

Otsego County Water Quality Coordinating Committee Minutes
967 Co. Hwy. 33, Cooperstown, NY 13326
(607) 547-8337, ext. 4

Wednesday, August 26, 2009

Present:

Matt Albright, Biological Field Station
Holly Waterfield, Biological Field Station
Dr. Ted Peters, Cooperstown Village Water Committee
Heidi Tafel, Cornell Cooperative Extension
Bruce Shultis, Goodyear Lake Association
Vince Stayter, Goodyear Lake Association
Tony Capraro, Natural Resources Conservation Service
Darla M. Youngs, Otsego County Conservation Association
Liz Fury, Otsego County Planning Department
Claire Hawthorne, Otsego County Planning Department
Carl Good, Otsego Lake Association
Robin Krawitz, Otsego 2000
Tom Shypski, Village of Richfield Springs
Win McIntyre, Watershed Supervisory Committee

The meeting was called to order at 1:10 p.m. by Facilitator Holly Waterfield.

I. Review of Minutes

The July 29 meeting minutes were reviewed. **Carl Good moved to accept the July minutes, with a second by Ted Peters. The July meeting minutes were approved.**

II. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Blanche Hurlbutt was unable to attend the meeting, but submitted the following along with hard copies of the Treasurer's Report, Bank Report and Income Report:

I'm sorry, but due to the Otsego SWCD responsibility to the NYS Envirothon I will not be able to attend today's meeting. I do hope to make one of the WQCC meetings in the near future. Please find the bank statement, income, and expense reports for August to-date. Please review the designated funds sheet. If you have any questions feel free to call me at the office (607) 547-8337, ext. 4 anytime during working hours.

Carl moved to accept the Treasurer's Report, with a second by Ted. The Treasurer's Report was approved.

III. Old Business

1. Review of Revised Bylaws

Holly said that Scott Fickbohm, who could not be present at the meeting, requested that we hold off on any serious discussion of the bylaws until next time. All agreed to this request, and Ted asked that everyone read the draft revised bylaws in preparation for the September meeting.

2. Grants/RFP Task Force Update

Holly reported that there had been no task force activity. Darla Youngs inquired regarding the status of the Waterfront Revitalization Program grant, which deadlines on September 16. Liz Fury said she would contact Scott about this grant. Matt Albright asked who would write the grant on behalf of the WQCC and Liz replied that if the grant submitted was requesting WQCC funding, SWCD would write it.

IV. WQCC New Business

Liz said the Planning Department had calls into professors and the Department of Health in regard to the scheduling of a gas drilling conference/workshop. They are waiting to hear back from Hartwick

professors to set a date, she said. Vince brought to the attention of those present the Article 78 filed against the Town of Otsego for its approval of the Walker subdivision.

V. Department Reports

1. Biological Field Station

Holly reported the following:

The summer internships have been completed, and we are in the process of getting written reports finalized. Continued water quality monitoring includes Canadarago Lake and tributaries, Otsego Lake, Oneonta wetland, demonstration onsite wastewater treatment systems, and our experimental phosphorus removal units. Otsego Lake water quality data is now available on our website and is being updated on a regular basis. We are waiting until the end of the growing season to assess zebra mussel colonization. The Upper Susquehanna Coalition just finished construction of vernal pools on Rum Hill in a forested area and on the Thayer Farm property. We've also recently submitted an NSF proposal for renovation rehabilitation of a building on the BFS Upper Site, which would serve as a field laboratory space in close proximity to Moe Pond and various unique habitats.

Matt encouraged everyone to check out the water quality web pages. He said the BFS could create similar pages for Canadarago Lake, if there is interest, and possibly for Goodyear Lake as well. He said the data shows trends over the course of the season and that this data is as close to real time data as they are able to provide. Matt added that BFS staff will embellish the material once the templates are finalized. Darla praised the data and said OCCA is working to have information about the new web pages published by the local news media. Unfortunately, she said, they had offered the "Cooperstown Crier" an exclusive but the Crier declined, citing space constraints and low interest. Matt and Darla said the BFS and OCCA receive numerous inquiries regarding Otsego Lake water quality, and both are surprised at the Crier's response. Darla said OCCA assistant director Teresa Winchester will now release the information to the full press distribution list.

2. Canadarago Lake Improvement Association

No one was present to report, but according to Don McKay, via e-mail:

Last Wednesday, the Executive Committee of CLIA met and approved the \$100 donation to the WQCC organization as proposed by Vince Stayter of Goodyear Lake. Please advise how the check should be addressed. Also, the Board agreed to a \$100 donation to the Otsego County Land Trust. The last member meeting of the season will be held on Saturday, August 29. The recent destruction by lightning of our instrumentation installation at the boat launch has been repaired and all systems are functioning. We are looking forward to receipt of the results of the H&H study.

3. Cooperstown Village Water Committee

Ted presented the following report:

The Water Plant crew pigged the intake line on Sunday, August 16, with the aid of local divers. Very little debris was found. No further adult mussel forms have been found on the internal screens before the pumps.

Win McIntyre asked what the divers are finding relative to zebra mussels, and Ted reiterated that they are not finding zebra mussels on the screens in the plant. Matt asked if the quantity of zebra mussels is substantial, and Carl said diver Paul Lord had indicated that it is. Matt explained that in Cleveland the volume of dead zebra mussels has been such that there have been issues with foul-smelling water as a result of the debris coming into the plant. Ted added that engineering reports regarding the use of potassium permanganate as a control measure for zebra mussels continue to come in. There was also some discussion of copper ion generators. Returning to the topic of pigging the line, someone asked how long the line is and Ted replied that it is almost a quarter of a mile. He said it takes about 30 minutes to pig the line. The various methods of pigging were discussed, and Matt wondered if there was any way to contain the debris so that it does not pile up around the intake.

4. Cornell Cooperative Extension

Heidi Tafel announced that CCE's new shared executive director, Don Smyers, will begin work on September 1.

5. Goodyear Lake Association

As provided by Vince Stayter:

The Goodyear Lake Community Celebration Day (Centennial +2) went well, with sunny weather and a decent crowd. Members, supporters and businesses alike contributed over \$4,000 to the event. We were pleased to see the Ross Park Zoomobile on site, as well as strong presence from Otsego County Soil & Water and OCCA. The sampling of Goodyear Lake continues with the help of Steve Wilson of Allied Biological, and Sidney High School. Results still show a good water quality. More to come. The sampling and measurement of the sediment/silt in the lake will occur in September. GYLA's Board of Directors has voted to repurpose and reapportion the Seward grant moneys. We are hoping to move it out of the control of Parks & Recreation and into the DEC. We would like to see it used for the further removal of invasive species, and to create a boat launch/walkway on the present Portlandville state land launch area. OCCA has been helping us in this effort.

Matt inquired as to the silt upstream, and whether this might be something the BFS could look at hydroacoustically. He said they have a very portable unit, primarily used for fish surveys, that could be used for vegetation and/or substrate-type mapping. This could be done in conjunction with depth analysis, he said. Matt explained that, in terms of dredging, the GLA will need to know how long the effects of the dredging will last and whether or not dredging would be sensible. Vince said as a result of the flooding in 2006, Goodyear Lake was hit with a lot of stuff from upstream. They may be able to get the dam owners involved, Vince added, if the silt pressure effects the bottom of the dam. Vince and Matt agreed to talk further on this subject.

6. Natural Resources Conservation Service

Tony Capraro reported that there was no new construction last month. However, he said they had six comprehensive nutrient management plans funded through the EQIP program countywide, out of 14 initial applications. Tony explained that a lot of money -- half a million dollars -- is being pumped into EQIP, pushing money to farmers for planning. Tony also said he had sat in on a 2-1/2 hour teleconference earlier in the morning on the Conservation Stewardship Program. It used to be called the Conservation Security Program, he said. The funding, at \$22 per acre, is for agricultural and non-industrial forestry lands, he said, toward maintaining existing conservation activities and to encourage additional conservation activities. There are 80 agricultural enhancements to choose from, Tony continued, on five-year contracts. Recipients can receive additional payments, he said, for additional conservation stewardship. Tony asked Darla if OCCA would announce the Conservation Stewardship Program opportunity in an upcoming OCCA eco-bulletin, and she said they would be happy to do so. Concluding his report, Tony said he and Jeanine Harter were gearing up for construction on two Wetlands Reserve Program projects scheduled to begin soon.

7. NYCAMH

Not present to report.

8. NYS Department of Environmental Conservation

Not present to report.

9. NYS Department of Health

Not present to report.

10. Otsego County Conservation Association

Relative to water quality since the last meeting, Darla had the following to report on behalf of OCCA:

- *We are working with Scott Wells of DEC to place several monofilament fishing line recycling receptacles that are currently going unused in appropriate spots within the county*

- Collaborated with BFS on handpulling of water chestnut at the Oneonta wetland on August 14 (volunteer turnout was low, but Erik is working with SUNY-Oneonta professor Wendy Mitteager to organize student volunteers to pull at that location, tentatively for Saturday, September 5)
- Collaborated with the GLA on handpulling of water chestnut on Goodyear Lake, August 6-8
- Invasive species signage presented to Otsego Lake Association and Goodyear Lake Association for installation – signs will also be given to Canadarago Lake Association and the Village of Cooperstown
- Letter on behalf of Otsego County Soil and Water Conservation District in support of application to DEC for Susquehanna Headwaters Green Infrastructure and Water Quality Planning Project
- Wrote letter on behalf of Otsego County Soil and Water Conservation District in support of application to DEC for Susquehanna Headwaters Green Infrastructure and Water Quality Planning Project
- Met with Carol Aiken and Marilyn Bradshaw in regard to their Article 78 filed against the Town of Otsego Planning Board re: the Walker subdivision
- Met with the Cooperstown Sewer Board to discuss house boat mooring on Otsego Lake
- Led “Pond and Waterways” workshop for children ages 7 and up in conjunction with Glen Brook Farm in Oneonta, during which children learned about the importance of clean water, where it comes from and where it goes

Regarding natural gas drilling, on August 13 Executive Director Erik Miller addressed the Cherry Valley Town Board on strategies available to local governments regarding jurisdiction that might limit or help to control natural gas drilling. Erik stressed the importance of a Natural Resource Survey which would catalogue Otsego County’s critical areas with particular environmental and historical significance and identify those that need protection, which can then trigger site-specific review under the State Environmental Quality Review Act. He distributed draft templates of proposed local laws from Broome County and the Town of New Lisbon on road preservation and vehicle permitting. These documents are available on the OCCA website, www.occainfo.org. Erik also attended the Springfield Town Board meeting, where he spoke on issues related to natural gas drilling.

In other OCCA news:

- Our current newsletter is in production and expected to be mailed within the next or so
- We are seeking nominations for Conservationist of the Year. The guidelines and nomination form can be accessed on the website, www.occainfo.org – the deadline is October 1.
- Our website is currently being revised and the new site should be up some time in early September

As to water chestnut pulling efforts, Matt said BFS staff will be going out in the next day or two to check on the effectiveness of the herbicide application in the wetlands area behind the State Troopers’ barracks off of Route 7 in west Oneonta. Tony asked that he be informed of the next pulling date, as he has an intern with a lot of hours available. Matt said the progress at Goodyear Lake is very evident. Compared to last August, there is only a tiny fraction of water chestnut remaining, he said. Vince confirmed that huge progress had been made this year, and said the Jewish campers were the biggest help.

11. Otsego County Planning Department

Liz introduced Claire Hawthorne, a new intern with the Planning Department, and confirmed that Household Hazardous Waste Day would be held on Saturday, September 19 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at The Meadows complex. The pharmaceutical collection will be included for the first time this year, she reminded, and asked those groups who had pledged sponsorship to send their checks to the Planning Department at 197 Main Street, Cooperstown. Preregistration is required for HHWD, she added, by calling 547-4228.

12. Otsego County SWCD

*Scott was unable to attend the meeting, but submitted the following report:
Over the past month the District has been busy on several fronts:*

1. *Development of the District's new Wetland and Vernal Pool Program – each of you should have received a request to “spread the word” about the program to your individual memberships/constituencies. In case you haven't, I attached a copy of the letter for your review.*
2. *Development of the District's new Grazing Initiative. The District will be a part of the Graze NY program starting next year and has begun the process of engaging the County 100+ grazing farmers. Outreach material attached.*
3. *No word yet on whether or not the District's “Susquehanna Headwaters Green Infrastructure and Water Quality Planning Project” (17 watershed, 1 million + acre natural resource inventory) grant will be funded, but we hope to find out soon.*
4. *The Board has approved our “position paper” on natural gas exploration and I have enclosed it for your review.*
5. *Met with the Village of Cooperstown Water Board to gauge interest in replacing the Otsego Lake Dam with a bottom draining hydro-dam that would address lake level management, dam operation safety, erosion and flooding along the lake shore during winter and spring and, perhaps, provide a fish ladder from the river into the lake. They are interested in pursuing a feasibility study as long as there is no cost to the Village.*
6. *Met with the Holy Myrrhbearers, along with OLT staff, to help them address issues related to their aging dam and new DEC dam safety regulations.*
7. *Completed this month's WQ monitoring of the 14 11-digit HUCs in the county*
8. *Participated in the Goodyear Lake Day – good time had by all.*
9. *Participated in the county's Farm Land Protection Board meeting where candidates were selected for state funding (OLT is lead) and decide on whether or not to pursue funding for re-writing the county's plan*
10. *Two site visits to wetland/vernal pool projects implemented under the District's new program.*

Troy Bookhout will be leaving our office at the end of the week and we currently are running an ad for his replacement – if you know of anybody who has Ag Conservation Planning experience and may be interested, please pass along. Also, no action taken by the RFP task force. Please feel free to contact me with questions or conversation on anything...

In regard to Graze NY, Tony explained that the program has been around for a while but Otsego County has never been a part of it. Scott is looking to secure some of that funding so that SWCD might hire a full-time grazing specialist that could possibly be shared with other districts.

13. Otsego Lake Association

Carl said that on Saturday, August 15, the OLA held its second membership meeting, this time on the *Glimmerglass Queen*. Attendees enjoyed a tour of Otsego Lake and Bill Harman spoke on the state of the lake, followed by a question and answer session. It was an enjoyable time, he said. Carl reported that he had been in communication with Scott for some time with regard to dredging out the top of Willow Brook. It now looks as though the DEC Water Quality Improvement Project grant program will include proposals for storm water runoff – Carl said he will be sitting down with Scott and Village of Cooperstown Trustee Lynne Mebust soon, and it is hoped that a report from Lamont Engineers on Willow Brook may be ready in time for this meeting.

14. Otsego Lake Watershed Supervisory Committee

Win circulated a hard-copy update, which is attached. He reported that it has been a relatively slow summer for the onsite wastewater treatment system management program. They are nearing the end of the inspection program, he said, but now have the more difficult folks to contend with. There was further discussion of the Lake 'N Pines, Aalsmeer and Bayside motels, which are among the uninspected properties. Win said 99% of the inspections will have been completed by the end of September. The four remaining property owners will receive a notice of violation, but they will still have an opportunity to prove their systems are okay. System upgrades have gone slowly, Win continued, and there are a number coming due at the end of this year. He said that probably by the end of this year there will be about 50 more systems to upgrade. The initial program will go at least a couple more years, he added, and the second round of inspections will begin next year. Win said the WSC will pay close attention to annual

maintenance requirements. Some discussion followed regarding failing systems as they relate to property sales.

Moving on to the subject of natural gas drilling, the WSC continues to work with the Department of Health Oneonta district office and the DEC. One of the questions they had was why the DoH was not more engaged on the subject. Win said apparently the DEC had requested back in March that the DoH come out with a position paper regarding the dangers of natural gas to public health. The WSC has a copy of that report, Win said. The DoH Bureau of Water Supply sets watershed rules and regulations, he said. He has the DoH comments on natural gas drilling, but most focus on the New York City watershed. Win read briefly from that report. He went on to say that the WSC is in the process of putting together comments relative to the protection of surface water drinking supplies, including a) a recommendation that all public surface drinking water supplies should be treated the same and, b) recommendations on setbacks and operations in drinking water watersheds. Natural gas drilling is a Type 1 SEQR action for any applications in drinking water watersheds, Win said. He added, in regard to the long awaited sGEIS, that the DEC did indicate they would look at regulations in other states, and it is clear from their response to the WSC that they have done so, whereas the DoH only looked at states in the Northeast. Some discussion of public water drinking supplies, groundwater and surface water followed.

15. Otsego Land Trust

Not present to report.

16. Otsego 2000

Robin Krawitz reported that Otsego 2000's position on gas drilling was circulated amongst the WQCC member organizations a while back.

17. Other

Matt asked if the Otsego Lake Management Plan was posted on the web, and Darla said to her knowledge the most recent version is not. Darla created the document, she said, and can make a PDF available. Matt asked if anyone had a problem with posting the LMP online, and those present did not. At the close of the meeting, Matt asked those present to sign the register.

VI. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 26 at 1 p.m. at the Upland Interpretive Center.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m. The next meeting will be held at The Meadows, County Highway 33W.