

Watershed Stewardship: You Can Make a Difference!

You can control stormwater runoff by:

- ❖ Installing swales and rain gardens that slow runoff by allowing storm water to soak into the soil
- ❖ Drain sump pumps into lawns instead of the sewer, road ditch or roadway
- ❖ Disconnect downspouts from the sewer system so they can drain into vegetated areas
- ❖ Inspect, maintain and repair septic systems regularly to prevent leaks or overflows
- ❖ Plant native vegetation along stream/creek banks to stabilize the banks and filter stormwater runoff

You can improve water quality by:

- ❖ Limiting the use of lawn pesticides or fertilizers. Practice integrated pest management by using native disease and pest resistant plants.
- ❖ Starting a compost pile of grass clippings and yard waste instead of dumping them into streams or on stream banks
- ❖ The proper use and disposal of chemicals by never pouring motor oil, paints or chemicals down storm drains or sinks.
- ❖ Establish and maintain stream riparian buffers. A good stream buffer is undisturbed land along a stream that has native trees, shrubs and understory vegetation with roots that stabilize soil to prevent it from being washed away.



Tonawanda Creek, known by the Seneca Indians as *Ta-na-wun-da* ("Swift Water"), at Indian Falls in Genesee County



Tonawanda Creek Watershed Committee

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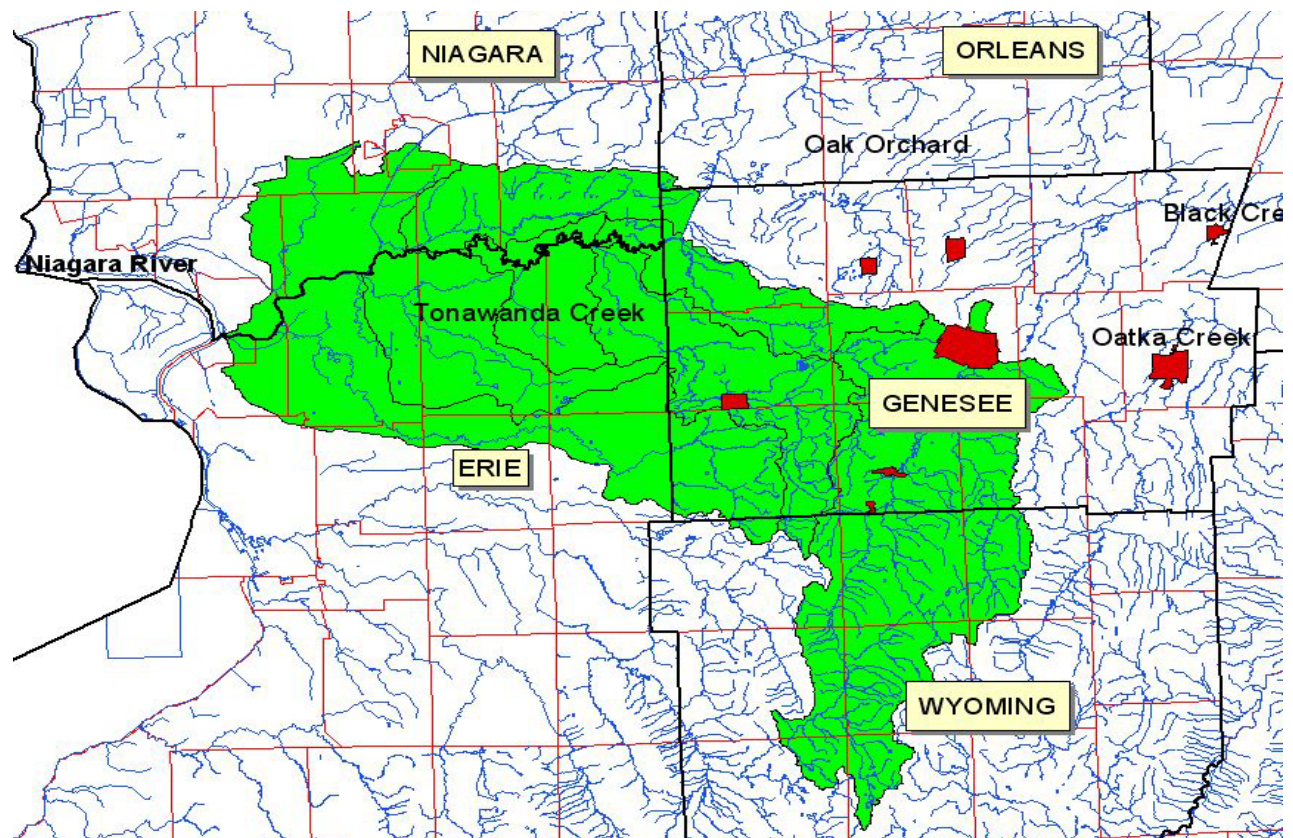
Tonawanda Creek Watershed



Prepared by
**Tonawanda Creek
Watershed Committee**

Tonawanda Creek Watershed

- Tonawanda Creek is one of the largest watershed areas in western New York, comprised of 405,606 acres or 648 square miles, and is approximately 101 miles long. It is part of Wyoming, Genesee, Niagara and Erie Counties, and the Tonawanda Seneca Nation.
- Its headwaters start in the Town of Wethersfield, Wyoming County where the elevation is more than 1,800 feet. The Creek flows northward from Wyoming County to Batavia where it makes an abrupt westerly change in direction and continues its flow along the boundary of Erie and Niagara Counties until it reaches the Niagara River in the cities of Tonawanda and North Tonawanda. The Creek is also part of the Barge Canal west of Genesee County. The Creek serves as the boundary between Erie and Niagara Counties.
- Communities in the watershed include Varysburg, Attica (Wyoming County); Alexander, Batavia, Pembroke, Indian Falls, Tonawanda Indian Reservation (Genesee County); Royalton, Rapids, Pendleton, Lockport, North Tonawanda (Niagara County); Newstead, Clarence and Amherst (Erie County).
- Cultivated land is the largest land use/cover with 45% or 181,280 acres. Forests comprise 27% or 107,741 acres of watershed area. Eleven percent of total watershed acreage, or 44,121 acres are wetlands.



Tonawanda Creek Watershed Committee

One way you can help is to participate in and support the newly-formed Tonawanda Creek Watershed Committee, which continues to meet on the 4th Wednesday of each month. The multi-county alliance includes government, tribal and agency officials, and interested landowners located within Wyoming, Genesee, Erie and Niagara Counties.

"We envision preserving, protecting and restoring the Tonawanda Creek watershed to ensure its health, beauty and sustainable uses for generations to come. The Tonawanda Creek Watershed Committee's mission is to protect, conserve and restore the quality of Tonawanda Creek and its watershed by planning and managing its ecosystem resources for a sustainable future that enhances the vitality of watershed communities."

The Tonawanda Creek Watershed Committee strives to be a successful regional initiative that is a leader in achieving cleaner water, healthier habitat and ecosystem, and economic sustainability.

The Committee intends to identify priority goals and projects, secure adequate funds, and implement targeted actions for the Tonawanda Creek watershed that will:

- Protect and improve water quality by reducing point and nonpoint pollution
- Provide increased swimming, fishing and other recreational activities
- Reduce the impacts and costs of flooding events
- Conserve, protect and restore fish, plant and wildlife habitats; remove invasive species
- Stabilize creek and stream banks and reduce erosion
- Revitalize watershed communities on a sustainable basis
- Build an engaged group of supporters and stewards through education and outreach to increase awareness of the Tonawanda Creek watershed's importance and value
- Respect its cultural and historical significance