

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

Wednesday, March 25, 2009

Present:

Matt Albright, Biological Field Station
Holly Waterfield, Biological Field Station
Jill Eichler, Canadarago Lake Improvement Association/OCCA
Don McKay, Canadarago Lake Improvement Association
Dr. Ted Peters, Cooperstown Village Water Committee
Bruce Shultis, Goodyear Lake Association
Vince Stayter, Goodyear Lake Association
Darla Youngs, OCCA
Liz Fury, Otsego County Planning Department
Karen Sullivan, Otsego County Planning
Jordan Clements, Otsego County Soil & Water
Blanche Hurlbutt, Otsego County Soil & Water
Robin Krawitz, Otsego 2000
Tom Sypski, Village of Richfield Springs

The meeting was called to order at 1:07 p.m. by Facilitator Holly Waterfield in the Otsego County SWCD conference room.

I. Review of Minutes

The February 25, 2009 meeting minutes were reviewed. Ted Peters moved to accept the minutes, with a second by Don McKay, and the February 25, 2009 meeting minutes were approved without further discussion.

II. Treasurer's Report

Blanche Hurlbutt reported that there had been no income or expenses since the last meeting, and noted that the designated funds had not been paid out to the Envirothon as yet. Blanche encouraged those present to visit nysenvirothon.net for more information on the Envirothon. The bank report shows a balance of \$5,008.79, she said, with some other designated funds including monies earmarked for the buoy fund. Matt Albright asked how much that was, and Blanche left the room to check. While Blanche was on this errand, introductions were made around the table for the benefit of Robin Krawitz, new Otsego 2000 executive director and Jordan Clements, new Soil & Water conservation technician. Returning to the meeting, Blanche reported that approximately \$1,700 was designated to the buoy fund. **Tom Shypski moved that the Treasurer's Report be accepted, with the clarification regarding the buoy funds. There was a second by Don, after which the Treasurer's Report was approved.**

III. Old Business

1. Snow removal practices

Holly said the snow removal letter to Cherry Valley authorities regarding snow removal best management practices had been a good discussion topic for the group. The letter was sent about two weeks ago, she said, and no response has been received as yet. Holly passed around a final draft of the Cherry Valley letter, and asked if we should keep this on the back burner until August. Relative to the letter, Holly said she had received an e-mail from Peter Freehafer of DEC, who mentioned that the DEC is currently working toward a set of guidelines for snow

disposal practices and is looking for input. Holly said she is not sure of the DEC's time frame and/or schedule on this, or the depth of the document. Holly read Freehafer's correspondence to the group. It said the DEC is beginning to develop its document this year and that DEC is very appreciative of the WQCC's efforts and interest regarding snow removal. (** e-mail included at end of minutes)

There was further discussion, and Matt said the timing of our letter doesn't seem to be great because the snow is gone, but we shouldn't forget about it, he went on to say. He added that we should send press releases out to all municipalities, not just Cherry Valley, and get some feedback from DOT. It was agreed that a press release ought to be generated on behalf of the committee. Tom suggested that this information be circulated to municipalities sooner rather than later, so they can set up sites and plan well in advance. There was talk about whether or not the WQCC ought to produce a brochure on the topic of snow removal best management practices. In general, it was agreed that sponsoring a forum for local municipalities would be a better approach. Tom said municipalities would have more down time in mid-summer. Early August is good, he continued, but once they hit Labor Day the municipalities would probably be too busy, he said. Blanche asked if a work day would be best, and Tom suggested mid-week.

Ted Peters asked if there were locations we could suggest for snow removal. Matt said yes, generically we would recommend keeping the snow away from storm drains, and we could advise municipalities as to what to avoid. It was asked whether Soil & Water can recommend specific sites. Holly said site visits and mapping can be undertaken for site selection. She said we will put the forum on the agenda for the next meeting and start planning. No registration fee will be necessary, as funds are available, and it was mentioned that perhaps the DEC will cosponsor the forum.

IV. New Business

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

Holly said a copy of the by-laws had been procured. She explained that under the current by-laws, the position of treasurer is not officially recognized. Rather, it is part of a combined secretary/treasurer appointment. Holly said it has been asked if we can amend the by-laws to divide the single position into two. **Matt moved that the positions of secretary and treasurer be independent of one another, with a second by Ted. Holly asked if there was further discussion. There was none, and the motion carried.**

2. Lake Festival Committee Update -- Decisions to be made regarding event for 2009

Darla Youngs presented a report to the group on behalf of the Lake Festival Executive Committee. The committee -- Scottie Baker, Scott Fickbohm, Erik Miller and Darla Youngs -- had met recently, she said, to discuss Lake Festival funding concerns and to make subsequent recommendations to the WQCC as a whole. To recap, Darla explained that the total cost to host the festival is approximately \$10,000, including roughly \$5,000 for an event planner. History has shown that we can raise about half the amount needed each year. We were able to continue with the event for the past few years thanks to a large initial donation that has now run out, Darla said. The committee discussed these concerns and Darla had been charged with the task of compiling an overview of Otsego Lake Festival planning and execution responsibilities, plus an approximation of the man hours required.

Darla passed around this synopsis. She said the Lake Festival Executive Committee had agreed upon several possible solutions: 1) to drop the paid event planner and organize/execute the event

with WQCC volunteer manpower; 2) to change the Lake Festival from an annual to a biannual event; or 3) to discontinue the event.

Darla, Blanche and Holly all volunteered their time to organize and hold the event, though Holly said she will be away for part of the time. They each said they could commit to approximately 40 hours. With a couple more volunteers, it was agreed that we could probably swing it. Blanche said we would need the support of the WQCC as a whole to do so. Darla pointed out that there had not been complete buy-in for the event on the part of all WQCC membership organizations in the past, in terms of participation and/or monetary support. The stress level will be lower, she added, as there will be less site preparation necessary to hold the event at Glimmerglass State Park as opposed to the former Lakefront Park venue.

A lengthy discussion ensued, with questions and/or points including: whether or not walkers are allowed into Glimmerglass State Park at no charge; feasibility of hiring a shuttle bus; possibility of a late afternoon or early evening "draw," such as musical entertainment; the Goodyear Lake Association's process for hosting its Goodyear Lake Day event (committee meets every week starting in April, small but time-consuming); the Leap Into Summer event also scheduled for July 11; renaming the event to be more generic and/or to include celebration of more water bodies.

Blanche moved that we go forward with the Lake Festival on July 11 with the help of the three who stated they would put in the necessary hours. There was a second by Darla, followed by further discussion. Topics included: attracting a broader audience with a countywide Lake Festival; advertising in "Great Getaways," which is published by the Pennysaver; establishing a planning process for the event.

Matt said he felt the event might suffer this year because of the delays in planning, which would require us to scramble now to pull it off. He asked the group if they would rather have a mediocre festival in 2009 or a rejuvenated event in 2010. **The original motion was withdrawn, and modified to delay the Lake Festival for a year, tentatively to be held on Saturday, July 10, 2010. A new motion was made by Blanche, with a second by Matt. The motion was passed.** All agreed that we would move forward, with consideration toward making the event a generic lakes festival.

V. Department Reports

1. Biological Field Station

Matt announced that SUNY-Oneonta has hired a new parasitologist, Florian Reyda, who is splitting time between SUNY-Oneonta and the BFS, and is active already with several studies on local fishes and parasites. There will be two undergraduate courses held at the BFS this summer, he said. Most, if not all, of the interns have been selected. There will be five undergraduate interns this summer, he said, plus one or two high-school interns. BFS renovations are ongoing, he continued. They have to be out of the BFS and fully housed at the Thayer facility in five weeks, Matt said. Ted asked if they were planning on redoing the septic system. Matt said they cannot exceed the projects/monies already allocated. Matt then spoke about the upcoming NYSFOLA conference, scheduled for the first weekend in May. It's a good conference, he said, and a good opportunity to network. For more information, he recommended a visit to www.nysfola.com. The phosphorus removal units have been running for about a month now, Matt said. The "gold standard" is 100 percent removal, he said, and very expensive. The P removal media seem to work well at this point, he said. Cobleskill students are redoing their walleye abundance estimate, Matt continued. They currently estimate 6,000 adult/spawning-age walleye in Otsego Lake. The walleye control the alewife, a harmful invasive species fish, Matt

said. The BFS walleye restocking program will continue again this year, he said. OCCA has stepped up to provide additional funds to pay for the fingerlings.

2. Canadarago Lake Improvement Association

Don said the CLIA supports NYSFOLA. It is \$50 to attend the conference for one day; the three-day package is \$370 for a single occupancy room and \$575 for double occupancy. Oaks Creek cleanup is set to start again next month, he said. In other CLIA news, they have changed their by-laws to include board term limits and two new board members have been recruited. They have a lot on their plate, Don said, due to a reduction in funding. Jill Eichler said a grant has been written and received for BOCES students to undertake a project focusing on Canadarago Lake, titled "Localized Changes in Water Table Due to Panther Mountain Dam Condition and the Impact on the Environment." She also spoke about a symposium being planned by the Center for Integrated Watershed Studies, scheduled for May 20 and 21. For more information, visit www.ciws.binghamton.edu/

3. Cooperstown Village Water Board

Ted said the Village is waiting for the engineer's report, regarding next steps toward zebra mussel control. They are still trying to find funding to use the wetland, he said.

4. Cornell Cooperative Extension

Not present to report.

5. Goodyear Lake Association

Vince reported that the GLA is seeking donations to kick off a lake study to be undertaken by Jill and her students, and possible for the lake festival. GLA representatives have contacted the owners of the dam, who have shown interest but have not made any commitments as yet. Ted asked if the GLA had a copy of the Otsego Lake Management Plan. The folks who created this document might be able to help them with their lake management plan, he added. GLA representatives have met with maintenance workers on the dam sluiceway that feeds the water into the turbines. Zebra mussels are packed to the depth of almost three feet in the sluiceway, Vince said, and are a growing problem downstream as well. Matt said they are all the way down to Maryland now. Bruce said there is concern about how zebra mussels will impact dry hydrants. Darla said that OCCA had recently distributed information from the Cornell Sea Grant program on zebra mussels and fire control equipment and residential water systems. She said she would circulate links to these articles to the WQCC listserv. Tom asked if zebra mussels travel upstream. Matt said yes, but not without help. Vince pointed out that ducks love zebra mussels. Tom expressed concern about Allens Lake, the drinking water supply for Richfield Springs. There are three miles of underground pipes to consider, he said, and a dry hydrant is located right there. Tom said he had no idea how the village would remedy the situation, should the pipes become infested. Ted asked how big the pipe was and if it could be pigged. Tom said he didn't really know.

6. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Not present to report.

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 on recent OCCA activities, including: just finished a color brochure on water chestnut pulling (copies distributed); have applied recently for several grants that are water-quality based; received \$350 from Stewart's Holiday Match program toward youth trail clean-up in association with Otsego Lake Festival, that will help pay for some of the advertising; working on huge Annual Fund Drive plan, to kick off in mid April; ad to run this week in local newspaper, thanking and acknowledging Lake Challenge donors; newsletter to printer by end of week, including article on negative aspects of bottled water with sidebar information on "Take Back the Tap" initiative; working on invasive species warning signage; revising website to be more user friendly and become more of a resource; using GoodSearch search engine; working on Earth Festival (Silent Auction donations and EcoArt entries needed and exhibitors welcome); Garage Sale -- donations needed, dates are April 25 and 26, donations will be accepted April 17-23; e-bulletins and press releases; a Low Carbon Diet Eco-Team Training Session / workshop, in conjunction with Cornell Cooperative Extension, is planned for April 8; Erik Miller has been appointed to the Board of the Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program; revised gas lease map available for viewing on home page of website.

11. Otsego County Planning Department

Karen Sullivan said the Planning Department is gearing up for workshops scheduled tonight, April 1 and April 8. Tonight's workshop is "The Comprehensive Plan," presented by the Planning Department, followed by "Zoning for Rural Communities" (Peter Manning of the Catskill Center) on April 1 and "State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA)" (attorney Doug Zamelis) on April 8. Karen said these workshops will help members of area planning boards fulfill their training requirements. Robin asked if the sessions are open to the public, and Karen replied that they are. There is no cost to attend, Karen said, and everyone is more than welcome. In other Planning Department news, Karen said they are working on a solid waste long-term plan. The MOSA agreement is up in 2014, she explained, and it has cost the county \$200,000 to be down in the amount of garbage. The county's recycling contract is up at the end of 2009, she said. The current recycling contract is with WRE, she continued, and there is a lot of tension right now, as WRE is hauling local trash out of the county. It is possible the county will coordinate with MRF (material recovery facilities) centers to create an easier process for residents. Karen also informed the group of the CleanSweepNY event scheduled for April 9 at the Oneonta NYSDOT Highway Facility on State Highway 7. CleanSweepNY is an opportunity to dispose of unwanted and/or obsolete pesticides and other chemicals. This opportunity is directed at agriculture, professional certified applicators, marinas and schools. These efforts are administered by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and are supported by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets and Cornell Cooperative Extension.

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

Blanche said that Scott Fickbohm was attending an Upper Susquehanna Coalition retreat and unable to make the meeting. Things at SWCD are moving along, Blanche said. They do not yet know the status of 15 ag non-point source grants, she continued, and will not know until July. She is not sure what is causing the delay, as usually they would know by now, but they do know that funding has been cut almost in half. The Envirothon is May 6, Blanche said, and things are moving along with that as well. This year is a little different, and there was an educational field day and training session at Rogers Environmental Education Center in Sherburne this past Monday, Blanche said.

13. Otsego Lake Association

Not present to report.

14. Otsego Lake Watershed Supervisory Committee (WSC)
Not present, but submitted report via e-mail, inserted below.

Onsite Systems Program

The WSC is gearing up for the 2009 inspection season. There are 26 properties and 55 systems remaining to be inspected. The reason for the large number of systems versus properties is that three commercial properties have a total of 24 systems. Also, to make for an interesting season, close to 2/3's of the properties are considered "difficult" situations regarding scheduling an inspection.

Two Village of Cooperstown Water Plant employees will be trained by the Onsite Training Network (SUNY Delhi) to conduct inspections. 2009 will be a transition year, with the Village taking full responsibility for inspections starting in 2010.

Demonstration Systems

The Thayer Farm demonstration system will be completed this spring with the tie-in of the boathouse. Extensive monitoring of the three demonstration systems will be conducted this summer, with emphasis on the phosphorus removal step. Work is underway at the Field Station to develop an improved phosphorus removal process. (Refer to BFS report.)

Gas Drilling

The WSC is taking steps to protect Otsego Lake from the potential environmental impacts of horizontal gas drilling and hydraulic fracturing in the watershed. There is significant acreage in the watershed north of Rt. 20 that has been leased for gas drilling. The land stretches from Rt.31 and Shadow Brook to Rt. 80 and Hayden Creek and Summit Lake. Current DEC regulations allow gas drilling as close as 50 feet from surface water bodies.

The WSC is working with the NYS DOH on two fronts: (1) amending the Otsego Lake Watershed Rules and Regulations, Public Health Law Section 1100, to address gas drilling and (2) assessing the impact of gas drilling on DOH's Source Water Assessment Program, which provides information on the potential contaminant threats to public drinking water sources.

The going in position of the WSC is that gas drilling setbacks need to be at least one mile from water bodies in a drinking water watershed. The NYC watershed is considering a similar setback.

MSG

It is approaching four months since MSG was sent off to draft an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the musical festival project. The Springfield Planning Board has heard nothing from MSG during this time. Also, MSG has not purchased the land.

15. Otsego Land Trust
Not present to report.

16. Otsego 2000

Robin Krawitz talked about the organization's new staff, herself and Avery York, and the new Cooperstown Farmers' Market manager, Lyn Weir. April 11 is the last winter market, she said, and the market opens for the 2009 season on Saturday, May 9. Construction in the market building has allowed them to expand and add three to four more vendor spaces, she added. This summer, Otsego 2000 will focus on the 10-year anniversary of the Glimmerglass Historic District and Otsego Lake, Robin said.

17. Other

The meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

** E-mail from Peter Freehafer, DEC

Subject: Re: Revised Cherry Valley Snow letter

In addition to the Chesapeake strategy, I am interested in further developing and promoting good practices for the disposal of contaminated snow throughout the region as part of a broader Susq/Chemung eco-system based river basin plan that will begin to be developed in earnest this year.

*Any ideas the WQCC has are welcome, particularly in regard to water quality data, siting/containment criteria, clean-up methods and outreach opportunities. Your interest and action is well appreciated. Thanks Holly,
-peter*