

Watershed Shuffle



Participants in this year's Watershed Shuffle.

Watershed Shuffle draws runners from across the country

By Caleb Harshberger

Last Saturday hundreds of local Central New York residents were joined by visitors from across the country. They gathered on Otisco Lake to run or walk the Watershed Shuffle. The Watershed Shuffle is an annual run that supports the Otisco Lake Preservation Association. Margaret Creamer is co-director of the run along with her husband Tim Creamer.

This is the sixth annual Otisco Watershed Shuffle. The run started when a group of local residents decided they needed to be a fundraiser to support the lake. Many of the volunteers have been involved from the beginning. Mark Harold is an area resident and has been a volunteer since the first year. "We had the crazy idea of doing some running in July," he said. "All the money goes to the Otisco Lake Preservation Association. It is our sixth year."

Volunteers like Harold are rightfully proud of the run and of the work that has been done to preserve Otisco Lake. What started out as a way to fund initiatives to deal with problems of weeds in the lake soon shifted to bring a suit requesting the ban of hydrofracking.

“It started with the weeds,” Harold said. “Around the second and third years it became about fracking.” The suit was supported by the Otisco Lake townships, much to the delight of the association.

The preservation of the lake is also important because of the sizeable quantity of drinking water that the lake provides to Onondaga Lake. “The lake provides almost 20 million gallons of drinking water to Onondaga county,” Tim Creamer explained.

This is the biggest fundraiser that the Otisco Lake Preservation Association does each year, making it extremely important that the money needed is raised. The run has traditionally been highly successful. One thing that is unique about the race is that members of the community donate prizes that will be awarded to the top three finishers with the rest raffled off to the racers based on bib numbers.

Prizes included a laptop, a floating lounge and a day on the lake. The community involvement likely plays a big part in making the events so successful with hundreds of runners and walkers registering for the event.

After less than half an hour the runners began trickling in. In first place was Rebecca Metzler. Joe Riccardi was second, and William Stuart was third. All of the results are available on leonetiming.com. After an hour the all of the runners and walkers had returned and the festivities could begin. Prizes were raffled off and the winners were recognized.

In order to get involved, register, learn more or contact the Otisco Lake Preservation Association, please visit otisolakepreservation.com where information, videos and contact information can be found.