

Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council – Watershed Inspection Committee
December 18, 2018– Monthly Meeting

Members present: Seth Jensen, Aileen McNabb-Coleman, Debby McCormick

Technical Advisors present: Dave Eckhardt

Others present: Drew Snell, Bruce Natale, Doug Kierst, Eileen O'Connor

Debby McCormick made a motion to approve the minutes from the November 20, 2018 meeting. Seth Jensen seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Drew Snell reviewed the issue of an unknown material leaching out from the abandoned municipal landfill in the Village of Groton into the Owasco Inlet. He said that he contacted NYSDEC but they have not yet gotten back to him regarding how they will address this issue. There are 2 other landfills in Tompkins County within the watershed. One is the Town of Dryden's landfill which, according to Bruce Natale, has been properly capped and is monitored by NYSDEC. The other one is located to the southwest of the Village of Groton. No further information regarding this landfill is available.

Mr. Snell followed the trash pickup service that was reported as a problem last month as it traveled through Owasco and Niles. No leakage of hydraulic fluids or other materials was noted. On-going residential construction projects in Koenig Point and Route 38A in Owasco and Route 38 in Fleming are of concern due to risk of sediment discharge into the lake. Mr. Snell will contact the CEOs of those municipalities to make sure they are aware of the projects and that the projects are meeting their requirements regarding erosion control and setbacks. Mr. Snell is concerned with the loss of lake front trees and buffer on these properties. It was discussed that building construction regulations are a local issue and can be addressed through zoning. Mr. Snell received a complaint recently regarding an animal processing facility and alleged improper dumping. He will be following up on the complaint.

Mr. Snell reported that no manure spreading has been seen in the watershed this past month, even though applicators have been busy elsewhere in the County. Doug Kierst explained that using dragline technology reduces the risk of any nutrient runoff which would typically be of concern during winter weather conditions.

The property owner who leased land to a farm operation responded to Mr. Snell's letter regarding excessive sediment runoff. Their son plans to contact Soil and Water to incorporate protective practices such as cover crops. Mr. Snell said he would like to know all of the leased lands in the watershed so he could reach out to the property owners and let them know about Soil and Water's many programs that may help. There was discussion regarding how to obtain this information, but no solution was found.

Of the three farmers who allowed livestock unregulated access to watercourses, two worked with Soil and Water to install fencing, even though one may not be 100% exclusionary. The third farmer, located in Scipio, has not responded. Mr. Snell will follow up with this farmer, who only has livestock periodically in this area.

Mr. Snell is still trying to put together a drone program. The company he was dealing with is no longer in business. Tompkins County Soil and Water did get back to Mr. Snell regarding the property that created the sediment plume following an isolated rain event in Groton earlier in the year. The runoff from a farm field descends a steep slope causing erosion and flooding problems. They believe diverting the storm water away from the bottom of the slope or by retaining the water in a pond would resolve the issue. Unfortunately there is no funding to address this issue. There was discussion regarding the need to keep the soil on the field in the first place before it runs off. Mr. Snell does not know where TCS&W will go from here. Mr. Kierst did report that TCS&W received \$500,000 in funding recently for projects in the watershed. It was suggested that Jon Negley be invited to the next meeting to get more information.

The vote on the budget was tabled until January. Seth Jensen was concerned that the expenses outpace the revenues in 2019 and for the program to be sustainable additional revenue will need to be found.

Eileen O'Connor suggested that the goals for 2019 be put off until after the new executive director is appointed.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be 9 am on January 22, 2019.

Minutes prepared by Eileen O'Connor, December 18, 2018