

**Cayuga County Water Quality Management Agency**  
**June 4, 2020 Meeting Minutes**

Members or Designees Present: Gary Clark, Doug Dello Stritto, Jeff Emerson, Doug Kierst, Seth Jensen, Bruce Natale, Rick Nelson, Dan Welch, Carl Wiezalis

Others Present: Kathy Bertuch, Mary Catalfano, Greg Colucci, Adam Effler, Richard Hadcock, Michelle McGinnis, Liz Moran, Emily Sheridan, Michele Wunderlich

**Announcements**

Michele Wunderlich announced that John Halfman has won the Finger Lakes Regional Watershed Alliance's 2020 Citizen Award and Hilary Lambert has won the 2020 Lake Steward Award from the New York State Federation of Lake Associations.

**Old Business**

**Minutes**

The minutes from the March 5, 2020 WQMA meeting were reviewed. Carl Wiezalis made a motion to accept the March 5, 2020 minutes as written. Rick Nelson seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

**WQMA Priority Working Groups Reports**

**Communication and Outreach Working Group**

Michele Wunderlich reported that the quarterly newsletter went out in April to the WQMA email list, County legislators, town and village clerks, town supervisors, village mayors, City of Auburn officials, and 134 planning board members. She reported that she sent the "WQMA May Report Out" document on May 8<sup>th</sup> to her WQMA email list. This document highlighted some of the work being conducted by members and partners. She reported that the website has been updated with a new blog, group photo and new member information. She stated that the next newsletter will be in June and the Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council is writing a lead article. They are looking for additional articles that show the positive things that are being done to protect water quality in Cayuga County.

**Invasive Species Working Group**

Michele Wunderlich reported she wrote an article with Hilary Lambert on hydrilla that will be an Ecotalk article in The Citizen. She reported that the hydrilla website on the Health Department website has been updated. She worked with the Finger Lakes PRISM to identify an unknown aquatic plant in one of the Owasco Flats Project's basins that ended up being marsh seedbox which can filter and take in toxins. She announced that next week is New York State Invasive Species Awareness week and she will be holding an on-line class on invasive species identification on Friday June 12<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 am.

**Nutrient-Sediment Working Group**

Dan Welch reported that the group was looking at possible grant funding for marking storm drains, but didn't have the staff capacity at this time to go forward due to Covid19.

## Agency Reports

### Cayuga County Parks Department Update

Doug Dello Stritto reported that they are moving forward with their REDI grant work at Sterling Nature Center which includes redoing their parking areas and building a new nature center facility integrating stormwater management BMP's. He reported that they are also working on the contract for the bridge on the Cato - Brutus Trail and working with Cayuga County SWCD on rehabbing the pedestrian and fishing access at Owasco Flats.

Seth Jensen reported that the City of Auburn has been working with a contractor on their NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation grant project for zebra mussel control in the upper pump station. The bid came in under budget so they are looking to see if they could modify that grant to do additional work on the plugged culverts (aka sluiceway). That work could possibly be 60% funded by the grant and he wondered if the County was interested. Bruce stated that members from OWLA should be in on the conversation and they would need to figure out how to come up with the 40% match. Doug Dello Stritto, Bruce Natale and Seth Jensen will discuss this further.

### Cayuga County Department of Planning and Economic Development

Bruce Natale reported that the County is getting ready to put the second phase of the Owasco Flats Project out to bid in late June. The project was tested on a high flow event on May 1<sup>st</sup>. There is evidence that this area flooded for the first time in 25 years.

### Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)

Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Doug Kierst reported that the SWCD has been busy working on road ditch and streambank stabilization projects. He reported that their ag projects are moving forward and that their aquatic vegetation control program is getting their equipment ready for the upcoming season. He reported that he is working with Liz Moran to provide agriculture information for use in the nine element plan for the Owasco Lake Watershed. He stated that the next WQMA meeting will still need to be via teleconference or other locations, because they won't be ready to open their conference room back up for large public meetings.

### Cayuga County Solid Waste Management Program Office

Bruce Natale reported that they are working on how to have public collection programs this year with social distancing. There will be changes coming to the programs and they all may require pre-registration. There will be a tire collection event on June 27<sup>th</sup> and the details will be out soon.

### Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County (CCE)

Dan Welch reported that his office has been tasked with distributing hand sanitizer and masks to agricultural and food businesses. There are several distribution events coming up. He is looking at possibly applying for a Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program grant that is due in July.

### City of Auburn

Seth Jensen reported that the City of Auburn has an RFP underway to get a design firm to prepare bid documents for the new biosolids treatment facility which will allow for a final product with beneficial reuse. It is estimated that the engineering will be approximately 2 million for this approximately 26 million capital improvement project. He reported that the contractor for the zebra mussel control project has cleaned out the intake pipe and has installed the new lines which are undergoing pressure testing. He reported that they are looking at upgrades to two combined sewer overflow facilities to improve collection and disinfection; and the removal of two other facilities from the stormwater system. This project is currently in the RFP phase to hire a consultant to do the design work. He reported that they are installing sewer slip lines to prevent stormwater interconnections and are preparing for the 2020 harmful algal bloom season.

### Lake Reports

#### Cross Lake Report

Carl Wieszalis reported that during the spring the water was up over four feet and there was flooding damage. He stated that the area was flooded for over four weeks and it is an ongoing problem as the big lakes dump water into the system to prevent themselves from flooding. He stated that the board of the Central New York Waterways, Inc. has been unable to meet due to Covid19. He stated that Michele Wunderlich does a good job of sending information out, which they share on their website.

#### Little Sodus Bay Report

Gary Clark stated that the Lake Ontario did not flood as bad this year due to the drier than normal spring and there being less of a snowpack. He requested a WQMA meeting up in Fair Haven when we can begin to meet in person again.

#### Owasco Lake Report

Rick Nelson reported that OWLA had their monthly membership meeting and Dana Hall is the new president. He stated that Olivia Green from The Nature Conservancy reported on the work they are doing in the Owasco Lake Watershed and in the Finger Lakes. He reported that the 90 acre Parmeley property has been donated to The Nature Conservancy and they plan to plant it in seasonal grasses.

Rick Nelson reported that they will continue their harmful algal bloom reporting program. This year is visual reporting with no samples taken for testing. They are looking for volunteers especially in the south east and south west corners. He reported that they are working with Cayuga County SWCD to do ditch remediation including rock lining and hydroseeding. They have provided \$21,000 so far that the Cayuga County SWCD uses as match to their grant funds. Finally, they plan on having an outreach picnic this summer.

#### Cayuga Lake Report

Kathy Bertuch reported that the Cayuga Lake Intermunicipal Organization is working to identify projects for funding when grant funds become available. They are reaching out to get these projects, but it has been slow going. They will do pre-grant prep work for four or five of the identified projects.

### Skaneateles Lake Report

Kathy Bertuch reported that UFI was contracted to complete a monitoring work gap analysis for the Skaneateles Lake nine element plan and their final report is due soon. She stated that they had to revise their public participation in light of Covid19 and they hope to have the kickoff meeting as soon as possible. She stated that the local laws analysis and monitoring contracts are currently on hold.

### **Partner Reports**

#### NYSDEC Great Lakes Program

Emily Sheridan announced the New York's Great Lakes Action Agenda Partners & Projects Webinar series that begins on June 16<sup>th</sup>

([https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/water\\_pdf/2020glaawebinarflyer.pdf](https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/water_pdf/2020glaawebinarflyer.pdf)). She stated that the NYSDEC will be sampling Lake Ontario tributaries the week of August 17<sup>th</sup> (more information about the program and sampling locations is available at:

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/23848.html>).

#### Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council (OLWMC)

Adam Effler reported that they are going to write an article on a local crop farmer for the June WQMA newsletter and The Citizen. He reported that they have submitted five grant proposals. One to the Finger Lakes Institute, one to the Emerson Foundation, one is the “Be Watershed Aware” program in collaboration with OWLA and the Cayuga County Health Department, one is phosphorus removal from manure and one is phosphorus removal using absorptive media in the Owasco Flats Project. He reported that they are working on a project to install water level sensors in the Owasco Lake Watershed.

Seth Jensen made a motion to adjourn. Dan Welch seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. The meeting was closed at 11:16 am.