

Cayuga County Water Quality Management Agency
May 6, 2021 Meeting Minutes
Meeting conducted virtually on 8x8

Members or Designees Present: Doug Dello Stritto, Jeff Emerson, Seth Jensen, Tyler Knapp, Ron Kuck, Steve Lynch, Rick Nelson, Eileen O'Connor, Dale Powell, Ed Wagner

Others Present: Ally Berry, Greg Colucci, Olivia Green, Tee-Ann Hunter, Nate Launer, Kate Monacelli, Liz Moran, Bruce Natale, Steve Penningroth, Greg Rejman, Ann Robson, Emily Sheridan, Michele Wunderlich

Presentation

Eileen O'Connor gave a presentation on Cayuga Lake and the draft Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) that was released. A long discussion occurred which included participants' thoughts on the TMDL and the public comment process.

Michele Wunderlich had distributed a draft resolution to members and designees prior to the meeting (attached). This resolution requested that the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation extend the current 45-day public comment period to 90-days to allow stakeholders to fully engage with municipalities and organizations within the watershed and prepare comments for submission. Doug Dello Stritto made a motion to pass the resolution as written. Eileen O'Connor seconded it and it passed unanimously.

Tee-Ann Hunter reported that Roxy Johnston and the Cayuga Lake Monitoring Partnership have put together a comment document linked to the draft TMDL's table of contents and suggestions for letters and resolutions that municipalities can use.

Old Business

Minutes

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

WQMA Priority Working Groups Reports

Communications Working Group

Eileen O'Connor reported that the next newsletter is due in June and she will reach out to the group to organize the preparation.

Invasive Species Working Group

Michele Wunderlich asked the group if they wanted any training during the New York State Invasive Species Awareness week in June. She will do an invasive species class prior to the next WQMA meeting. Steve Lynch requested a brief overview of mitigation measures in the County and she will work on adding that to the presentation.

Nutrient and Sediment Working Group

No update.

Agency Reports

Cayuga County Health Department

Eileen O'Connor reported that there is funding to replace substandard septic systems on properties on Cayuga Lake, Skaneateles Lake, Owasco Lake, and Lake Como. They will fund 50% of the cost of upgrading up to \$10,000. They are going to send out postcards to eligible homeowners.

Cayuga County Buildings and Grounds Department

Doug Dello Stritto reported that they have mobilized for the construction at Sterling Nature Center as part of the Lake Ontario Resiliency and Economic Development Initiative (REDI) Project. He is working with the Owasco Lake Watershed Inspection and Protection Division on the new buffers in the park and are adding no mow signs which explain what is being done to protect water quality. They are also going to have a public meeting soon on the Deauville Island development project.

Seth Jensen stated that they are interested in partnering with the County to add signs near the pump station where they installed flexible pavement.

Cayuga County Department of Planning and Economic Development

Steve Lynch reported that the Planning Department is part of the steering committee for the CLEAR Project, which is a comprehensive planning effort for resiliency and long term protective measures on the Lake Ontario shoreline. Oswego County and Cayuga County are working together and EDR is facilitating the process. Work continues on the Local Waterfront Revitalization Projects for the Village of Cayuga and the Village of Fair Haven/Town of Sterling and they will have interns from SUNY ESF to provide design work. He reported that the electronics collection event is preliminarily scheduled for September 25th and the household hazardous waste collection event for October 16th, with pre-registration required for both.

Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)

Tyler Knapp reported that they are working on farm plans and have begun work on installing best management practices. They held one 4 hour NYSDEC Erosion and Sediment and Control Workshops for Construction Site Contractors and Operators. They have installed a 110 foot streambank and road shoulder stabilization project in the Town of Venice in the Owasco Lake Watershed. They are also stabilizing 250 feet of Lake Road in the Cayuga Lake Watershed. Tyler Knapp also reported that they have received two microgrants, one for the Seneca River Watershed and one for the Lake Ontario Watershed, to do site specific planning including nutrient management plans and practices. He reported that the tire collection day will be held on June 12th from 8:30 am to noon and pre-registration is required. Ron Kuck stated that people can pre-register on the Cooperative Extension website.

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County (CCE) Update

Ron Kuck stated that 60% of the farms in Cayuga County do some measure of cover crop and that CCE provides continuing education.

City of Auburn

Seth Jensen reported that they have the full design for the Combined Sewer Overflow project. He reported that they completed an article for a tech journal about the decision making framework and project at the wastewater treatment plant of the drying of biosolids. The City of Auburn has bonded for a 36 million reinvestment and investment into the wastewater treatment facility for the next 2 to 3 years.

Seth Jensen reported that the City was selected to participate in the Drinking Water Source Protection Program. He stated that it will not be a replacement for the Owasco Lake Watershed Rules and Regulations but complimentary.

Town of Owasco

Ed Wagner reported that the GAC system at the water treatment plant is completed and will be operational for their August 1, 2021 deadline. He reported that they have installed hardware cloth on the Japanese knotweed located behind the highway garage as part of their consent order. He also reported that the town has been named a Tree City USA by the Arbor Day Foundation and they will be planting trees and doing an Arbor Day proclamation.

Lake Reports

Cayuga Lake Report

Tee-Ann Hunter reported that the Cayuga Lake Intermunicipal Organization, now known as CWIO, will be commenting on the Cayuga Lake TMDL and have passed a resolution requesting an extension. She stated that Adam Effler came to their last meeting and discussed the work being done in the Owasco Lake Watershed. She reported that Ian Smith is working on a project at a Six Mile Creek vineyard and on a project on drainage tiling. Shawn Murphy is now the head of the agricultural committee for the CWIO.

Duck Lake Report

Dale Powell reported that Duck Lake Association had their first meeting a week ago and they discussed their herbicide treatment for this summer. He stated that the water level is up in Duck Lake but it is in good shape.

Owasco Lake Report

Rick Nelson stated that Ann Robson is the president elect for the Owasco Watershed Lake Association (OWLA) and she is his alternative on the WQMA. He reported that OWLA provided funds for the sluiceway cleanout in Emerson Park. Seth Jensen reported that the contractor spent two weeks cleaning out the sluiceway and once they broke through the clog, you could feel the current in the channel. Seth Jensen reported that there will be a meeting on Friday to review Phase II inlet protection in the lake to try to prevent this from happening again and they plan on working on design plans to submit to the State to get permits to do this work this winter.

Partner Reports

Finger Lakes Institute (FLI)/Finger Lakes Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM)

Kate Monacelli reported that the New York State Invasive Species Awareness week is June 6-12, 2021. She stated that Owasco Paddles is holding an event in Emerson Park on June 6th to learn to identify and report invasive species in Owasco Lake. She reported that they are gearing up for their field season and they currently have twenty watercraft stewards and four invasive species technicians who will be watercraft stewards as well as lead water chestnut pulls. Finally, she reported that there will be hydrilla field crews in Cayuga Lake and nearby waterbodies this summer.

The Nature Conservancy

Olivia Green reported that they have a partnership with Justin Jobin to look at alternative and innovative septic and sewers systems in Cayuga County. He is currently in the discovery phase. She also reported that Representative John Katko is speaking tomorrow during the closing keynote of Lake Friendly Living Awareness Week, sponsored by The Nature Conservancy.

Miscellaneous

Steve Lynch made a motion to adjourn. Ed Wagner seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. The meeting was closed at 11:36 am.

Resolution:

WHEREAS the Cayuga County Water Quality Management Agency understands the importance of protecting the waters within the Cayuga Lake Watershed; and

WHEREAS the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for phosphorus (P) in Cayuga Lake will help guide practices and regulations to reduce P inputs into Cayuga Lake; and

WHEREAS the Cayuga County Water Quality Management Agency is grateful for the work the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation has put into the draft TMDL, we believe there are components of the TMDL Plan that need further review and clarification within the document.

THEREFORE, Be it

RESOLVED that the Cayuga County Water Quality Management Agency requests that the current 45-day public comment period be extended to 90-days to allow stakeholders to fully engage with municipalities and organizations within the watershed and prepare comments for submission.