

Cayuga County Water Quality Management Agency
September 2, 2021 Meeting Minutes
Meeting held at Cayuga County Soil & Water Conservation

Members or Designees Present: Gary Clark, Jeff Emerson, Seth Jenson, Doug Kierst, Ron Kuck, Pat Mooney, Rick Nelson, Eileen O'Connor, Dan Welch, Carl Wiezalis

Others Present: Ally Berry, Jenna DeRario, Adam Effler, Olivia Green, Bill Hecht, Tee-Ann Hunter, Greg Hutnik, Greg Rejman, Emily Sheridan, Dillon Shults, Michele Wunderlich

Old Business

Minutes

The minutes from the August 5, 2021 WQMA meeting were reviewed. Jeff Emerson made a motion to accept the August 5, 2021 minutes as written. Rick Nelson seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

New Business

The Agency discussed the Bell Station property in Lansing. Jeff Emerson made a motion:

The Cayuga County WQMA supports the effort of the Cayuga Bird Club's officers in opposing NYSEG's auction of its Bell Station property on the Lansing shoreline and requests that they resume their negotiations with area organizations, such as the Finger Lakes Land Trust and NYSDEC, to acquire this parcel for a fair price, so it can be conserved as a wildlife management area or other type of land available for the public and for future generations to come. The Cayuga County WQMA advises the Cayuga County Legislature to consider passing a resolution in support of this effort and request NYSEG to resume negotiations, as stated above.

Pat Mooney seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

WQMA Priority Working Groups Reports

Communications Working Group

Eileen O'Connor stated that the next newsletter will be done in September and to send Michele Wunderlich any articles you have by September 14, 2021.

Invasive Species Working Group

Michele Wunderlich reported that the annual Asian Clam survey was held on August 11th and she will do a presentation on the results at a future meeting. Jeff Emerson requested spotted lanternfly flyers and the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County will look at getting some.

Nutrient and Sediment Working Group

Seth Jensen reported that the group met and went through the action items for the Nutrient and Sediment Working group and they have already addressed about 75% of them. He stated that they are going to develop a presentation on stormwater regulations for the Cayuga County

Planning Board trainings. He stated that they are going to coordinate with the Communications and Outreach group on some outreach pieces.

Agency Reports

Cayuga County Environmental Health Update

Eileen O'Connor reported that the septic system replacement program is for septic systems located within 250 feet of Owasco Lake, Lake Como, Cayuga Lake and Skaneateles Lake and it provides reimbursement of 50% of costs, up to \$10,000, for design and installation of a new septic system. She stated that the application form is on the Health Department website.

Eileen O'Connor reported that Cayuga Lake has had harmful algal blooms through the entire summer. She stated that there have been less reports in Owasco Lake, but the raw water toxins taken at the Auburn Water Treatment Plant are higher than they have ever been. She stated that the Owasco Water Treatment Plant and Auburn Water Treatment Plant have their treatment systems on. She stated that the water treatment plant at Wells College has not seen any cyanobacteria yet this year and the one sample they took of the raw water had nothing in it.

Seth Jensen reported that the City of Auburn and an engineering firm are working on taking high resolution photos of raw or finished drinking water samples and using artificial intelligence to give a real time concentration of microcystin in the water. This will allow for more real time decision making.

Eileen O'Connor mentioned that the NYSDEC reported a significant manure spill of approximately 30,000 to 50,000 gallons in the Cayuga Lake watershed that was due to human error in leaving a valve open.

Eileen O'Connor reported that the hydrilla treatment in Cayuga Lake continues with some additional locations added north due to the discovery of more plants. The fluoridone monitoring reports for the drinking water and bathing beach are available on the Health Department website.

Cayuga County Parks Department

Doug Dello Stritto reported thanked Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District for their assistance with the flooding in the park. He stated that the buffers caught sediment from the floods. He reported that the Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council and Owasco Watershed Lake Association are designing a demonstration rain garden.

Cayuga County Department of Planning and Economic Development

Michele Wunderlich stated that the modeling is completed for the Owasco Lake 9E Plan and that there will be a public meeting on September 27, 2021 at the Cayuga Onondaga BOCES. She reported that the stormwater basins were overtopped during the flooding on August 19th. Doug Kierst reported that he was there after the peak and that you could visually see that Basin #3 was working.

Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)

Doug Kierst reported that they have been busy giving guidance after the flooding. He reported that the most damage seems to be to the fire lanes, steep slopes and the streambanks. He

reported that they are done with aquatic vegetation harvesting in the big lakes. Doug Kierst reported that there will be a soil health seminar held at the Cuddeback Farm on September 9th.

Cayuga County Solid Waste Management Program

Jenna DeRario reported that the electronics recycling event is on September 25, 2021 and the hazardous household waste event is on October 16, 2021. She stated that the resident survey has been released for the update to the County's solid waste management plan.

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County

Dan Welch reported that the registrations for the electronics event are filling up and that their office is currently in the Cayuga Works Career Center at Cayuga Community College.

City of Auburn

Seth Jenson reported that the City has been very busy in response to Tropical Storm Fred. They are working on submitting costs to the Cayuga County Emergency Management Office for submission to FEMA. He stated that Auburn received the most rain in Central New York and that the capital projects held up well. He stated that there was more rain than Hurricane Agnes in 1972 and Owasco Lake peaked at 715. He stated that there will be a stakeholder meeting for the Drinking Water Source Protection Plan grant.

Lake Reports

Cross Lake/Seneca River Report

Carl Wiezalis reported that the last three weeks have been bad for flooding in Cross Lake with the water 5 to 6 feet over normal navigation levels. He stated that people have had to pull their boats out of the water or anchor them offshore because the docks are 1 to 3 feet under water. There is damage to the shorelines and trees are being lost.

Carl Wiezalis also reported that water chestnut mats have been floating down the river and landing on the west shore for the first time. He stated that Onondaga County has found \$50,000 for water chestnut remediation. He stated that Cayuga County should also be involved since the water chestnut is coming from Cayuga County. Seth Jensen suggested that the Invasive Species Working Group take this on.

Lake Como Report

Pat Mooney reported that they had cleaned out the beaver dam in Fall Creek in accordance with their permit prior to the heavy rains. These rains caused minor flooding on the lake. The Lake Como Association is meeting to discuss treating the milfoil in the Lake with chemicals.

Little Sodus Bay/Lake Ontario Report

Gary Clark reported that the water level of Lake Ontario is where it should be this time of year. He reported that the work done on West Bay Road is great. He reported that the Census shows that the populations of Sterling and Fair Haven are increasing. He stated that there have been some sewer issues due to stress on the sewer due to the number of people using it. Finally, he stated that the NYSDEC will be stocking salmon through their pen rearing program in Little Sodus Bay.

Owasco Lake Report

Rick Nelson reported that Dr. Timothy Volk presented on the Willow Biomass Project at SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry at the last Owasco Watershed Lake Association meeting.

Rick Nelson reported that 90% of the willows they planted along Veness Brook earlier this year have survived. He also reported that OWLA is planning to treat at least another 2,500 hemlocks this fall for hemlock woolly adelgids (HWA) with their remaining HWA funds, as well as conduct a new assessment to find more affected watershed trees. They are looking for new donations to continue this program in 2022.

Cayuga Lake Report

TeeAnn Hunter reported that the Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization (CWIO) is wrapping up their Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan grant and the result is a list of 26 water quality improvement projects in the watershed as well as five priority projects ready to apply for grant funds. She stated that they did an organizational assessment with the Consensus Building Institute and the CWIO has adopted new bylaws, developed a memorandum of understanding, developed a job description for a watershed manager and recalculation of dues.

Partner Reports

Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council (OLWMC)

Adam Effler reported that Ally Berry and Dillion Shults are taking drone training. He stated that the Cayuga County Parks Commission has approved the installation of a rain garden in Emerson Park and this project is being led by Kim Mills of OWLA and it should be installed this fall. He stated that they are working on one of the actions of the Nutrient and Sediment Management group which is to approach golf courses to ask that they obtain certification from Audubon International by implementing Standard Environmental Management Practices. The OLWMC is administering, on behalf of the City of Auburn, the Conservation Kick Great Lakes Commission grant program and the Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District will be installing a water and sediment control basin (WASCOB) on a selected watershed producer's property. He reported that they will be moving to a new office on West Lake Road in October. Finally, a speaker from Evidn will speak at their September meeting on Our Owasco and Michele Wunderlich will speak on the Owasco Lake 9 Element Plan.

Partnership for Healthy Watersheds

Greg Rejman reported that they have social media posts on corn silage harvest and farm traffic on roads. He stated that a lot of the investments made on farm held up to the extreme rain with clean water coming off the fields with minimal erosion. He stated that the streambanks are a mess.

Miscellaneous

Doug Kierst made a motion to adjourn. Doug Dello Stritto seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. The meeting was closed at 11:55 am.