



Otsego County Water Quality Coordinating Committee

Minutes

May 2, 2012, 1:00 – 3:00 pm

The meeting was called to order by Scott Fickbohm, treasurer. Member organizations in attendance were the Otsego Lake Association, Richfield Springs, The Canadarago Lake Association, Biological Field Station, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Otsego 2000, and the Soil and Water District.

The minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed – no changes being suggested, a motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes. The minutes were approved.

The Treasurer then reported on WQCC's finances. He reported one expense for April -- \$674.72 for Otsego Lake no-wake zone buoys. WQCC has \$1741.24 on hand for the Lakes Festival, \$1529.33 remaining for the buoy program, and \$773.41 in undesignated funds for a total of \$4,043.98. Vince Stayter reminded attendees that voluntary dues are generally paid in November/December.

The discussion moved on to Old Business. Scott Fickbohm reported on progress on the grant deliverable – he is compiling an annual report for the WQCC for 2011, which will include annual reports from member organizations. Once the report is presented in hard and electronic copies to the county, WQCC will receive 50% of the grant funds, or approximately \$500. The same process will need to be repeated for 2012 in order to receive the remaining 50%. The 2011 annual report will focus on the updated WQCC strategy – Scott will forward to committee members for feedback and input, and requests annual reports from all members.

Still under Old Business, the committee discussed plans for the upcoming Lakes Festival. Vince Stayter suggested inviting the Beekman Boys to do a presentation, since they generally draw a big crowd. Other suggestions included involving the Upper Susquehanna Coalition, Tom Hughes of NYS Parks for fish-related activities, and borrowing DEC's watershed model for the day. Scott agreed to find out how WQCC might get the model.

The discussion then focused on future topics for WQCC public meetings. Suggestions included Brine Spreading – conventional vs. shale (someone suggested a USGS expert in Ithaca), and development pressures from natural gas. The topic for the May 30 meeting will be 'Lakescaping'; someone suggested a follow-up speaker from the Corps of Engineers or DEC on permitting issues around shorelines, or the issue of the EPA's TMDL for the Chesapeake Bay.

The discussion then moved on to New Business. The Envirothon event was successful, and since Oneonta won locally there is now a need for funding to send the team to state finals. OCSWD has offered to contribute up to \$200, but it was unclear how much remained to be raised. A motion was made that the WQCC should front the money necessary, up to \$800, if needed in order to get the team to state finals. This amount would be reimbursed by fundraising, etc. It was noted that because the exact amount needed was not known, the committee should wait for more clarification, and then vote by email if needed. The motion was withdrawn.

The next issue under New Business was the spreading of brine on roadways to control dust and as a snow melt. Vince Stayter remarked that NY's beneficial use determination program is one of the most lax in reclassifying hazardous waste for beneficial use. Scott reminded the committee of the difference between flowback fluid and production brine from gas wells. Psalm Wyckoff commented that she had talked to Ted Loukides of the DEC, who confirmed that no BUD had been issued for shale gas well brine. Scott had also checked with several counties that have been using production brine from conventional wells for several years as well.

Next, the discussion moved on to department reports.

Biological Field Station: Matt reported that BFS has published its State of the Lake report and will be holding a forum to discuss the report and the changes that have occurred over the 30 years of BFS monitoring of Otsego Lake. The end result will be a lake management plan. They are currently looking for input from the DEC. BFS is also wrapping up last year's annual reports.

Canadarago Lake Association: They are undertaking a State of the Lake survey in order to craft a lake management plan for Canadarago Lake.

Goodyear Lake Association: They held a meeting on April 25 with DEC and stakeholders about the DEC's planned expansion of the 'cart-up boat launch. DEC wants to expand but the residents are unanimously against, citing lack of room for expansion, late-night parties and disruptions. GLA will also be sponsoring a lunch for the participants in the Susquehanna Sojourn Kayakers on June 15th, when they are pulling water chestnuts with OCCA. And finally, the sounding of Goodyear Lake was postponed again.

Natural Resources Conservation Service: Tony Capraro reported that NRCS took a big budget cut for programs, and that the number of contracts they have are down by 80%. They had over 60 applications for water quality projects though. He reported that 2,000 trees are slated to be planted through the Conservation Reserve program, and that they were working on Unadilla and Roseboom projects for emergency flood mitigation funding, primarily streamside stabilization. Tony reported they had participated in Earth Fest, Envirothon, and a pre-K field trip to Cooperstown Holstein Corporation. He also noted that NRCS has two interns joining them for the summer.

Otsego County Planning Department: Psalm reported that Terry Bliss had retired at the end of March, Karen Sullivan promoted to department head, and Psalm promoted to senior planner. They are now looking to hire another planner. Psalm mentioned that the department was working on various grants related to flooding/farm assistance as well as for local governments. She also noted that the department had received a grant for a 5-year update of the county's hazard mitigation plan.

Soil & Water District: Scott Fickbohm had prepared a written report and submitted that in lieu of a verbal report of activities.

Otsego 2000: Ellen reported that O2K had been continuing its work on advocacy and outreach around gas drilling issues, managing the growing Cooperstown Farmers' Market, and historic preservation issues including moving forward with an update of the Waggoner Patent historic district nomination.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.