

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

The Seneca Lake watershed management planning process began in 1996 with the development of the *Seneca Lake Watershed Study: Developing and Understanding of An Important Natural Resource*. That study called for an in-depth description and analysis to determine the state of the watershed, an education and awareness program to educate local residents and to stimulate their interest in protecting the resource, development of coalitions for cooperation and participation in projects, and development of a plan of work relevant to the watershed and its residents to achieve the following goal:

To protect and enhance Seneca Lake and its surrounding watershed through the encouragement of sound management practices and cooperation at the local level to develop a comprehensive approach for improving the quality of life and water in the Seneca Lake Watershed.

It is that study that helped bring together representatives from local, regional, state, and federal agencies as well as concerned citizens to form the Seneca Lake Area Partners in Five Counties (SLAP-5) that moved the Seneca Lake Watershed Management Planning process along. It is that group that worked as the Oversight Committee guiding this program which has culminated in this document.

This report describes the state of the watershed research, analysis and discussions, identifies current problems facing the watershed, and details the public education and outreach efforts. It is accompanied by a detailed appendix and a compact disk (CD) which contains the original computer mapping and databases, such as land use, soils, the agricultural inventory, the resident survey and the lakeshore owners survey, for use by anyone interested in conducting his/her own research.

Undertaking an intense public outreach and review program is the next step in the Seneca Lake watershed planning process. *Setting a Course for Seneca Lake* forms a solid foundation for the hard work of planning and implementation that lies ahead.