

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

Wednesday, February 25, 2009

Present:

Holly Waterfield, Biological Field Station
Jill Eichler, Canadarago Lake Improvement Association/OCCA
Vince Stayter, Goodyear Lake Association
Dr. Ted Peters, Cooperstown Village Water Committee
Carl Good, Otsego Lake Association
Tony Capraro, NRCS
Darla Youngs, OCCA
Joe Homburger, Otsego Land Trust
Tom Shypski, Village of Richfield Springs

The meeting was called to order at 1:03 p.m. by Facilitator Holly Waterfield in the Otsego County SWCD conference room.

I. Review of Minutes

The February 4, 2009 meeting minutes were reviewed. Vince Stayter said an amendment was necessary in the Goodyear Lake report. He clarified that all profits from the Polar Bear Jump go toward various charities, rather than 50 percent as currently stated in the minutes. **There was a motion by Carl Good to approve the minutes with the correction, with a second from Tom Shypski. The February 4, 2009 minutes were approved with the amendment.**

II. Treasurer's Report

Tony Capraro informed the group that there was no Treasurer's report, as Treasurer Blanche Hurlbutt was attending a state Envirothon meeting in Auburn and Scott Fickbohm was out sick.

III. Old Business

1. Lake Festival Committee Update

Darla Youngs reported that the Lake Festival Executive Committee was scheduled to meet the following week to discuss funding and sponsorship concerns pertaining to the event. She pointed out that Friends of Glimmerglass had agreed to help organize the Lake Festival, which is scheduled to be held this year at Glimmerglass State Park on Saturday, July 11, but she said this did not include monetary support of any kind and is not really a "partnership" per se, as indicated on the agenda. Darla said she would circulate information to the WQCC members as to the date and time of the Executive Committee meeting, as all are invited to take part in the discussion.

2. Grant Writer RFP Status

Darla said she had circulated the RFP through a recent OCCA e-bulletin and posted the information on the OCCA website. She encouraged other WQCC member organizations to do the same. It was her understanding, she continued, that there was no money in the budget for advertising the RFP. She had checked out the Sweet Home Productions website for its free job postings, as suggested in the last meeting, but could find no indication that the postings were free. She did not know who had suggested this site, but welcomed help in confirming the free job postings opportunity. There have been a couple inquiries as a result of the e-bulletin and website posting, said. The position could not be posted on craigslist, she added, because no jobs with payment deferral are allowed. Ted Peters suggested that Donna Bevona, a former Cooperstown-area resident with grant-writing experience, might be interested. He said he will send Ms. Bevona's e-mail address to Darla so she can forward the information to her.

IV. New Business

1. WQCC By-law amendment to recognize the position of Treasurer

Holly said she needs a copy of the By-laws and was unable to procure one prior to the meeting. As a result, she said, this will be put off until the next meeting.

2. Town/Village of Cherry Valley snow removal practices

Holly said several concerned citizens have contacted member groups of the WQCC in regard to the dumping of snow by the Village of Cherry Valley on the side of Route 166, about 20 feet from one of the meanders of the

Cherry Valley Creek. The snow is loaded with sediment and salt, she said. She asked, should we do something about this? Do we file a complaint? Holly then introduced information that Matt Albright of the BFS had sent, about the chemistry and physical components of urban snow. Matt had done a previous study on this, she said, prompted by complaints of similar dumping at Fairy Spring in Cooperstown. The report, copies of which were passed around, was titled "Characteristics of Urban Snow from the Village of Cooperstown As Represented by a Repository at Fairy Springs, Otsego County, N.Y." It was suggested that, using this information as a basis, the WQCC ought to write a letter to the Cherry Valley Village Highway Department and/or Village Board, voicing its concern and asking those in charge to look into an alternate venue for dumping the loads of snow.

Tony said a gentleman had called his offices with concerns about the Cherry Valley storm water system. Currently, two drain pipes dump everything into the Cherry Valley Creek, including trash, he said. Holly said she would look into that complaint as well. Tom Shypski said the Village of Richfield Springs had stopped dumping its snow by the stream, but that most of the melting snow with road salt is from state roads, including along Main Street, which drains right into the Ocquionis Creek. The creek runs into Canadarago Lake, he said. Ted clarified that, since the Cooperstown report on dumping of snow near Fairy Spring, the Village has changed its protocols. They now use an organic slurry product on Village roads and, as a result, much less salt.

Tony said he felt it was worth writing a letter, and Holly agreed. Other discussion on this topic included: the previous designation of the Cherry Valley Creek as a trout stream; the 2006 survey of the creek's water quality; whether or not the creek is listed on the DEC Priority Waterbodies List; storm water regulations; the Clean Water Act, under which we are not supposed to let the quality of any water body degrade; the potential for fines; and whether or not the state has guidelines and/or recommendations for snow disposal.

Holly offered to draft a letter on behalf of the WQCC which would express the group's concerns and recommend alternatives. **Darla moved that Holly draft a letter and circulate it to the WQCC member listserv for approval, with a second by Ted. The motion was passed.**

3. "Good Search" search engine

Vince Stayter spoke to the group about the benefits of the "GoodSearch" Internet search engine, which can be accessed at goodsearch.com. When you use GoodSearch, he explained, you can earn money for the nonprofit organization of your choice. Each time you conduct a search through the site, he said, \$.01 goes to the organization you have selected. The money can add up considerably over time, he said. For instance, if 100 people use GoodSearch twice a day for one year, more than \$730 will be raised. You can track how much is being raised through the site. Holly inquired as to who funds GoodSearch, and Tom said the money comes from advertising on the site. Vince said it is a clean site with no blind links.

V. Department Reports

1. Biological Field Station

Holly reported that the BFS has started official testing of its on-site phosphorous removal units this week and they will have the results next week. There are three different types of media for removal being tested for longevity and affordability, she said. BFS staff is working on the upcoming move to the Thayer facility, she said, and they may be installed there before May. They will have a lab in the basement of the hop house, she continued, with a conference area, classrooms, offices and more lab space upstairs. It will be 14-18 months before they will be back in the Field Station. This coming Saturday is the deadline for intern applications to the BFS for college students, Holly said. She also spoke of a National Science Foundation (NSF) grant proposal for a variety of equipment and some money toward four weirs. One is already in existence and under repair, she continued. If the grant goes through, the weirs will allow more quantitative study of the impacts that typical local/regional agricultural practices have on water quality, specifically, nutrient and sediment runoff. Staff are also planning out 2009 field work, and packing.

2. Canadarago Lake Improvement Association

Jill Eichler said CLIA representatives will be meeting this Friday with individuals who worked on the original Otsego Lake Management Plan, for feedback and advice that can be applied to the draft Canadarago Lake Management Plan.

3. Cooperstown Village Water Board

Ted reported that the Village is currently in a holding pattern, in regard to the use of chlorine in the village water supply intake to control zebra mussels. Officials are favoring the running of a line, and they hope to have it going by the summer. Between now and then, they plan to pig the intake. Ted announced that he is now chairman of the Village Board of Sewer Commissioners. Regarding the possibility of using the wetlands by the sewer plant for nutrient removal, he explained that wetlands are good for removing nitrogen, but not effective in removing phosphorus. He said he is not sure the Village is going to be required to remove nitrogen and, as a result, it is likely the Village will move forward with the phosphorous removal and not use the wetland after all. It would cost

\$400,000 to use the wetland, he said, but it looks as though they can do it for less by adding iron or aluminum to the treatment process to remove the phosphorous.

Tom said Richfield Springs is not currently removing nitrogen, though they are removing phosphorous. Richfield Springs is upgrading its SPEDES permit, he said, but there is nothing in the plans for de-nitrification.

4. Cornell Cooperative Extension

Not present to report.

5. Goodyear Lake Association

Vince said the GLA enjoyed a very successful Polar Bear Jump. They have sent a letter to the owner of the dam, he said, asking for environmental assistance. Discussion moved to zebra mussels, and Carl asked if people draw water directly from Goodyear Lake for drinking purposes. Rarely, answered Vince. Zebra mussels are an ongoing problem with the fire department stand pipes, Vince said, and in regard to control nothing is working so far. Tom said Canadarago Lake is experiencing many problems with drawing water. Vince said zebra mussels are a huge problem for boats in Goodyear Lake. There is no control on launching of boats into the lake, and no boat washing station. It was mentioned that quagga mussels are even worse. Tom said the drinking water for Richfield Springs comes from Allens Lake, where so far no zebra mussels have been detected. He said he would like a way to systematically check for zebra mussels in the water. Ted asked if there were problems with zebra mussels clogging boat motors on Goodyear Lake. Vince said absolutely – they get into everything. He found zebra mussels two inches deep on the bottom of his paddle boat, he said.

6. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Tony Capraro spoke about a Susquehanna-based team meeting held recently in Binghamton to review programs. There is no finalized budget yet, he said, but all programs will be funded in 2009. The Chesapeake Bay Initiative will make available \$1.1 million to use toward Chesapeake Bay initiatives and funding for the Chesapeake Bay watershed. That money will be put into the EQIP program there, he said, leaving more money in our own watershed for other EQIP programs. NRCS is open for business, Tony said, and taking applications. There are a bunch of contracts ready to go, he said. They average 10 completed wetlands programs per year.

7. New York Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health (NYCAMH)

Not present to report.

8. NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)

Not present to report.

9. NYS Department of Health (DOH)

Not present to report.

10. Otsego County Conservation Association

Darla reported that OCCA Executive Director Erik Miller and Assistant Director Teresa Winchester were in the field today visiting natural gas drilling sites in Pennsylvania. OCCA has completed a color brochure on water chestnut removal, she said, which was funded by BoatU.S. Once BoatU.S. has reviewed and approved the draft, it will be sent on to the printer. Teresa has written a report on the "Water of Life" conference she attended in the fall that might be of interest to WQCC members. Darla said she would forward that report to the WQCC listserv later in the week. OCCA has circulated the grant writer RFP information through its listserv and in a recent e-bulletin, and posted it on the OCCA website. They have received two inquiries by e-mail, Darla said, which she has forwarded to Scott Fickbohm. Tony Capraro of NRCS had presented information at OCCA's last Board meeting on the EQIP program. OCCA's contributions to EQIP have equaled almost \$200,000 in Otsego County since 1995, Capraro said in his report -- \$81,000 inside the watershed, and \$114,984 outside. Darla reminded everyone that Earth Festival is scheduled for Saturday, April 18. She passed out copies of the Earth Festival solicitation letter and sign-up form.

11. Otsego County Planning Department

There was no one present to report, but Karen Sullivan, senior planner, sent in the following information via e-mail: Planning Workshops to be held at the EMS training rooms in the Meadows Building Complex
Wednesday March 25, 2009 - 7-9:00 pm – "The Comprehensive Plan" – Presented by the Otsego County Planning Dept.

Wednesday April 1, 2009 – 7-9:00 pm – "Zoning for Rural Communities" – Presented by Peter Manning of the Catskill Center

Wednesday April 8, 2009 7-9:00 pm – "State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA)" – Presented by Attorney Doug Amelia

The hours will count toward the State requirement for local officials.

Farmland Preservation Workshops are scheduled for the following dates:

Saturday March 14
1-3 pm
The Old School house
Springfield Center, NY

Thursday March 19
1-2:30 pm
The Meadows Complex
140 County Highway 33W

Tuesday March 24
6-7:30 pm
Butternut Valley Grange

Presenters include: Scott Fickbohm, Otsego County SWCD; Bill Gibson, USDA-FSA; Tony Capraro, NRCS; Peter Hujik, Otsego Land Trust; Chris Harmon, CADE

12. Otsego County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD)

Not present to report.

13. Otsego Lake Association

Carl said there was not much to report since the February 4 meeting. The OLA's first board meeting of the year is this coming Saturday, he said. On March 3, Carl said, there will be a Cooperstown Village meeting at the Otsego County Courthouse to discuss the idea of bringing a baseball team to town. There is also to be a discussion of zebra mussels, during which SUNY-Oneonta professor Tom Horvath might speak, Carl said. That meeting begins at 7 p.m.

14. Otsego Lake Watershed Supervisory Committee (WSC)

Win McIntyre was unable to attend the meeting, but he sent word that there was nothing new to report. Ted said the septic system program was plugging along, and one system had been installed recently. The Village is looking to train Village employees to take over the inspection work.

15. Otsego Land Trust

Joe Homburger reported that there is continued interest in conservation easements. Tomorrow OLT staff is meeting with NYS DEC and OPRHP build partnerships related to its conservation blueprint. Joe said familiarity with the state's Open Space Plan will be helpful as they try to build off existing protected lands. On Friday, OLT staff will meet with CLIA representatives, regarding the conservation blueprint as it pertains to the draft Canadarago Lake Management Plan. Joe also mentioned a recent e-mail OLT had received from the Town of Hardwick. Hardwick officials are looking for information, reports, etc. which might relate to land-use planning in the Town of Hardwick as that town works to develop a comprehensive plan. Any relative documents would be welcome. Vince said the Pace University Law School land-use division has an extensive section on its website for both Town Boards and private citizens.

16. Otsego 2000

Not present to report.

The meeting was adjourned at 2 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,
Darla M. Youngs, WQCC Secretary
March 20, 2009*