2004); and
  - Results of this Summit.