

# ELA Division Newsletter

LATIHWY^TYSANIKO·LALE? they protect the earth



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# Environmental Welcomes *Recent Hires*



**Maureen Perkins**  
Environmental Compliance Specialist

Meet our new Environmental Compliance Specialist, Maureen Perkins (Oneida). She has a Master's in Environmental Science and Policy from UW Green Bay and experience as a legislative analyst and air quality specialist. She is ready to engage in compliance activities, collaborate on solid waste management, conduct NEPA reviews, and manage Phase 1 Assessments. Welcome Maureen!

The Environmental Area  
is now completely staffed



**Deven Metoxen**  
Environmental Project Manager -Restorations

Introducing Deven Metoxen-Hamilton, (Oneida) who holds a degree in Wildlife Ecology and Management from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. He has three years of internship experience at the Wisconsin Tribal Conservation Advisory Council. He is excited to join the Environmental Area as our new Environmental Project Manager for Restorations. Say hello to Deven!

# Environmental Update

## ONEIDA NATION FARM HOSTS GRAZING SCHOOL

### Strong partnership

In mid-August, the Oneida Nation hosted a two-day "Wisconsin School of Grazing." Classes were organized by Grassworks Inc, NRCS, and UW Extension. This class was located at the Oneida Nation Farm (ONF). This is the first time Oneida has hosted such an event and only the second year these classes were offered across the state.

Grassworks reached out to Oneida to bring this event to the Northeast, recognizing their enduring partnership with NRCS and Grassworks, along with Oneida's expertise in beef cattle grazing. While the event welcomed the public, it specifically aimed to assist tribal farmers looking to start rotational grazing practices.

### How much grass is required?

The goal of this training was to teach how to assess how much feed is on the pastures and how much the animals' feed requirement are, over a specific time. This concept can be particularly hard for new grazers to understand.



Eleven students attended the northeast grazing school this year. While all attendees shared an interest in beef grazing, the discussions extended beyond managing a beef herd. The new farmers in attendance got actual hands-on experience in the field with seasoned experts to understand feed requirements and pasture health.

We believe every student left with deeper insight and newfound knowledge. We hope to partner with Grassworks, NRCS, and UW Extension office to continue this event in Oneida to inspire more tribal farmers.



*For more information contact Resource Conservationist Jon Habeck at: [jhabeck@oneidanation.org](mailto:jhabeck@oneidanation.org)*



# Environmental Update



## Exploring the Natural World: Oneida Summer Youth Camp

The 4th Annual UWGB-Oneida Youth Camp was held the week of August 11th, 2025. Oneida youth in grades 4th to 6th participated. Lessons included harvesting plant medicines, such as Sweet Grass and Wild Bergamot (#6), and teachings about Oneida language, stories and ceremonial dances.

This camp was nature-based and filled with opportunities to bird watch, hike, and fish. Youth got a visit from Oneida's warden, Terry Metoxen, who showcased wildlife found in Oneida. Each year students also visit the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay's campus to explore the herbarium, wildlife museum, and the First Nations Center.



*Sweet Grass and Wild Bergamot harvesting with  
Oneida Elder, Randy Cornelius*



This camp is made possible through funding and organization by University of Wisconsin-Green Bay Camps, the NEW Bird Alliance, and Oneida Environmental.

For more information contact Wetland Project Manager Tony Kuchma at: [akuchma@oneidanation.org](mailto:akuchma@oneidanation.org)



# Environmental Update

## Preventing Waterborne Illness in Oneida During the 2025 Swimming Season

Ever wonder if the water you and your family swim in at your favorite beach is safe? Sanitarian staff at the Environmental Area work hard to protect you and your family so you can be safe from waterborne illnesses through weekly beach water testing. During the swimming season (April to September) the Sanitarian conducts weekly water sampling at both the Oneida Lake and the Norbert Hill Center Pond. Water samples are sent to the State of Wisconsin Lab and are tested for E. coli, a bacteria found in the feces of humans and animals.

Once samples are tested, the Sanitarian receives a report from the State of Wisconsin Lab which logs the level of E. coli bacteria in each sample. Based on the reported information, if the E. coli level is not at a safe level, the Sanitarian sends an advisory notice to the public to either use caution when swimming or to refrain from swimming. (If E. coli is ingested, it can make you sick.)

During the 2025 swimming season, the levels at the Oneida Lake were consistently safe. The levels at the Norbert Hill Center Pond were elevated twice, with one advisory issued at the end of July and one closure issued in August.



*Use of the Oneida Lake (and the Norbert Hill Center Pond) is a privilege. Let's work together to keep both beaches safe for everyone!*

### **A few points to remember about swimming in natural bodies of water:**

- If you or a family member become ill after swimming, contact a medical professional.
- Do not swallow lake/pond water.
- Do not swim with open cuts
- Use the restroom facilities not the Lake.
- No public bathing! Soaps can disrupt the water chemistry making the fish, plants, and other animals sick.
- Toddlers must wear swim diapers.
- Wash after swimming. There is a shower station at the Oneida Lake.

*For more information contact Sanitarian Jennifer Jordan at [jjordan4@oneidanation.org](mailto:jjordan4@oneidanation.org)*



# Environmental Update

## Trailblazing together: Stewardship and Collaboration

*“Making time for green space is what we all need.”-Shad Webster Conservation Director*

For the last five years, Diabetes Prevention and Health staff formed an inter-departmental Trails Team from Nation Service areas to achieve a common objective: enhance wellness and increase use of the Oneida Trails System to address diabetes. Through creative outreach, education, and direct involvement, they are advocating for healthy lifestyles and fostering a deeper appreciation for our stunning natural landscapes.

The Team objectives are: to cultivate a positive mindset, encourage safe and responsible use of trails, educate the community on how to navigate the GIS map for tracking locations, and to enhance trail accessibility and signage. A result of this initiative is a month long Trails Scavenger Hunt where participants search for a QR code on a trail to be entered to win exciting prizes. The Trails Team invites families to enjoy the fall colors, see you on the trails!

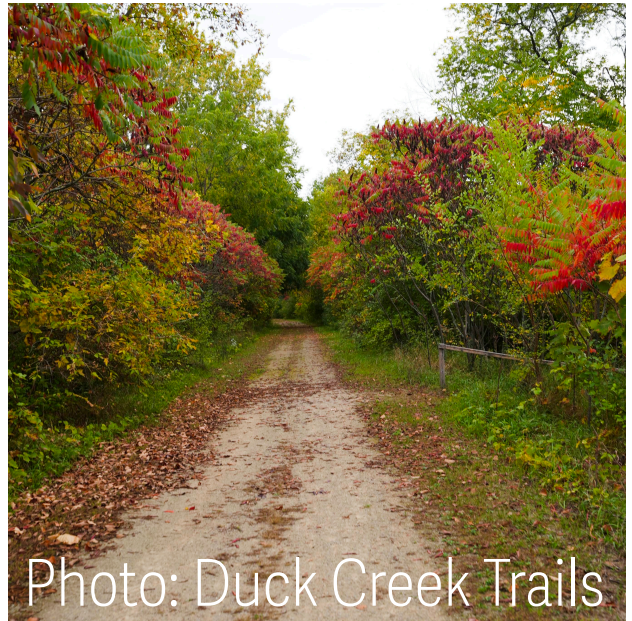


Photo: Duck Creek Trails

Environmental Area will be posting photos of the trails featured in the Oneida Trails Map Guide, plus insights on birds you might hear and plants you might see.

Trails act as lively channels, connecting us to the earth, and to each other. We invite all community members families and friends to explore new adventures, cherish every moment. Use the hashtag #oneidatrails when sharing photos on social sites!

**Caution: Remember to wear blaze orange while hiking during hunting season!**

For a copy of the trail guide contact Comm. Outreach Specialist Amber Powless at: [apowles7@oneidanation.org](mailto:apowles7@oneidanation.org)



# Land & Conservation Update

## Conservation of Natural Resources: Hazard Tree Update

### Who is the Hazard Tree Program for?

Our strategy focuses on "Good Governance" for cost savings, benefiting Elders and Disabled Members of the Oneida Nation Tribe.



### What is the intended function of the program?

- Removal of hazard or storm damage trees\*
- Stump removal\*
- Process resources for Supplemental Heating
- Process wood for mulch.
- NOT for nuisance, must be hazard to property

### Benefits of Hazard Tree Removal Program

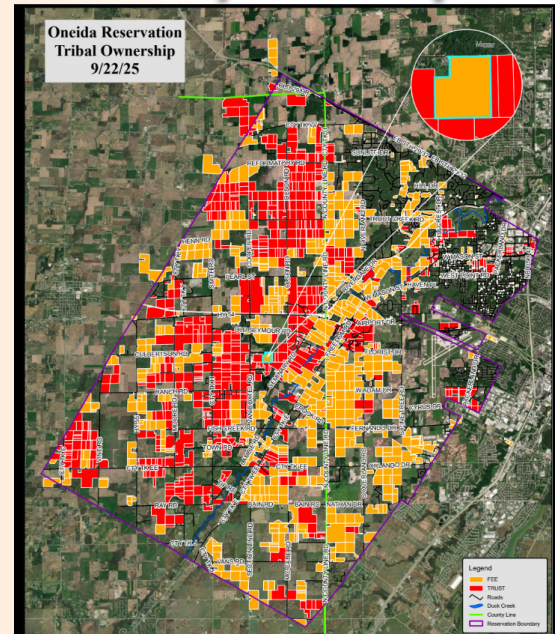
- Year-round Cost Savings
- 100% Tribally Funded
- Safe/hazard free living area
- landscaping mulch stocked

### Hazard Tree Work Orders completed

| 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|------|------|------|
| 181  | 152  | 192  |

**\*Services for Elder or Disabled Oneida members only**

## Land Acquisition Update



Land Management had 9 new acquisitions in the 4th quarter for a total of 121 acres, which brought the Oneida Nation's total land holdings to 29,069 acres or 44% of the reservation.

There are 8 accepted offers closing in the 1st quarter of FY26, with 6 more negotiations and 9 new properties being looked at.

104 acres went into trust on South Pinetree Road, the property had been in the process since 2006.

*For more information contact Shad Webster at 920-869-6500*



# Agriculture Update

## Fall Harvesting



With the new facility now operational, activities proceed as usual. As summer winds down, it marks the onset of hay bale production. By the second week of August, ONF personnel had harvested over 530 acres of hay!

*More about their new shop in office next edition!*



"We're growing!"

Another reorganization is in the works. Food Distribution Oneida Pantry have been added to our Division!

### Beef & Buffalo Shop hours

**Mon-Thurs**

**9:00am - 4:00pm**

**Friday**

**8:00am - 11:30am**

9 2 0 - 8 3 3 - 7 9 5 2

For more information contact  
Oneida Nation Farms Manager  
Thomas Swiecichowski  
[tswiecic@oneidanation.org](mailto:tswiecic@oneidanation.org)

## Growing forward: A New High Tunnel at the Orchard

This past summer, the Orchard built a high tunnel, marking significant progress in our growing and sustainability efforts.

*Why a high tunnel?*

Unlike greenhouses, which are permanent structures with climate control, high tunnels are simpler, unheated plastic-covered frames that utilize passive solar heating. They protect crops from the elements, making them perfect for extending the growing season.

This new addition enables the orchard to plant earlier, harvest later, and cultivate better crops despite unpredictable weather. *"I want to thank the Environmental Team, Orchard Staff Vanessa, Talon, and NRCS for all the work with the high tunnel."* - Heather Jordan, Orchard Manager.

Orchard Shop - see Facebook Oneida Orchard page for monthly hours!

*Heather Jordan [hjordan@oneidanation.org](mailto:hjordan@oneidanation.org)*





# Agriculture Update



## Farmer's Market 2025 Season Comes to a Close With Renewed Energy for the Future

The Oneida Farmer's Market continued to see growth this season and is excited for what lies ahead for the community. Operating in their new location near the roundabout on Highway 54, the total customer count for 2025 was 18,466, up from the 2024 customer count of just over 14,400. While long-term plans of the Market entail an evolution into a permanent,

year-round Oneida Public Market that not only features local produce and food, but also artisan goods, the need for a structure to house the Farmer's Market immediately can no longer be ignored. With this, Phase 1 of the Public Market Project was approved this summer by leadership. This Phase 1 is specific to construction of lean-to structures at this round-about location on Highway 54. These structures will look to increase the number of vendors participating in the Farmer's Market and improve the overall experience and safety of the community in varying weather conditions. The construction of the lean-tos is anticipated to be completed by the summer of 2026.

The Oneida Farmer's Market team also collaborated with the Wello organization this fall for an innovative and exciting "Pharmacy to Farmacy" pilot project. This collaboration allowed us to purchase produce from Oneida Farmer's Market vendors and distribute it free to the patients utilizing the Health Center Pharmacy. These "Pharmacy to Farmacy" events were held on September 5 and September 19, 2025. We were able to provide bags containing Oneida Nation beef and various seasonal produce to 60-70 patients each week. The goal of the pilot program was to introduce and encourage food-based interventions to health care service settings.

*For more information contact Vanessa Miller at: [vmiller@oneidanation.org](mailto:vmiller@oneidanation.org)*





Exciting times around the ELA Division as the seasons change and the harvest comes, we are all working hard to get as much done before the snow! Crops are ready and being picked, wood is being cut for the winter, the orchard is being put to sleep, canning is at its peak, and cleanup and demo of much needed dilapidated buildings around the rez is happening. As you can see from all the updates provided in our ELA Newsletter, our staff in the Division have been making a difference and doing some great work over the last quarter.

We are constantly evolving in this Division to better align with our Mission, and have another announcement to share. We have just completed another re-organization that moves the Oneida Nations Food Distribution Program and the Oneida Food Pantry into our Division. This creates improved alignment with our Food and Agriculture Area and will be a great addition. Please welcome Marilyn King, the Food Distribution Manager who has run that program effectively forever and Moon Hill, Food Pantry Manager who, like Marilyn, does an excellent job providing for our community. We look forward to working together with their programs to better meet the needs of the Oneida community. With this addition we are planning for additional changes in the near future that will again, better align areas to address the needs of this Division. Stay tuned for more about this soon!

Hunting season is in full swing, and we want everyone to try out the hunting app available with all the hunting areas open for bow and gun hunting. As the Land Office continues to do it's best to acquire more land, this creates opportunities for additional hunting land to be available, watch the map to stay updated! There have been some questions regarding getting access to hunting areas around leased ag land and I can provide some direction on that. What is on the hunting map is available land to hunt. We ask that you not damage any crops on leased land and that both lease holders and hunters be respectful of each other. Please be safe and enjoy the outdoors whether your hunting, hiking, foraging, or enjoying the beauty of the land!

– *Eric McLester*

## DIRECTOR'S CORNER



# ONEIDA

## GIS/Planning Hunting APP

Click the link or scan the QR Code to access the map



<https://arcg.is/0Sq59f0>

- Upon entering the link, you will be greeted by a Legal Notice
- This is important, so read thoroughly.
- Once finished, press ENTER.



# Oneida Nation Environmental, Land & Agriculture



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OneidaEHSD](https://facebook.com/OneidaEHSD)



ELA Division

## Environmental Pilot Project

Environmental staff grew and maintained a garden with the purpose of donating fresh produce to Oneida Pantry to distribute to the community.



This season they have harvested 1,033lbs of pumpkins, squash zucchini, and sunflowers!



## NEWSLETTER-

Release Dates

November 1st

~~February 1st~~

May 1st

August 1st

**NEXT ISSUE FOR  
WINTER SEASON  
WILL BE MARCH 1ST**