

Developing Educational Materials for New York's Eastern Lake Ontario Region

The current economic climate has New York Sea Grant (NYSG) constituents seeking educational materials that can reach numerous audiences using innovative delivery methods. To supplement ongoing efforts that promote environmentally-responsible use of the Eastern Lake Ontario Dunes and Wetlands Area (ELODWA) and the Sandy Creeks watershed, NYSG expanded its toolbox of educational materials that include a guidebook, brochure, traveling trunks and interpretive panels in 2010.

Twenty identical traveling trunks, which are large totes filled with educational materials, were assembled. These totes will be used by formal and informal educators to increase public appreciation for ecologically appropriate recreational enjoyment of the ELODWA. These trunks are available in local school districts.

NYSG developed the traveling trunks in partnership with the Oswego County BOCES, Oswego County Soil & Water Conservation District (OCSWCD), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC).

In addition to the traveling trunks, a series of interpretive panels was developed to educate constituents about various components of the Sandy Creeks Watershed, an Ecosystem-based



This NYSG traveling trunk is in use by the Pulaski School District Environthon Team, high school science classes and Middle School Science Club. Photo: Mary Penney, NYSG

Management Demonstration Area in New York State. The panels' text and graphics promote stewardship and highlight previously overlooked issues that define these unique ecosystems. Topics include sand dune formation, the sand transport system, eastern Lake Ontario wetlands, and riparian restoration. Visitors encounter the panels at public access properties within the 17-mile stretch of the ELODWA and at streamside locations.

NYSG developed the panels in partnership with the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historical Preservation; the New York State Tug Hill Commission; OCSWCD; TNC; NYSDEC; and Great Lakes Seaway Trail.

The New York State Department of State provided two grants totaling \$59,000 for project funding.

Left: Walkers approach the Great Lakes Seaway Trail interpretive panel at Sandy Island Beach State Park. The New York Sea Grant interpretive panels for the Eastern Lake Ontario Dunes and Wetlands Area and Sandy Creeks watershed employ the design style of the Great Lakes Seaway Trail panels. Photo: George Fischer, Great Lakes Seaway Trail



This project meets the performance measures of Sea Grant's Healthy New York Coastal Ecosystems focus area. New York Sea Grant Extension administration is located at 112 Rice Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853.

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