

Introducing C-OFOKLA: A Kettle Lake Coalition in Central New York

by Tarki Health, NYSFOLA Board of Directors

(with special thanks to William Kappel, US Geological Survey)



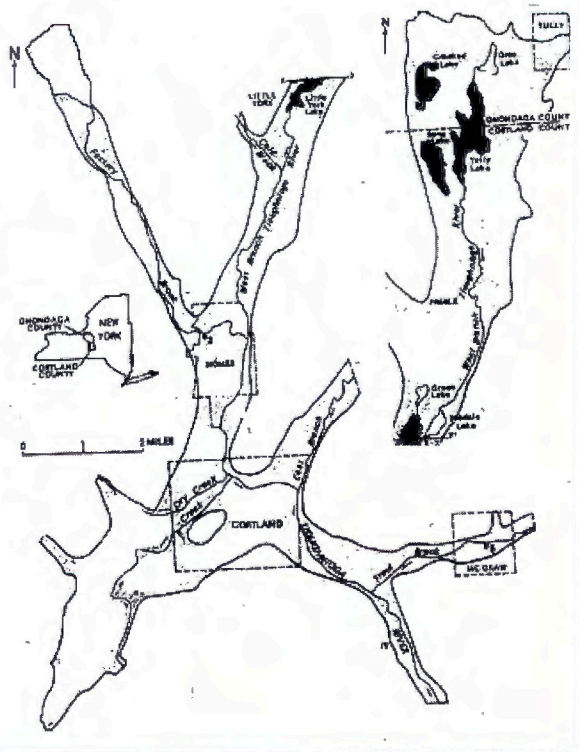
While most people in New York State are well acquainted with the beautiful Finger Lakes, many do not know of the smaller, kettle-hole lakes formed near the end of the last glacial period. These small lakes, ponds, and dry depressions were

formed when huge chunks of ice broke off the receding glacier and were then surrounded or buried by sediments and water that flowed from the melting glaciers. When these ice chunks finally melted, the depressions remained, some forming “kettle-hole” lakes .

The glaciers also left the Valley Heads Moraine across Central New York. These large plugs of glacial sediment blocked the north-south trending valleys in which the Finger Lakes are found today. The Valley Heads Moraine forms the surface water divide between the St. Lawrence River Basin (where streams and rivers flow north) and the Susquehanna River Basin (where streams and rivers flow south). The Tully-Preble kettle lakes are too small to be Finger Lakes and although they are the headwaters of the Susquehanna River Basin in our region, two of the lakes (Green and Crooked) contribute to groundwater to either the Susquehanna or St. Lawrence Basins depending on the time of the year.

Understanding this unique placement, four of these lake associations decided to look to each other for support and in 2008, Crooked Lake, Little York Lake, Song Lake and Tully Lake formed a coalition; The Cortland-Onondaga Federation of Kettle Lakes Associations Inc. C-OFOKLA is now a recognized New York State 501(c)3 Corporation with a mission to advocate awareness of lake resources, educate our communities about watersheds and their protection, and promote stewardship of the kettle lakes, surrounding waters and watershed regions in Cortland and Onondaga counties.

With a mission that includes education and outreach, C-OFOKLA has hosted over 25 professionals, who have graciously shared their expertise with our communities on a variety of watershed issues. The education and awareness presentations have covered a variety of topics that have been serious, interesting, and fun. The topics are varied,



Kettle Lakes in Cortland and Onondaga Counties, NY.
Adapted from: An atlas of eleven selected aquifers in New York. 1982, Waller, Roger Milton; Finch, Anne, J.
USGS Open-File Report: 82-553

the discussions are lively. All presentations are free and open to the public. Here is a sample of a few from 2013:

- Scott Kishbaugh, Coordinator of the Citizens Statewide

Lake Assessment Program, shared information and concerns directly relating to C-OFOKLA lakes.

- Mark Whitmore, a Cornell University professor and leading expert in forest ecology, walked the woodlands of Song and Tully Lakes and presented information on non-native invasive forest pests.
- Dr. Gregory Boyer, Chair of the Environmental Chemistry Department at SUNY ESF presented important information on algae.
- This year, award winning underwater filmmaker/photographer David O. Brown, treated the community to a stunning environmental photo essay. A full list of speakers can be found on the website.

C-OFOKLA has forged many important partnerships, including those with our local water resource agencies, towns and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. One relationship, in particular, has brought the communities together and increased excitement about the watershed work in ways that rival the others. Collaborating with Professor Kimberly Schulz, a limnologist with SUNY ESF, has brought an interest that only her enthusiasm, and that of her students, could generate.

Each fall, for the past four years, Dr. Schulz's Limnology Practicum class has created interesting and supportive projects. Because the students come from different disciplines within the university, their projects range with their interests. Some projects include, mapping the hydrology of Song Lake, exploring the salt tolerance of macroinvertebrates in Tully and Little York Lake, making a relative weight analysis of the fish between lakes, and many more. These projects are all described on the website: www.cofokla.org under the Student Projects tab.

The relationships built between the students and the resi-

dents creates synergy; helping each other toward mutually beneficial goals. C-OFOKLA also helped to sponsor students for larger studies, including, Adrianna Beltrani's senior project, *A Best Management Plan Framework*, which remains available to all the lakes to use as a valuable guide. Andrew Brainard, a doctoral student, was also sponsored for his *Kettle Lakes Research: Anthropogenic Influences on Aquatic Invasions*. This last study has been a critical piece in helping to document and demonstrate the influence of boat traffic on the spread of aquatic invasive species.



What is he doing? Find out by reading "General Fish Diversity of Song Lake and Characteristics of *Erimyzon succetta* (lake chubsucker) at www.cofokla.org.

Along with education and outreach, the collation responds to issues important to the watersheds. C-OFOKLA worked to establish a Keyholing Ordinance in the Town of Preble and continues to supply Little York Lake with support for rebuilding their dam. The group brings a lakeside voice to comment letters to state and federal government on issues such as the proposed regulations on high volume hydraulic fracturing, proposed changes to wetland regulations and recent laws regarding invasive species and harmful algal blooms.

In October, C-FOKLA, along with the Alverna Heights Spirituality and Nature Center, NYS Parks, and the Cornell Biological Field Station at Shackleton

Point, will help sponsor the 6th Annual Invasive Species Workshop in Fayetteville.

Currently, all of the lakes in our organization are also NYFOLA members, and all have been CSLAP participants. Working together has helped reignite interest in each association and provide a greater interest in understanding and improving water quality. It's not all work, however. Each September, we gather together for a picnic and general meeting with music, food, and community sharing. These lakes might be small, but by creating a strong coalition, it doesn't feel so lonely. Read more about C-FOKLA, and access reports at www.cofokla.org.