"Something Fishy" Brings Teens to Onondaga Lake

By Tom Hughes, Project Staff Associate, ESF Outreach

The SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF) has a rich history of engaging faculty and students in academic research and public education on Onondaga Lake. ESF SCIENCE (Summer Camps Investigating Ecology in Neighborhood and City Environments) exposes Syracuse middle and high school students to science, urban ecology and environmental education. Over the past two years, ESF SCIENCE has enhanced its curriculum by developing projects focused on aquatic ecology and sport fishing and fisheries, including an urban fisheries management program entitled “Something Fishy About Onondaga Lake.”

Something Fishy About Onondaga Lake provides participating youth (primarily 12-16 year olds) with an understanding and appreciation for the historical, cultural, and ecological importance of Onondaga Lake. ESF undergraduate and graduate students of the ESF Science Corps lead day-long adventures for area youth. Participating youth have enthusiastically contributed to ongoing fisheries research in hands-on environmental activities including recording water quality data; measuring and tagging fish; and discussing the research and its management implications.

Participants are further connected to the natural resource and their communities through recreational angling experiences, where ESF Science Corps and fisheries professionals teach the basics of fishing and aquatic ecology. Guest instructors have included NY State Department of Environmental Conservation Region 7 biologist Jim Everard and accomplished carp angler Mike McGrath from McGrath & Associates Environmental Recreational Firm. Conservation and angling groups such as the CNY Chapter of the Izak Walton League and The Good Ole Boys Bass Club have also provided fishing instruction and discussed the angling opportunities available to youth in Syracuse.

During the summer of 2008, ESF students will have a greater presence on the shores of Onondaga Lake. Two ESF undergraduate students will serve as Onondaga Lake Stewards thanks, in part, to support from the Onondaga Lake Partnership Mini-Grants Program. These students will lead the educational program “Something Fishy About Onondaga Lake.” The Onondaga Lake Stewards expect to reach
ESF Science Corps educator Leetha Kounnavong (right) celebrates the “catch of the day” with Amber Jackson, a 5th grade student at Dr. Weeks Elementary School and summer camp participant from Hawley Youth Organization, Catholic Charities of Onondaga County—KidsWINI.

over 200 area youth in July and August 2008.

To learn more about ESF SCIENCE and project plans for summer 2008, please visit ESF's outreach table at Onondaga Lake Day on June 7, 2008, ESF Outreach web site: www.esf.edu/outreach/estscience or e-mail Terhi Majanen at thmajanen@esf.edu.

This insert is intended to provide general information to the public regarding the Onondaga Lake basin and activities related to the cleanup and restoration thereof. Approval for publication by the members of the OLP does not signify adoption or approval for purposes of regulatory, enforcement or other legal actions, of the factual, scientific, or legal assertions, characterizations or conclusions contained therein.

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rous and adding more phosphorous will not create a greener, lusher lawn, but it will harm the lake.

To demonstrate the effectiveness of phosphorous-free fertilizer, Cornell Cooperative Extension and Onondaga County Environmental Health Council will host a demonstration project this summer at Onondaga Lake Park. This year the athletic fields will be treated with phosphorous-free fertilizer. The grounds crew and athletic teams will be asked to evaluate the condition of the grass relative to prior years.

All are welcome to visit the park and athletic fields and see the results. And, thanks to a mini-grant from the Onondaga Lake Partnership, Cornell Cooperative Extension will distribute free bags of phosphorus-free fertilizer at Onondaga Lake Day on June 7th. Stop by the “Welcome” tent, pick up your free bag, and begin your personal contribution to a cleaner Onondaga Lake.

**Off the Lake**

Face painting by SUNY ESF students was popular at the 2007 Onondaga Lake Day event and will be offered again this year.

- **Bicycle Rides (for Three or More!)**—Rides start at the Information Tent.
- **An Open House** will be held at the Onondaga Yacht Club.
- **Salt Museum**—Learn about Syracuse’s salty past.
- **Safe Boating Jamboree**—Sail & Power Squadron will offer free boat safety checks, information on proper safety equipment, and display new boats at the public marina from 11AM to 3PM.

For a complete listing of the day’s schedule of activities and presentations, visit [www.onlakepartners.org](http://www.onlakepartners.org).

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**Chris Gandino from County WEP points out some of the tiny critters that live in the lake to Lake Day visitors.**

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**Community Education Offers Activities**

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