

Cayuga County Water Quality Management Agency
July 1, 2021 Meeting Minutes
Meeting conducted virtually on 8x8

Members or Designees Present: Gary Clark, Doug Dello Stritto, Richard Hadcock, Tyler Knapp, Ron Kuck, Pat Mooney, Dale Powell, Ann Robson, Ed Wagner, Dan Welch, Carl Wiezalis

Others Present: Ally Berry, Greg Colucci, Adam Effler, Frank Moses, Emily Sheridan, Michele Wunderlich

Old Business

Minutes

The minutes from the June 3, 2021 WQMA meeting were reviewed. Doug Dello Stritto made a motion to accept the June 3, 2021 minutes as written. Dale Powell seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

New Business

Cayuga Lake TMDL Comment Letter Endorsement

Michele Wunderlich stated that she had sent a draft letter to members/designees containing the Cayuga County Department of Planning and Economic Development's comments on the draft Cayuga Lake TMDL. Comments are due on July 8, 2021.

Tyler Knapp stated that Doug Kierst left some comments on the draft letter for him to read which were:

- Under the section entitled "the entire implementation section in the current document seems "generic"":
 - Regarding the 1st bullet point under that section - Priority Watersheds do not need to be identified and best management practices (BMPs) should be installed where there are landowners willing to pay to install them. Since there is no guaranteed funding associated with the BMP implementation, and the process is voluntary, the installation of any BMPs throughout the watershed should be welcomed.
 - Regarding the 2nd bullet point - In a general practical sense, the pairing of specific BMPs in specific areas is unrealistic unless or until all the land located within the watershed has completed the proper planning that would identify the specific BMP locations. Having general statements calling for an increase in cover crop usage throughout the watershed, will yield benefits, since the implementation is voluntary, with no guaranteed funding associated with them.
 - Regarding the 3rd bullet point - It should be left up to the individual private landowners and planners to work together and decide what BMPs should be installed and where they should be installed on a farm/landowner/field by farm/landowner/field basis.
 - Regarding the 4th bullet point - The implementation costs associated with BMPs will vary from location to location. Some areas may be in close proximity to materials (i.e. stone) or contractors that are available to do the work which would lower the costs versus areas where it is a longer distance (higher hauling costs)

which will increase costs. Where the practices are best suited should be determined through proper planning and evaluation by trained individuals.

- Regarding the 5th bullet point - It is hard to include specifics in a watershed wide TMDL. The completion of proper planning at the landowner/farm/field level is the best approach to voluntary implementation of BMPs.
- Regarding the 6th bullet - I agreed to this statement and also question who would be responsible to pay for the tracking.
- Under the section that mentions Appendix G and the funding:
 - There should be dedicated funding source made available for BMP installation in the Cayuga Lake Watershed.

Carl Wiezalis made a motion for the Cayuga County WQMA to endorse the Cayuga County Department of Planning and Economic Development's draft Cayuga Lake TMDL letter and submit it to the NYSDEC. Dale Powell seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Presentation

Michele Wunderlich gave a presentation on "Hyfi Sensors in the Owasco Lake Watershed."

WQMA Priority Working Groups Reports

Communications Working Group

Michele Wunderlich reported that the quarterly WQMA newsletter went out in June.

Invasive Species Working Group

Michele Wunderlich stated that the group will do the annual Asian Clam survey again this summer at the end of July or beginning of August.

Nutrient and Sediment Working Group

Michele Wunderlich asked if anyone was willing to take on the role as chair of the Nutrient and Sediment Working Group due to other commitments. No one offered to take up the role.

Agency Reports

Cayuga County Buildings and Grounds Department

Doug Dello Stritto reported that the signage for the new no mow zones has been installed. These signs explain why they are not mowing that area. He reported that work continues on the Sterling Nature Center and the Cato Fair Haven Trail.

Cayuga County Department of Planning and Economic Development

Michele Wunderlich reported that the construction of the Owasco Flats Wetland Restoration and Riparian Buffer Project is complete and she is working on closing out the grant.

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County (CCE) Update

Dan Welch reported that the tire collection event in June collected over 5000 tires and they got about double the people bringing tires this year.

Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)

Tyler Knapp reported that SWCD staff is completing construction oversight on two agricultural operations; and two engineering projects completed the design phase and are going out to bid. He reported that they are writing a proposal for consideration through the Agricultural Non-Point Source Abatement grant program. They are working with highway superintendents on culvert replacements and road ditch stabilization projects. The weed harvester was in Little Sodus Bay but had encountered mechanical issues and is in the process of being evaluated/repared. They are also working on culvert assessments in the Owasco Lake Watershed and completed a road ditch stabilization project with the Town of Scipio Highway Department. Finally, he reported that the tire event was a success and they collected around 5,000 tires (~83 tons) and he thanked Cornell Cooperative Extension, Cayuga County Dept. of Planning and Economic Development, Cayuga County Highway and Nucor for their work on this event.

Rich Hadcock stated that the water levels in Little Sodus Bay have been significantly low this year and there has been rapid weed growth which is causing issues with boating.

Lake Reports

Cross Lake/Seneca River Report

Carl Wiezalis reported that Megan Harris from the Finger Lakes Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management was at Cross Lake last week with three graduate students to evaluate the water chestnut on the west side of the lake and moving up lake. He stated that on the east side, Ken Bush, an Onondaga County Legislator has found funding for hand pulling and possibly weed cutting of the water chestnut in that County. He also reported that the water level is currently normal.

Lake Como Report

Pat Mooney reported that they were having issues finding flares for their ring of fire and they are thinking of doing the LED flares next year. Their next meeting is scheduled for July 17th and they will discuss using Solitude to chemically treat the weeds in Lake Como.

Duck Lake Report

Dale Powell reported that their chemical treatment of the weeds in Duck Lake was conducted on June 21st and it went well. He reported that the weeds are not too bad and their water level is a little low.

Little Sodus Bay/Lake Ontario Report

Rich Hadcock reported that they promoted LED flares and sold around 700. He reported that their water level is low and he has seen significant amounts of algae (not harmful algal blooms) and dense weeds in Little Sodus Bay. Gary Clark reported that they are working on improvements to West Bay Road that are part of the REDI grant program.

Owasco Lake Report

Ann Robson reported that the Owasco Watershed Lake Association (OWLA) Board meeting is on July 17th. They have twenty seven zones that they are doing harmful algal bloom (HABs) surveillance on this summer; are conducting a stream sampling program; assisting the Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council with funding signs for the watershed; are working with

the Finger Lakes Institute on programs for highlighting watersheds in the classroom; and have a monthly article in *The Citizen* on the watershed. She reported that they held a recognition for Drew Snell who is leaving his position as watershed specialist. Finally, she stated that they used the sale of LED flares as a fund raiser.

Skaneateles Lake Report

Frank Moses reported that the Skaneateles Lake Association is conducting education on the dangers of flares. He reported that the Lake Friendly Living Coalition of the Finger Lakes created a “Lake Friendly 4th” flyer. He stated that they are happy with the Owasco Watershed Lake Association’s work on hemlock woolly adelgid and they have a board member who is going to take on this topic to have a more comprehensive response in the Skaneateles Lake Watershed. Finally, they have received a CNY Community Foundation grant which will allow them to hire an educational consultant to create an emerging watershed scientist curriculum.

Partner Reports

NYSDEC Great Lakes Program

Emily Sheridan reported that she attended the Coastal Lakeshore Economy and Resiliency (CLEAR) Initiative meeting the previous night and there will be two more public meetings if people want to attend in the future. She stated that Sea Grant is working on a coastal literacy program and is planning on ecosystem educational workshops this summer. One will be at Fair Haven Beach on August 4th from 3 to 5 pm. She stated that the CFA is open and that there are non-ag nonpoint source pollution planning grants up to \$30,000 available through the NYSDEC. Finally she reported that the 2030 Action Agenda is close to release.

Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council

Adam Effler reported that Drew Snell has left the Owasco Lake Watershed Inspection and Protection Division and Dillion Shults will be starting in mid-July. He stated that he received an endorsement letter for the Owasco Lake Watershed Rules and Regulations from Senator Oberacker, Senator Helming and Assemblyman Lemondes. He stated that Ally Berry is working with the YMCA on watersheds and lake safety and the YMCA will be using their watershed model for youth education. He stated that the Cayuga County Sheriff’s Office is looking at using LED flares and Wegmans in Auburn in providing funds to the Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council from the sale of their LED flares. He reported that they have put their “Clean, Drain, Dry” billboard up at Emerson Park; are working on installing additional Hyfi sensors; and are working on a tributary monitoring program with OWLA, Cayuga County Department of Planning and Economic Development and the NYSDEC.

Miscellaneous

Dale Powell made a motion to adjourn. Carl Wiezalis seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. The meeting was closed at 11:15 am.