

Cayuga County Water Quality Management Agency
August 5, 2021 Meeting Minutes
Meeting held at Cayuga County Soil & Water Conservation

Members or Designees Present: Jeff Emerson, Seth Jenson, Tyler Knapp, Steve Lynch, Pat Mooney, Rick Nelson, Dale Powell, Ed Wagner

Others Present: Ally Berry, Jenna DeRario, Adam Effler, Greg Hutnik, Dillon Shults

Old Business

Minutes

The minutes from the July 1, 2021 WQMA meeting were reviewed. Rick Nelson made a motion to accept the July 1, 2021 minutes as written. Steve Lynch seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

New Business

No new business.

WQMA Priority Working Groups Reports

All Working Groups were requested to provide names of alternate members at the next WQMA meeting.

Communications Working Group

No update

Invasive Species Working Group

Ed Wagner reported that the annual Asian Clam survey will be held on August 11th and the results will be available shortly thereafter.

Nutrient and Sediment Working Group

The chair of the Nutrient and Sediment Working Group is still vacant. Steve Lynch suggested that the number of tasks in the annual work plan of the Working Group should be reduced, which could help fill the position.

Agency Reports

Cayuga County Department of Planning and Economic Development

Steve Lynch reported the following:

- The Village of Cayuga and the Village of Fair Haven/Town of Sterling Local Waterfront Revitalization Programs are underway.
- The Cayuga County Department of Planning and Economic Development is a member of the Steering Committee for Lake Ontario Coastal Lakeshore Economy and Resilience (CLEAR) Initiative.
- The Town of Sterling is preparing a 1-year moratorium on commercial water withdrawals proximate to the Town of Sterling and Village of Fair Haven public water wells; and studies are being conducted to determine any future impacts.

- The Cayuga Lake and Owasco Lake monitoring and testing budgets for county funding in FY22.
- The County has an opportunity to become a contributing member of the Cayuga Watershed Intermunicipal Organization in FY22.
- In regards to the Owasco Lake 9E Plan, the SWAT model is calibrated and validated and the Cornell University is running mitigation scenarios. There will be a public meeting on September 27 at Cayuga Onondaga BOCES (limited to 50 in person) on draft recommendations
- A CFA Application was submitted for Deauville Island Improvements
- Sterling Nature Center rebid in ongoing.
- The proposed DEIS and draft management plan by NOAA for a National Marine Sanctuary for 1,700 square miles of Lake Ontario is out for comments.

Seth Jenson asked if there were cost implications to sending John Halfman's data to a certified lab. Steve Lynch suggested that this should be asked of John Halfman. Dale Powell noted that the JLI Lab costs \$30 per sample.

Jeff Emerson asked if there was a plan if the salt mine ceiling collapsed. Steve Lynch responded that mining is regulated by the NYSDEC. Jeff Emerson asked if road salt was being considered to be prohibited. Steve Lynch answered that there is no current prohibition on using road salt, but the County is looking to get machines calibrated in order to not use so much. Seth Jenson will ask the Director of Public Works about calibrations for the City's machines.

Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)

Tyler Knapp reported that SWCD has been working on the AEM program and are currently working with four farms to implement practices in the Owasco Lake and Seneca River watersheds. They are working with Adam Effler and Seth Jenson on a project in the Owasco Lake watershed, funded by a federal grant with the City of Auburn, to install soil erosion and sediment control practices. They estimated that they would be installed next spring, but have the flexibility to extend the grant to July 2022. The farm is leasing the land so it may be a complicated process because they will need to work with the owner and renter. Operation and maintenance must be maintained for ten years even if the land is operated by another farm in the future. It had to be 100% cost share since the farmer doesn't own the land. SWCD is also working on a joint project with USDA on a farm in the northern part of the County. The project is funded by a state grant program and through USDA's EQIP; the project will include plan development and prescribed grazing practices.

For the non-ag related projects, they are assisting municipalities with flooding, drainage and erosion concerns from the excessive rainfall in July. The weed harvester is currently on Cayuga Lake; Owasco Lake will be next with an anticipated arrival the week of 8/9. They still have the smaller lakes to get to and hope to circle back to Little Sodus Bay if time permits. Mechanical failures have set the District back a few weeks this year. Additionally, they are working with the Towns of Scipio to implement road shoulder stabilization measures in the Owasco lake Watershed. The project included the extension of the road culvert and the installation of outlet protection. SWCD is also working with Cayuga County Highway Department to install

approximately 650 feet of road ditch stabilization using rock in construction with the placement of one concrete sediment trap/basin.

Seth Jenson asked if there is an inventory of culvert crossings in GIS format. Tyler stated that an inventory and assessment was being completed by SWCD, but records are retained through the NAACC program. SWCD utilizes the program's software to enter culvert related data into a database via a tablet in the field. They are approximately halfway through the Owasco Lake watershed; with an estimated 250 total culverts that need assessment for the grant. If funded in the future, they will also need to identify erosion issues and recommend follow up actions for municipalities. Funding is through WQIP.

Cayuga County Solid Waste Management Program

Jenna DeRario reported that she is working on a solid waste management plan update for the County, per requirements of the NYSDEC. She will present to the County Legislature in August on the implementation schedule, NYSDEC requirements to complete the plan, and planned outreach to the communities. She is first collecting data to understand the current waste stream, what programs are already in place, and options the County has for moving forward. The NYSDEC recommended looking at Madison County's solid waste management plan as a good example of one.

There will be Countywide waste events soon – electronics recycling on September 25, 2021 (registration coming soon) and hazardous household waste on October 16, 2021.

City of Auburn

Seth Jenson reported that the City has been working on a sludge management program. Currently, between 7,000 and 8,000 tons of sludge per year are being hauled to landfills from the wastewater treatment plants, amounting to \$750,000 - \$800,000 in hauling costs. While the City has worked well with Casella, it leaves the system vulnerable with one hauler. Seth Jensen is interested in how other counties manage their bio-solids and speaking more with Jenna DeRario about the local solid waste management plan and how there can be further collaboration. There may be a possibility for the City of Auburn to take liquid sludge, before pressing, from different municipalities on a weekly basis to their digester. That way, small municipalities would not need to pay for expensive equipment.

Steve Lynch asked if the fertilizer created from the sludge could be sold back to farms, as they are in need of fertilizer. Seth Jenson responded that California has a good model that requires farmers to buy fertilizer from sludge management programs before purchasing commercial fertilizer.

Town of Owasco

Ed Wagner reported that the Town is working on three capital projects:

1. Their granulated activated carbon (GAC) system is nearly ready to go live.
2. A waterline replacement.
3. A recent study determined that separating Town sewer from stormwater infrastructure would cost roughly \$23 million. Town is going to separate infrastructure on three pilot

streets (\$3 million) and do a post-study to verify if flows are reduced. Construction should begin on this pilot project in 1.5 years.

Lake Reports

Duck Lake Report

Dale Powell reported that the lake is in good shape; there were low readings of *E. Coli*.

Lake Como Report

Pat Mooney reported that they are in the process of looking at chemical treatment of the weeds on the lake. They received an estimate of \$25,000 for 18 acres of weed management. This effort would include permitting through the NYSDEC. They have been managing beaver activity as well.

Owasco Lake Report

Rick Nelson reported that there have not been any harmful algal blooms (HABs) reported in Owasco Lake. He thanked Steve Lynch for presenting on the 9-E Plan and Owasco Lake Watershed Rules and Regulations at a recent meeting.

Partner Reports

Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council

Adam Effler reported that the NYSDOH came out with a statement regarding the proposed updated community consensus Watershed Rules and Regulations. The NYSDOH has formed a four agency review board: the Department of Health, Ag and Markets, NYSDEC, and the NYSDOS. The Town of Owasco and the City of Auburn are looking for more transparency on the process. They support more incorporation of comments and concerns from the Council.

Adam stated that NYSERDA has approved the Council for an internship program that can fund interns to help with Climate Smart Communities accreditation for Owasco and other municipalities. The Owasco Lake Watershed Inspection and Protection Division has installed 14 Hyfi water level sensors around the Owasco Lake watershed. A link to the data is on the Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council's website. They've been working on several signage programs, such as Lake Friendly Living, with cost sharing from OWLA and the Council. They are working with OWLA on installing a rain garden in Emerson Park. The Council is positioning themselves to get land acquisitions from the Nature Conservancy for conservation. Adam Effler reported that they are going through an audit and the final audit results will be posted on their website.

Miscellaneous

Steve Lynch made a motion to adjourn. Jeff Emerson seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. The meeting was closed at 11:45 am.

Minutes written by Greg Hutnik.