

Cayuga County Water Quality Management Agency
March 2, 2023 Meeting Minutes
Meeting held at Cayuga County Soil & Water Conservation District Offices

Members or Designees Present: Seth Jensen, Doug Kierst, Steve Lynch, Eileen O'Connor, Dale Powell, Ann Robson, Ed Wagner, Dan Welch, Carl Wiezalis

Others Present: Sam Beck-Anderson, Adam Effler, Emily Fell, Dr. Gioia, Olivia Green, Dana Hall, Greg Hutnik, Liz Kreitinger, Frank Moses, Erin Norris, Patty Orr, Ryan Staychock, Elizabeth Thomas, Evan Tuthill, Michele Wunderlich

Announcement

Steve Lynch announced that funds are available for Congressionally Elected Spending.

Minutes

The minutes from the February 2, 2023 WQMA meeting were reviewed. Steve Lynch made a motion to accept the February 2, 2023 minutes as written. Dan Welch seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with Seth Jensen abstaining due to absence.

WQMA Priority Working Groups Reports

2023 WQMA Work Plan

Seth Jensen asked if there were any comments on the Cayuga County WQMA 2023 Work Plan. Carl Wiezalis moved the Cayuga County WQMA 2023 Work Plan to the floor and Doug Kierst seconded the motion.

Carl Wiezalis requested amendments to the Stormwater section under the Nutrient and Sediment Working Group. One action was amended to read: "Provide the Communication and Outreach Working Group with communication pieces on resiliency and flooding and the resources available to assist property owners in addressing them." An additional action was added under the previous amendment: "Provide the Communication and Outreach Working Group with communication pieces to encourage landowners to install erosion and sediment control and waterfront protection-Skaneateles Lake Association."

An additional action was added under Priority: All Areas section under the Nutrient and Sediment Working Group that reads: "Request a representative from NYS Canal Corporation provide a presentation on lake levels and flooding-WQMA."

Doug Kierst requested the removal of the action "Request NYS Ag & Markets to present at a WQMA meeting on the source water buffer program" under the Nutrient and Sediment Working Group. A discussion occurred and the action was removed.

Steve Lynch made a motion to accept the Cayuga County WQMA 2023 Work Plan as amended. Doug Kierst seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Communications and Outreach Working Group

Dan Welch is now the chair of the Communications and Outreach Working Group. Michele Wunderlich stated that the next newsletter will be in March.

Agency Reports

Cayuga County Health Department

Eileen O' Connor reported that they are regularly meeting with The Nature Conservancy, NYS DEC, and SUNY Stony Brook Center for Clean Water Technology to advance a research and development project on phosphorus treating septic systems in Cayuga County, including the Y-Camp. She reported that they will also discuss testing a unit that has been approved through the certification program in Quebec that just got a vendor in NYS and has been used successfully on residences in Canada. Olivia Green stated that the Center for Clean Water Technology and NYS DEC also want to do some groundwater monitoring to study fate and transport of phosphorus from septic systems in Cayuga County. She can schedule a presentation on this project in the next couple of months.

Cayuga County Department of Planning and Economic Development

Steve Lynch reported that resolutions for the Community Science Institute's HABs surveillance program and their tributary monitoring program; as well as the resolution to accept FLOWPA funding were passed the County Legislature in February. He reported that there is a County resolution for March to provide Cayuga County's share for the 2019 NYS Consolidated Funding Application grant awarded to the Lake Ontario Regional Dredging Council in support of the Lake Ontario Regional Dredging Management Plan.

Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)

Doug Kierst reported that they have held a couple Erosion & Sediment Control Workshops for Contractors and Operators and have three more scheduled. He reported that the tree sale is going on and they are working on grant applications. They have also been working on the modeling updates for the Nine Element Plan for Owasco Lake and are working on the Nine Element Plan for Skaneateles Lake.

Cayuga County Solid Waste

Evan Tuthill reported that he is making a presentation to the Cayuga County Legislature on the Solid Waste Management Plan in March to identify the appropriate committee or working group to identify the programs we are going to implement in the future. He also reported that the first electronics recycling event will be held on April 1st.

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County (CCE)

Dan Welch reported that there will be a workshop on the value of manure on March 15th at John Daly Farm in Cato. He reported that Kirsten Workman from Pro-Dairy is holding a workshop on tile drainage on research that has been done at the Minor Institute and the University of Vermont on April 18th. He also has been appointed an advisory seat on the State Soil and Water Conservation Committee.

City of Auburn

Seth Jensen reported that the City of Auburn is taking on a capital reinvestment project and has authorized up to \$84 million for the wastewater treatment plant. Work includes treatment of the biosolids, many WWTP process improvements, and potentially upgrades to the overflow retention facility. He reported that the SEQR resolution is going to the City for the CSO project. He reported that they are replacing valves and piping at the slow sand filter plant and considering upgrades at the upper pump station with a chlorine dioxide zebra mussel treatment system. Finally, they are working with a consultant to study the effectiveness of the carbon treatment system for microcystin at higher levels to ensure it is effective across a higher toxicity range.

Town of Owasco

Ed Wagner reported that they have received \$91,000 grant from FEMA for Gahwiler Road to upgrade the ditching and piping under the road. This road was damaged due to Hurricane Fred. He reported that he is disappointed that Camp Columbus was sold to a private developer.

Lake Reports

Cayuga Lake Report

Liz Kreitinger reported that the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network is planning a spring conference and plan on focusing on the northern end of the lake. She reported that they are planning litter cleanup events and working with the Cayuga Lake Hydrilla Task Force to develop a plan for outreach in the lake to get the word out about hydrilla in Seneca County. She also reported that there is a new infestation in the Sheldrake and Wyers Points area.

Erin Norris reported the CWIO Technical Advisory Committee is working on a project matrix to receive projects and work on timelines. She reported that the next CWIO meeting will be held on March 22nd and it will be highlighting SWCD work in the watershed. She has been working with the Village of Cayuga on a shoreline stabilization project and with the Village of Union Springs.

Cross Lake/Seneca River Report

Carl Wieszalis reported that the lake and river levels have been reasonable, but he is concerned about spring flooding. He reported that there is a property owner with 600 feet of shoreline with about a foot of water chestnuts.

Duck Lake Report

Dale Powell reported that the Duck Lake Association is waiting to hear on their herbicide treatment and CSLAP.

Owasco Lake Report

Ann Robson reported the Bob Brower Symposium will be held on March 11th and will be on the effects of climate change on Owasco Lake. The keynote speaker will be Mark Lowery. She reported that Senator May is having a small discussion group and OWLA will be represented there to encourage more funding for water initiatives. She reported that OWLA's representative to the Owasco Lake Nine Element Plan Coordination Committee will be Dana Hall.

Skaneateles Lake Report

Frank Moses reported that on February 22nd the Onondaga County CCE hosted a program on Helping Our Hemlocks with updates from NYS Hemlock Initiative, Onondaga County Soil and Water Conservation District and the Skaneateles Lake Association. He reported that on March 8th Onondaga County CCE will host the “Ups and Downs of Skaneateles Lake” presentation on lake levels with Bill Kappel. He reported that on February 14th, the Skaneateles Lake Association along with The Nature Conservancy, fellow lake conservation groups, land trusts, and other environmental organizations advocated to New York State representatives to maintain the \$400 Million Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) that supports many water quality protection initiatives, such as the Finger Lakes-Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance (FOLLOWPA) program, Farmland Protection Implementation Grants, Water Quality Improvement Projects, and Forest Conservation Easement Funds. He reported that they received the 2022 summary made available through DEC, Parks, and the NY Natural Heritage Program's Watercraft Inspection Steward Program Application (WISPA) effort.

Partner Reports

NYSDEC Great Lakes Program

Michele Wunderlich stated that Emily Fell left a comment that the next meeting for the Integrated Watershed Action Plan for Sterling/Wolcott Creek is planned for March 29th and the team will be presenting on the risk analysis and management strategies.

Finger Lakes Institute/Finger Lakes Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM)

Sam Beck-Anderson reported that the Finger Lakes Institute is excited to be working with Cayuga County on continuing the monitoring buoy for Owasco Lake and a virtual community-based aggregation data viewing tool. He reported that they are gearing up for their summer research season which includes working with Lake Associations on HABs sampling, mercury sampling and continuing to operate their state certified water quality lab.

He reported that the Finger Lakes PRISM field season work includes management and surveying for various terrestrial and aquatic invasive species, reaching out to partners to solicit information for potential projects for their terrestrial invasive species strike team and holding hemlock woolly adelgid workshops. They will continue to focus on hydrilla monitoring and early detection and rapid response surveys on Cayuga Lake and throughout the Finger Lakes, and, based on work done in 2022, they will incorporate more scuba and snorkeling to help delineate and understand the existing and possible new hydrilla populations in Cayuga Lake. He reported that the Finger Lakes PRISM is reconvening their steering committee and the full partnership meeting will be in early May. Finally, they are planning their spring webinar series.

Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council (OLWMC)

Adam Effler reported that the Owasco Lake Watershed Inspection and Protection Division staff are finalizing their 2022 report which will be delivered to municipalities in the watershed and to the Auburn City Council on May 11th. He reported that we are awaiting the next Watershed Rules and Regulations meeting. He reported that they will be visiting, along with their partners, their new land preserve, the Fillmore Nature Preserve, to install additional property signage and conduct their first annual property inspection. He reported that the Owasco Lake 9E Plan

Coordination Committee meeting will be after this meeting. Finally, he reported that the OLWMC is leading two grants: one for tributary signage and one for a stream protection project on the Owasco Inlet.

The Nature Conservancy

Olivia Green reported that they are closing soon on a land protection easement for a 96-acre property uphill from the Owasco Flats. She reported that they are also working on their last two purchases from the WQIP grant: one is 72 wooded wetlands parcel in Venice and one is 100 acres parcel of mixed use in Locke. Finally, she reported that they are looking at reforestation of some of the upland portions of the former Parmley Property.

Miscellaneous

Doug Kierst made a motion to adjourn. Dan Welch seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. The meeting was closed at 12:01 pm.