

Cayuga County Water Quality Management Agency
July 2, 2020 Meeting Minutes
Meeting conducted virtually on 8x8

Members or Designees Present: Doug Dello Stritto, Seth Jensen, Bruce Natale, Rick Nelson, Eileen O'Connor, Dale Powell, Tim Schneider, Dan Welch, Carl Wiezalis

Others Present: Greg Colucci, Adam Effler, Richard Hadcock, Frank Moses, Michele Wunderlich

Announcements

Eileen O'Connor announced that the Moravia Waste Water Treatment permit is due for renewal with no changes.

Old Business

Minutes

The minutes from the June 4, 2020 WQMA meeting were reviewed. Seth Jensen made a motion to accept the June 4, 2020 minutes as written. Carl Wiezalis seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

WQMA Priority Working Groups Reports

Communication and Outreach Working Group

Eileen O'Connor reported that the quarterly newsletter went out in June and they have received positive feedback. This newsletter showcased good practices. She thanked Michele Wunderlich for putting it together. The next one is due in September.

Invasive Species Working Group

Michele Wunderlich reported she wrote an article with Hilary Lambert on hydrilla that was Ecotalk article in The Citizen. She reported that she held her on-line class on invasive species identification during New York State Invasive Species Awareness week.

Nutrient-Sediment Working Group

No report.

Agency Reports

Cayuga County Health Department

Eileen O'Connor reported that the United States Army Corps of Engineers begun treatment of the hydrilla in Cayuga Lake in Aurora. They are using fluridone to treat the hydrilla and they are sampling the drinking water. The results from last week were non-detect.

Eileen O'Connor reported that the Health Department has begun their harmful algal bloom (HAB) outreach and activities for the summer including a press release and frequently asked questions document for restaurants. She also reported that the Town of Owasco and City of Auburn are using CSI Laboratories to test the water for HAB toxins.

Finally, she reported that they are only doing their septic system inspector course for new inspectors this summer. For those inspector requiring recertification, they are doing self-certification instead of in person classes.

Cayuga County Department of Planning and Economic Development

Michele Wunderlich reported that there have been issues with the validation and calibration of the SWAT model for the Owasco Lake Watershed Nine Element Plan. She reported that they are requesting a one year extension on the project but hope to be finished sooner.

Bruce Natale reported that the County has sent the second phase of the Owasco Flats Project out to bid and they had their pre-bid meeting on July 1st. He estimates that the first phase of the project caught about 50 cubic yards of sediment during the storm at the beginning of May.

Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)

Tim Schneider reported that the Cayuga County SWCD has hydroseeded approximately 10 miles this year. He reported that they are working with the Village of Moravia on flooding issues and so far have cleaned out a plugged culvert and will be installing two cleanout basins. They have been doing stabilization projects, working with two farms on agricultural best management practices and applying for Agricultural Non-Point Source grants. They are also working with the towns of Summerhill and Sempronius on two road ditch/culvert projects that are scheduled to begin in August. Finally, they have mowed and no-till planted The Nature Conservancy property in the Owasco Flats.

Cayuga County Solid Waste Management Program Office

Bruce Natale reported that a tire collection event was held on June 27th and it was smaller than usual. That may be because they required pre-registration. They had around 120 vehicles and collected about 1800 tires, which was about 1/3 less than they usually do. Most of the tires go to Nucor to make steel.

Cayuga County Parks Department Update

Doug Dello Stritto reported that they are doing extensive work on their REDI grant at Sterling Nature Center. They are also working to replace two bridges on the Cato - Brutus trail and Cayuga County Highway is completing culvert replacement and ditching along the trails. He reported that the contractor is planning on completing the paving work on Deauville Island in August/September and the riparian plantings along the back channel.

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County (CCE)

Dan Welch reported that they have been working with the Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council and Owasco Watershed Lake Association on a hemlock woolly adelgid inventory/outreach grant. He also reported that they have been receiving many calls about the Asian giant hornet but the people reporting them are probably seeing the European hornet.

City of Auburn

Seth Jensen showed photos from their zebra mussel control project. He reported that there were more zebra mussels than expected in the intake pipe and it took a week to clean them out. Rick Nelson asked about the sluiceway and Bruce Natale stated that he was waiting for photos that Ed

Wagner took that the consultants wanted to see. Seth stated that their contract with the consultants is substantially complete but he will not close it out until he hears about the sluiceway.

Seth Jensen also reported that they have a grant to purchase close to 150 acres in the south end of Owasco Lake off of Rockefeller Road (Jones Estate), and they hope to finalize the closing in a couple weeks.

Lake Reports

Cross Lake/Seneca River Report

Carl Wiezalis reported that people are seeing suspicious blooms on the east side of the lake in Onondaga County but no one has shared photos so they cannot submit them to the NYSDEC. He stated that they are already having issues with water chestnut. He reported that Russ Nemecek with Onondaga County got money to fund hand pulling for the summer and some mechanical harvesting. He asked the group if anyone knew who owns the old channel into Cross Lake because boats are being damaged due to an obstruction in the water (in Onondaga County). No one knew so Carl Wiezalis is going to talk to the United States Army Corps of Engineers.

Duck Lake Report

Dale Powell reported that they completed their herbicide treatment of Duck Lake on June 22nd and June 23rd. He also reported that the lake is about four inches low, they are not seeing zebra mussels this year and it seems to be peak boating season.

Little Sodus Bay Report

Rich Hadcock reported that the Lake Ontario lake level has been dropping slowly but is still six inches higher than their historical 100 year average level. He asked when the weed harvesting was going to start because they are already seeing significant weed growth. They have floating weed masses with blooms of algae on top (not harmful algal blooms). Tim Schneider stated that weed harvesting is scheduled to begin on July 6th in Owasco Lake after they wrap up a large project that has been on-going for months; then they will move on to Little Sodus Bay. Finally, Rich Hadcock reported that they are doing a scaled down Fourth of July with a boat parade and ring of fire.

Owasco Lake Report

Rick Nelson reported that Andy Zepp from the Finger Lakes Land Trust presented at the OWLA meeting and updated them on some projects in the Owasco Lake watershed that they are getting ready to close on. He reported that OWLA continues to cost share the ditch remediation work conducted by Cayuga County SWCD. He also reported that they are doing their harmful algal bloom observation and reporting. He asked who else in the watershed is working on hemlock woolly adelgid and if anyone knew a licensed chemical applicator. Frank Moses stated that he would share information with OWLA about the CNY HWA hunters and he stated that the Finger Lakes Land Trust has applicators and they could contact them. Frank Moses also reported that the Skaneateles Lake Association worked with Onondaga County Soil & Water Conservation District on grant application submitted to USDA-Forest Service-GLRI program to support Hemlock Woolly Adelgid management.

Skaneateles Lake Report

Frank Moses reported that they have 15 boat stewards at boat launches and there was a report of a Round Goby caught at south end of the lake. He stated that they have begun the benthic matting for the Eurasian Watermilfoil Management program. He reported that they are working on streambank stabilization and wetland creation in the Skaneateles Lake watershed. They are continuing their research with stream monitoring; exploring using a drone to look at mud plumes after rain events; and analyzing the sediment in 140 transect samples. He stated that they have 34 active zones for their shoreline harmful algal bloom monitoring and they continue to work on their lake friendly lawn care program and lake manual.

Partner Reports

Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council (OLWMC)

Adam Effler reported that they wrote a recognition article on a local crop farmer for the June WQMA newsletter and The Citizen. He reported that they will also have a monthly column in The Citizen. He reported that they continue work with County Planning and Hyfi to get water levels sensors installed on tributaries in the Owasco Lake watershed which will provide data for the SWAT model. He reported that they received funds from the Emerson Foundation to purchase a watershed model for education; are planning a training to inventory hemlock trees and the hemlock woolly adelgid infestation in the watershed; and training on how to identify harmful algal blooms. They are also working on a two tiered pledge system with tier one being a language revision of the lake friendly lawn pledge and the second being a pledge for lake friendly living.

Rick Nelson made a motion to adjourn. Dale Powell seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. The meeting was closed at 11:14 am.