

Town and Village of Waddington

LWRP Monitoring Report

June 2012

Community Background:



The Town and Village of Waddington are located in northern St. Lawrence County on the shores of Lake St. Lawrence, a particularly scenic portion of the St. Lawrence Seaway, at the international border with Canada. The Village is the more densely populated of the two municipalities. According to the 2010 US Census Bureau, the Village has 972 residents living within 2.4 square miles of which 0.2 sq. miles are of surface waters, while the Town has 2,266 residents living within 58.0 square miles of which 51.5 square miles are of land and 6.4 square miles are of water.

The physical geography of the area was changed by the construction of Moses-Saunders Dam in Massena and the St. Lawrence River federal navigational channel, the Seaway. Over the second half of the last century the waters of the Lake St. Lawrence, which is the reservoir of the dam, formed a long and shallow embayment called Whitehouse Bay, an almost insular area called the Leishman Point, and the Ogden and Murphy islands. Ogden Island, Whitehouse Point and Leishman Point are public lands owned and managed by the New York Power Authority (NYPA). The mainland to the south of Leishman Point and Whitehouse Bay areas are largely in private ownership. The shoreline defined by the lake along the mainland stretches for 20.8 miles while the shoreline along the Ogden and Murphy islands is 8.2 miles long.

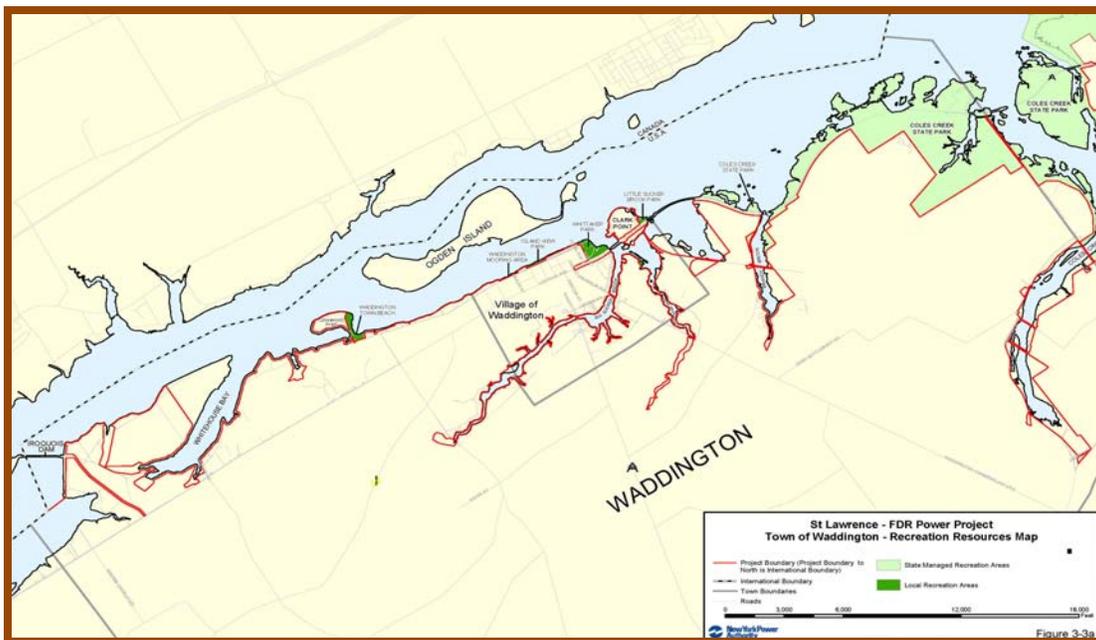


Aerial view of the Town and Village's coastal area

The southern shoreline of Ogden Island, the bay east of Leishman Point, and the Whitehouse Bay form 600 acres of the Whitehouse - Ogden Island Bays, a State-designated significant fish and wildlife habitat. These relatively sheltered shallow bays are uncommon in the lower reaches of the St. Lawrence River and well known for their fishing resources. As stated in NYPA's 2003 relicensing agreement, any development must be undertaken outside of a 100-foot buffer surrounding each State-designated significant coastal fish and wildlife habitat situated within lands owned by the NYPA¹.

Sucker Brook, Brandy Brook and a small branch of Coles Creek also shaped the physical geography of the Town and Village of Waddington. Sucker Brook and its branch Little Sucker Brook drains the western and southwestern portions of the Town, before emptying into Lake St. Lawrence in the eastern part of the Village along the west side of Clark Point. Brandy Brook drains the south-central part of the Town and flows into Lake St. Lawrence east of the Village and north of NY Rt. 37, its mouth is characterized by a narrow and fairly deep channel cutting through very broad shallows. A narrow branch of Coles Creek drains the northeastern part of the Town flowing into the Coles Creek beyond the Town's easterly limits.

During the past two decades, NYPA released some of the lands in its holding to the Town. Previous trends in ex-urban population movement, consisting of construction of single-person or small family households and second homes, along with the more recent economic stagnation, increased the pressure for land subdivision and denser development. This, in turn, increased the pressure on the local waterfront resources such as water quality and designated habitats, and the need for public waterfront access and water-related activities for tourists and seasonal residents.



Town of Waddington Recreation Resources Map

Public access to the waterfront is currently provided through six recreation areas: Waddington Town Beach located in Howard Park, Island View Park located near the Village's downtown, Whittaker Park

¹http://www.stl.nypa.gov/Land%20Management%20Plan/St.%20Lawrence%20LMP%20final.102604.htm#_Toc79716163

located east of the Island View Park, Little Sucker Brook Park located in the northeastern corner of the Village, and Brandy Brook Boat Launch and Coles Creek State Park located on the northeastern side of the Town. These areas support water-related activities such as camping, picnicking, walking and hiking, and water-dependent activities such as swimming, fishing and boating. All six recreation areas are on public lands owned by NYPA. Under the 2003 license awarded for the St. Lawrence Project, the Power Authority is required to provide for the construction or rehabilitation of these six recreational facilities located in the Town and Village of Waddington². Same facilities are operated by the Town or the Village under an agreement with the Power Authority with provisions for annual payments to reflect the cost of maintenance.

Docking is available in the northwestern part of the Town, at the Waddington Town Beach, and in the northern part of the Village, at the Whittaker Park and Island View Park. Boat launches are available at Whittaker Park in the Village and Brandy Brook Boat Launch in the northeastern part of the Town. A paved narrow pedestrian trail stretching close to the shoreline connects the Island View Park with the Whittaker Park. The Village and the Town would like to extend this trail and eventually improve it and connect it with the St. Lawrence River Trail.

Agricultural uses were once dominating the residential and recreational uses. In 1975, a large area of the Town was designated as an agricultural district. Two areas of the Town's coastal area are still included in this district. One portion located west of the Village and including all of the land south of Rt. 37 from Buck Road to the Town line plus a contiguous area north of Rt. 37 east of Whitehouse Bay it is currently part of Agricultural District 2. Some of the land of a second area that was initially part of the agricultural district, located east of the Village and including large areas of land on either side of Coles Creek, changed its zoning a few years ago. Agriculture is declining locally and land uses are changing.

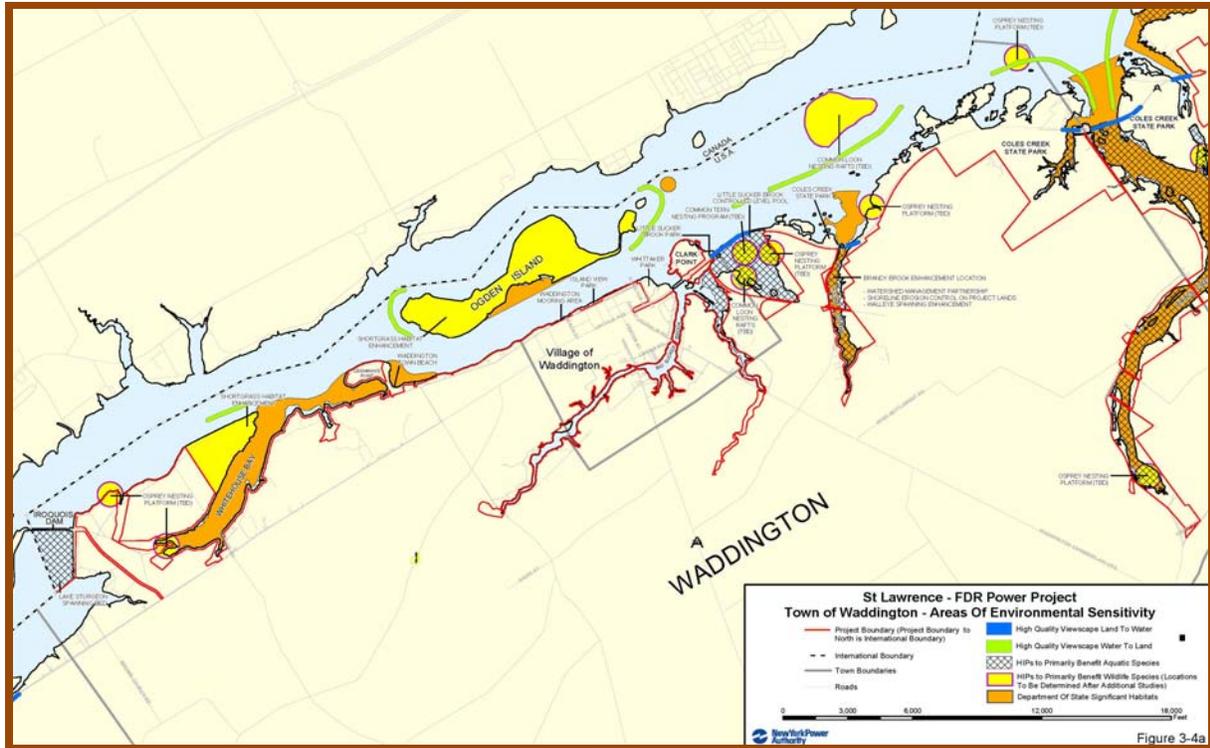
Collaborations with the Department of State:

The Town and Village of Waddington developed and adopted a joint Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (LWRP) to promote local economic development and revitalization by increasing public access and recreational activities to the local waterfront area. The Department of State (DOS) provided technical assistance for the creation and approval of the LWRP. Since its approval in 1991, the LWRP was used to coordinate municipal efforts with NYPA's efforts of increasing public access to the water and developing public recreation areas in key locations along St. Lawrence River, within the municipal limits of the Village and Town. NYPA's ownership of the shoreline lands has had a pervasive influence on the development of local waterfront area of the Town and Village of Waddington, and has discouraged private sector initiatives along the shoreline. However, more inland areas of the coastal area experience successful private initiatives, which are supported by the proximity of recreational areas and available water-dependent activities.

NYPA's decision to release some of its lands from its holding enabled the Town to work with DOS to prepare a study that provides clear guidance on redeveloping the Town and Village waterfront area by

² <http://www.northcountrypublicradio.org/news/nypa.html>

addressing the marketing of surplus lands by NYPA, the expansion of productive and beneficial uses on publicly-owned properties, and the revitalization of deteriorated and vacant historic, commercial, and public buildings within the village's commercial core. This study was awarded an Environmental protection Fund Local Waterfront Revitalization Program grant in 1997.



Waddington Areas of Environmental Sensitivity

Due to NYPA’s constant involvement in the development, improvement, and maintenance of the Town and Village’s coastal recreation areas, the Village and Town were hesitant in proposing more waterfront projects. All of the projects proposed and undertaken by NYPA within the Waddington’s coastal area have been reviewed for State consistency by DOS. NYPA also studied and protected environmentally sensitive³ coastal areas along the St. Lawrence River.

LWRP Monitoring Process:

The goal of the monitoring process is for DOS to assess a community’s consistency with its approved LWRP, and to understand implementation activities and decision-making procedures related to the LWRP. Additionally, this process provides a forum for a community to highlight successes and request technical and financial assistance for program implementation.

DOS began its monitoring and evaluation process of the Town and Village of Waddington LWRP with a phone call to the Town Supervisor, briefly describing the monitoring protocol and asking him to

³ <http://www.stl.nypa.gov/Land%20Management%20Plan/Appendix%20B%20-%20Project%20Boundary%20Maps/Appendix%20B%20-%20Project%20Boundary%20Maps.htm>

coordinate the participation of the town and the village in this process. Follow-up letters were sent to the Village and the Town to provide information relating to what the monitoring process would involve and a list of survey questions. The letter indicated that a conference call would take place between DOS representatives and key municipal personnel to answer the survey questions, and a follow-up site visit/meeting would be arranged to review the responses provided in the survey.

The conference call to discuss the Town's and Village's answers to the survey questions was informative and provided much of the details necessary for the DOS to make its assessment. As part of the call, the Village and the Town described the relevancy of the joint LWRP, its use, and the local consistency review process. Call participants included William Shoen, Village of Waddington Trustee and Deputy Mayor; Mark Scott, Town Supervisor; and Carol Burns, the Town Clerk.

A few weeks after the conference call, DOS staff traveled to Waddington to meet with Village and Town personnel. This meeting focused on the implementation of proposed waterfront projects and future opportunities to collaborate with DOS. The meeting was complemented by a tour of the waterfront, including sites that the Town and Village would like to improve or develop for recreational uses and economic revitalization. During the meeting and waterfront tour, DOS staff provided technical assistance on different topics that emerged. DOS staff explained that most of the issues and opportunities outlined in the 2012 Town of Waddington Economic Development Strategic Plan and 2008 Community Development Plan are mostly relevant to the waterfront, and their place is in a joint Waddington LWRP amendment. DOS staff also emphasized the need for updated local regulations that would help the Town control the type and extent of new development that might occur on lands recently released to the municipalities by NYPA, and stressed the need for prioritizing local projects and concentrating local efforts on getting the necessary funding for project implementation.

DOS told meeting participants that a written assessment of findings would be prepared to identify areas of improvement, training, or need for LWRP amendments.

DOS Findings:

Overview

Both municipalities are committed to making good use of the entire waterfront area. Unfortunately, the revenue of both communities is not sufficient to cover local organizational needs, which slows down the generation and adoption of new regulations and impacts the planning and implementation of new projects. The administrative work of both communities is done by part-time personnel, including the governing body, along with volunteers.

LWRP Implementation

Comparing the waterfront actions proposed in the original joint Waddington LWRP with the current recreational areas and private redevelopment located within the waterfront area, it is obvious that the LWRP guided the waterfront development and revitalization and the coordination of municipal and NYPA efforts to improve the public's access to the waterfront. Waddington's waterfront seems to have undergone a visible change for the better. However, more work needs to be done to ensure a

sustainable transformation of designated waterfront areas into a mix of recreation, small businesses and residential uses, while preserving the natural resources of the waterfront.

Docking and Boat Launching Facilities

Six recreation areas supporting water-dependent and water-related uses exist in the Village and Town of Waddington. Docking areas have been developed in the northwestern part of the Town, at the Waddington Town Beach, and in the northern part of the Village, at the Whittaker Park and Island View Park. Boat ramps have been constructed at Whittaker Park in the Village and Brandy Brook Boat Launch in the northeastern part of the Town.

Trails

A short pedestrian trail connects the Island View Park with the Whittaker Park. The Village and the Town hope to extend this trail and eventually transform it in a mixed-use trail that will connect with the St. Lawrence River Trail.

Village Downtown

Visible efforts are made by the private sector and the Village to improve the aesthetics and uses of the residential homes along the Village's Main Street.

LWRP Update

The inventory of the approved Waddington LWRP describes the conditions of the waterfront area of the 1980s. Since then, the land ownership has changed and so has some of the land uses. This prompts necessary modifications of local regulations. Most of the projects proposing improvements to the recreation facilities within the waterfront area have been completed, or the improvements are needed again because the wear-and-tear of the previous improvements were completed decades ago.

Overall, the current version of the LWRP is still usable for consistency review of proposed actions and for its guiding vision, but most of the information it contains needs to be updated. The updating of the LWRP itself could be easily achieved by using the information gathered in recent community plans and some volunteer legwork.

LWRP Document Accessibility

Copies of the Waddington LWRP are on file at the Clerks' Offices, which are located in the same building and are accessible during normal business hours. An electronic copy of the LWRP is available on the DOS website.

Local Consistency Review

The Village of Waddington LWRP Consistency Law and the Town of Waddington LWRP Consistency Law was adopted in 1989 and 1988, respectively, to provide for the protection and beneficial use of the natural and man-made resources within the Waddington waterfront area by ensuring that actions classified as Type I or unlisted under Part 617 of Title 6 of NYCRR to be undertaken, approved, or funded by municipal agencies would be undertaken in a manner consistent with the policies and purposes of the joint Waddington LWRP.

As part of the Town's local consistency process, any municipal agency undertaking any action in the LWRP area must complete a WAF and request input from the DOS and any other interested agency before making any determination regarding its action. The written determination of consistency with the coastal policies is required to explain why the proposed action is consistent or inconsistent with the coastal policy. The extent of the inconsistency is also required to be explained in writing. The agency is required to maintain a file with consistency reviews of its proposed actions within the local waterfront area, and to make it available for public review if demanded.

Other entities proposing actions in the waterfront area are required to prepare a WAF and submit it together with any other pertinent information to a Town agency, to review the action for consistency with the coastal policies. A Town agency is defined by the same law as "any board, department, office, other body or officer of the Town of Waddington." The agency must render its determination of consistency of the action with each coastal policy within 30 days from applicant's submission. The agency's decision has to be written and shall state the manner and extent to which the action is inconsistent with the coastal policies and affects the waterfront. The agency is required to maintain a file with consistency reviews of waterfront actions proposed by applicants, and, if demanded, to make it available for the public's review.

The Town and Village clerks are the first point of contact for everyone undertaking a waterfront action. For this reason, they are the most knowledgeable about the consistency review requirements, and most of the consistency reviews are conducted by them. In the opinion of the municipal personnel, it is very likely that most residents are not aware of the LWRP and/or the local consistency law.

As described above, the actions undertaken by NYPA are reviewed by DOS for consistency with the coastal policies.

Grants Awarded			
Title 11 Environmental Protection Fund Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (EPF LWRP)			
Town of Waddington			
Year	Amount of Grant	Project Description	Status
1997	\$10,000	Waddington Riverfront Development Strategy - The Town will prepare a document that provides clear guidance to redevelop the Town and Village waterfront area. The study will address the marketing of surplus lands by the New York Power Authority, the expansion of productive and beneficial uses on publicly-owned properties, and the revitalization of deteriorated and vacant historic, commercial, and public buildings within the village's commercial core.	Closed