

**Cayuga County Water Quality Management Agency**  
**January 6, 2022 Meeting Minutes**  
**Meeting conducted virtually on 8x8**

Members or Designees Present: Gary Clark, Doug Dello Stritto, Jeff Emerson, Doug Kierst, Ron Kuck, Seth Jensen, Steve Lynch, Rick Nelson, Eileen O'Connor, Ann Robson, Carl Wiezalis

Others Present: Sam Beck-Andersen, Ally Berry, Lauren Darcy, Adam Effler, Emily Fell, Greg Hutnik, Darby Kiley, Aaron McKeon, Liz Moran, Frank Moses, Greg Rejman, Michele Wunderlich

**Announcements**

None.

**Old Business**

**Minutes**

The minutes from the December 3, 2021 WQMA meeting were reviewed. Jeff Emerson made a motion to accept the December 3, 2021 minutes as written. Seth Jensen seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

**New Business**

**Elections**

Michele Wunderlich, representing the nominating committee, put forward the slate of Seth Jensen as Chair and Doug Dello Stritto as Vice Chair. Steve Lynch made a motion that Seth Jensen be Chair of the WQMA and Doug Dello Stritto be the Vice Chair. Jeff Emerson seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

**Presentation**

Darby Kiley, Associate Planner with Tompkins County Department of Planning and Sustainability, presented "Regulatory Tools to Protect Stream Buffers."

**New Business (Continued)**

**Draft 2020-2022 Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List of Impaired/TMDL Waters**

The Agency discussed the draft 2020-2022 Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List of Impaired/TMDL Waters and the comment period which ends on January 28, 2022.

Rick Nelson made a motion to request an extension of the public comment period for the "Draft 2020-2022 Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List of Impaired Waters" and requests that more data on the criteria for changes in this list for Cayuga County Waterbodies be sent to the members for review. Eileen O'Connor seconded the motion. Liz Moran suggested requesting the extension be three to four weeks after the data is received.

Rick Nelson amended the motion to read:

The Cayuga County Water Quality Management Agency requests an extension of the public comment period for the "Draft 2020-2022 Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List of Impaired Waters" and requests that more data on the criteria for changes in this list for

Cayuga County Waterbodies be sent to the members for review. We request an extension until February 28, 2022 or 30 days after additional data is received by the County.

Seth Jensen seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

### **WQMA Priority Working Groups Reports**

Michele Wunderlich reminded the Working Groups that the Year End Report is due in February.

#### Communications Working Group

Eileen O'Connor stated that Michele Wunderlich sent out the last newsletter in December and the next one will be in March.

#### Invasive Species Working Group

No updates.

#### Nutrient and Sediment Working Group

No updates.

### **Agency Reports**

#### Cayuga County Health Department

Eileen O'Connor reported that they have gotten proposals for the Septic System Replacement Program for properties on Lake Como. She stated that she is working with Olivia Green with The Nature Conservancy on promoting innovative phosphorus removal septic technologies within the Owasco Lake Watershed.

#### Department of Parks and Trails

Doug Dello Stritto announced that they are waiting for a NYSDEC permit to dredge the Deauville Island channel in the spring for regular maintenance and to prepare to move docks to the other side of the channel to remove some vehicular traffic from the Island as they go forward with their plans for Island redevelopment. He reported that they need to do more drainage work on the rain garden project over the winter and spring. He reported that they are working with the City of Auburn for permanent closure of the culverts (sluiceway) so they can be maintained in the future.

#### Cayuga County Department of Planning and Economic Development

Steve Lynch reported that the NYSDOS and their consultant team are in the process of finalizing the CLEAR plan for Cayuga and Oswego Counties. He reported that the County is working with Community Science Institute and Finger Lakes Institute to do tributary monitoring in 2022. He also reported that Michele Wunderlich and Eileen O'Connor have become staff level representatives to the Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization (CWIO).

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

Doug Kierst reported that they stabilized 1,200 feet of road ditch along Townline Road in the Towns of Scipio and Fleming. He reported that they continue to assess culverts in the Owasco Lake Watershed using the North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative (NAACC) protocol and they have received grant funds to do similar assessments in the Cayuga Lake, Skaneateles

Lake and Little Sodus Bay/Lake Ontario watersheds. He also announced that they received \$600,000 to do some fire lane stabilization and to work with highway departments on road ditch stabilization.

Doug Kierst stated that they are doing the Trade-A-Tree program in coordination with the Cayuga County Department of Planning and Economic Development. He stated that there will be a soil health meeting at Patterson Dairy next week and they will talk about the Our Owasco Project through Evidn.

#### Cayuga County Solid Waste Management Program

Steve Lynch reported that the local solid waste management plan is on pause until the new planner is hired. He reported that they are working on the 2022 program and there is a resolution to go out for proposals for a household hazardous waste vendor.

#### Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County

Ron Kuck reported that they are going to hire an environmental educator to help with Finger Lakes watershed issues and education, recycling and composting.

#### City of Auburn

Seth Jensen stated that he would like future WQMA meetings to be held at other locations near the other lakes so that we can tour those areas. He would also want the meetings to still be available remotely at the same time. Michele Wunderlich will look into that.

Seth Jensen reported that they are working again with the City of Syracuse on collecting wastewater samples for assessing covid related community numbers within the sewershed. He believes it will have a database and dashboard to monitor community spread.

He reported he is meeting with The Nature Conservancy to learn more about the Cities and Urban Waters Program and there will be another meeting for the Drinking Water Source Protection Plan. He also reported that last year was good for hydro power and it provides about 80% of the power consumption for the City of Auburn's municipal power.

#### Lake Reports

##### Cross Lake/Seneca River Report

Carl Wiezalis discussed the persistent flooding that began in August and reported that they are still about two feet above summer navigation level. He stated that landowners are still prevented from removing their lifts and docks due the water level.

Carl stated that the NYSDEC Climate Smart Communities grants have money to look at climate related changes such as flooding and asked about applying. Steve Lynch stated that the County would have to authorize the application and the matching funds would have to be obtained. He also stated that these are hard to get unless you have a specific program in place. Seth Jensen announced that the City is working with the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board on becoming a Climate Smart Community, which would go towards additional points if they applied for these types of grant funding in the future.

### Little Sodus Bay/Lake Ontario Report

Gary Clark reported that Lake Ontario's water flow is currently higher coming in than going out and the level is up by 8 inches but they are still in a good position. He reported that the Bay Betterment Association met in December and they decided to get rid of their website and try to work with Fair Haven to get their information out.

### Owasco Lake Report

Rick Nelson reported that the Owasco Watershed Lake Association (OWLA) continues working on the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid hunting project. They identify properties with hemlocks and asks owners if they can look for the hemlock woolly adelgid and treat the trees if needed. Last year they treated 4,000 trees and they have a grant to continue the program.

Rick Nelson reported that the annual Bob Brower Scientific Symposium is tentatively scheduled to be held both virtually and in person on March 19, 2022. He made a motion to request that the WQMA be a co-sponsor of the 2022 Bob Brower Scientific Symposium. Carl Wiezalis seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

### Skaneateles Lake Report

Frank Moses reported that Skaneateles Lake's elevation is 3 feet higher than this time last year. He reported that the Skaneateles Lake Association (SLA) is working with Dana Hall who is providing them with good guidance for their landowner outreach for Hemlock Woolly Adelgid surveys. They are also working with the Finger Lakes Institute on promoting upcoming workshops. Other work includes advancing development of Skaneateles Lake Watershed Improvement Projects initiative; revamping their Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Business Plan; working with 9E planning team on exploring the added value of SLA supported research; re-engaging for the year with Lake Friendly Living Coalition of the Finger Lakes to discuss, share, and develop upcoming shared outreach, education, and advocacy activities and working with Go Native! Perennials, Onondaga County CCE, American Society of Landscape Architects, and other event organizers on landscape professional and landowner educational workshop series.

He also reported that they received their 2021 Aquatic Invasive Species Watercraft Inspectors report and they inspected 6,141 watercraft in 2021, which is down from 2020 most likely due to rainy season, no wake zone policy, and 2020 it being a sunny and pandemic friendly activity. Finally, he reported that the Onondaga County Cornell Cooperative Extension is hosting road salt presentation with Brenden Wiltse of the Adirondack Watershed Institute on Feb. 1st.

### **Partner Reports**

#### Central New York Regional Development and Planning Board

Aaron McKeon reported that he is working on the Skaneateles Lake Nine Element Plan and the modeling is underway. He reported that the Town of Ithaca and the Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization will have a virtual public meeting in later February/early March to discuss a slate of projects that they have put together.

### Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council (OLWMC)

Adam Effler reported that they hired a second watershed inspector who will start on January 31<sup>st</sup>; have swapped out the Hyfi water level sensor at Spring Street and made improvements to the one on Dutch Hollow Brook; and have removed dead deer from the lake and tributaries. He reported that their annual meeting with the NYSDEC will be held on January 31<sup>st</sup> and at the January 18<sup>th</sup> OWLMC Board meeting John Halfman will report on his 2021 monitoring program. Finally, he reported that there will be new representatives on the OLWMC board from the Town of Scipio and the City of Auburn.

### Miscellaneous

Seth Jensen made a motion to adjourn. Doug Dello Stritto seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. The meeting was closed at 11:50 am.