

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

Wednesday, January 28, 2015

Present:

Matt Albright, Biological Field Station
Holly Waterfield, Biological Field Station
Mike Empey, Dave Brandt Chapter, Trout Unlimited
Danny Lapin, Otsego County Conservation Association
Darla Youngs, Otsego County Conservation Association
Nicole Mehr, Otsego County Conservation Association
Kelly Byrnes, Otsego County Planning Department
Chris Andreassen, Otsego County Soil and Water Conservation District
Mike Coryat, Otsego County Soil and Water Conservation District
Danny Lapin, Otsego County Conservation Association
Marcie Foster, Otsego Land Trust

The meeting was called to order at 1:04 p.m. by Facilitator Darla Youngs.

I. TREASURER'S REPORT

- Mike Coryat distributed the Treasurer's Report on behalf of Treasurer Blanche Hurlbutt, Otsego County Soil and Water Conservation District, who was out of town.
- Facilitator Darla Youngs said she would check on the status of available mini-grant funds and whether the \$2,000.00 allocated in 2014 as possible grant leverage had actually been used.
- It was remarked that the mini-grant fund balance seemed higher than expected, even with the \$2,000.00 still intact. Youngs said she would check with Hurlbutt for an itemized report on the mini-grant funds.

II. REVIEW MINUTES

- D. Youngs said former Secretary Erik Scrivener had resigned due to staffing changes in the County Planning Department and increased work load. She said she would secure the minutes from the last business meeting from Scrivener for review and approval at a later date.

III. WQCC OLD BUSINESS

Mini-grant Funds

- Mini-grant funds were discussed previously during the Treasurer's Report portion of the meeting.

IV. WQCC NEW BUSINESS

Slate of Officers for 2015

- D. Youngs introduced the proposed slate of officers: Jordan Clements, SWCD, facilitator; Holly Waterfield, BFS, vice-facilitator; and Darla Youngs, OCCA, secretary.
- Youngs explained that, since WQCC is a subcommittee of SWCD, B. Hurlbutt remains the treasurer by default.
- **Upon confirming the presence of a quorum, a motion was made by Mike Empey to approve the slate of officers as put forth, seconded by Matt Albright. The motion to approve Clements, Waterfield, Youngs and Hurlbutt as WQCC officers for 2015 was unanimous.**

Updates to "A Plan for the Management of the Otsego Lake Watershed"

- D. Youngs explained that in working with her staff recently on review of a Department of Transportation project, and in speaking with H. Waterfield and M. Albright of the BFS, it had come to their attention that the Otsego Lake Watershed Management Plan is due for an update.

- The plan was last updated in 2007.
- Albright said he had written much of the narrative for the plan update in 2007, working with water quality partners. Updates at that time coincided with the need for a reprint.
- Youngs introduced OCCA Environmental Planner Danny Lapin, who explained why he thought the time was right for an updated plan and who advocated for revisions that will bridge the common gap that exists between science and policy.
- Among topics Lapin recommended that the new plan might address were: development projects, research, advocacy, outreach and climate change.
- Albright provided some background on the plan, explaining that as of the 2007 revisions the plan was 10 years old.
- At that time the goal was to bring the plan up to date. The first half of the document, he said, was an account of what had been accomplished in the first 10 years.
- Albright said the document outlines what was recommended to be done, what had been done, who did it, and where the funding came from.
- This, he said, was to demonstrate that it was an active plan.
- Albright said Lapin's suggestions about updates to the plan were good ones.
- Lake issues have been put on the back burner somewhat of late, Albright said. He suggested that public meetings associated with the LWMP updates might help get these issues back in the forefront.
- Youngs pointed out that updates to the LWMP would be a positive way to get the lake back in the public eye, referencing negative news coverage about DOT and Route 80 maintenance along the lake.
- Waterfield said updating the LWMP may be a good way to get DOT involved in a positive way as well.
- Albright said a lot of issues having to do with Otsego Lake and the Otsego Lake Watershed are changing very rapidly, particularly due to the introduction of exotics. The quality of the water in Otsego Lake has improved, he said, but the lake ecology is changing dramatically.
- Lapin said this would be an opportunity to coordinate with state-level initiatives.
- **H. Waterfield moved that a subcommittee be established to update and revise the Otsego Lake Watershed management plan, seconded by M. Empey. The motion was passed unanimously.**
- It was agreed that Youngs would send an e-mail to WQCC member groups offering to chair the committee and to garner input.

V. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Prior to beginning the report segment of the meeting, Secretary Youngs asked that from now on short bullet-point reports be provided electronically to her by member organization representatives for the business meetings. This will enable Youngs to drop the reports into the minutes document and focus her attention on recording comments and dialogue.

1. Biological Field Station

- M. Albright said he and H. Waterfield have been spending time writing/editing reports for the BFS Annual Report.
- A call is out for college undergraduate and high-school interns. More at bfs.oneonta.edu.
- A position will be opening soon for an aquatic ecologist faculty position. Time will be split between the main campus and BFS.
- Waterfield is working with Scott Wells (DEC Region 4 Fisheries) on a poster outlining ecological changes to Otsego Lake as related to exotic fish introductions.
- The most recent DEC gill netting survey of Otsego Lake collected several healthy-looking lake whitefish (Otsego bass) representing various year classes. Lake trout spawning studies collected a number of whitefish fry. It is possible that this historically abundant and important native fish may rebound following the successful management of the exotic alewife.
- Of note is the fact that the first class of Lake Management Masters' Program students is in the process of wrapping up their studies and most have professional jobs already lined up.

- Carter Bailey, project lead for the Canadarago Lake watershed management plan, is headed for a position in pond management in Cleveland, OH.

2. Dave Brandt Chapter, Trout Unlimited

- M. Empey announced that there will be an ice fishing event at the Canadarago Lake boat launch held in conjunction with the upcoming Richfield Springs Lions Club's Winter Carnival.
- Dates will be publicized in the Pennysaver.
- TO is wrapping up DEC camperships for local kids. Otsego County probably sends more kids to DEC per capita than any other county in the state, Empey said.
- Two young fly fishermen who work with Craig Buckbee will be attending DEC camp.
- TO's riparian buffer project on the Upper Schenevus is moving forward. Improvements along a 6-7 mile stretch are planned; landowner contact will target dairy farmers first.
- A meeting with Trees for Tribes representative Beth Roessler is planned for April.

3. Otsego County Conservation Association

- Darla Youngs distributed a poster for the upcoming agricultural plastic recycling pilot program. OCCA is partnering with Cornell Cooperative Extension, Otsego County, Otsego County Soil & Water Conservation District and Casella Waste Resources on this program.
- Earth Festival has been set for Saturday, April 11 and Lake Appreciation Day at Glimmerglass State Park will be held on Saturday, July 11. Exhibitors and vendors will be sought for both events.
- Youngs said OCCA had recently approved its budget for 2015. Line item allocations in 2015 particular to water quality are: \$1,000.00 toward riparian buffers, hydroseeding and/or surface water monitoring; \$3,000.00 toward barnyard improvement projects; \$10,000.00 toward the Otsego Lake septic system management system/watershed management; \$7,500.00 toward the Cooperstown boat inspection program; funding to BFS toward three summer interns and a Lake Management Masters' Program student; funding to Canadarago Lake Improvement Association toward its boat steward program; etc.
- Youngs said OCCA is working to devise a concerted public education campaign to prevent the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species. The goal is to have a common message to be used by all the 21 groups who signed on to OCCA's letter to the Otsego County Board last year in favor of an AIS transport law.
- The campaign would include radio and newspaper advertising. OCCA has set aside funds for this and will be approaching its partners and affiliates for support.
- OCCA will be concentrating much of its efforts over the next couple of months on review of the proposed Edic to Fraser transmission line project. Comments/concerns on potential impacts to water resources along this route will be sought.

4. Otsego County Planning Department

- Nothing to report.

5. Otsego County Soil and Water Conservation District

- Mike Coryat said work had begun on WQIP grant work and three stream stabilization projects involving sites in Morris, Edmeston and on the Otsdawa Creek.
- The sites have been assessed by the Upper Susquehanna Coalition and there is heavy work involved at all three.
- \$6,000.00 is available for stream buffer and slope stabilization projects; \$3,000.00 available for woody debris removal. Contact SWCD with potential sites.

6. Otsego Land Trust

- Marcie Foster said OLT hopes to close on three new easements this week: two on Ouleout Creek in Delaware County and one on Decatur Creek.

- Pertaining to the Blueway, the parking area at the Parslow Road site has been completed and OLT is working with DEC on fishing access.
- Foster said she is looking for help this year to create a management plan for the Parslow Road property (86 acres).
- OLT will sponsor two BFS interns this year with projects specific to OLT.
- Grants associated with Brookwood Point are moving forward. They expect to open up the entry way this year and to have canoe and kayak access to the lake there.
- An AIS management plan for Brookwood and all of OLT's access sites with river frontage is in the works.
- OLT access sites are for car top watercraft only.
- OLT looks to create a comprehensive plan for AIS disposal and prevention, Brookwood being the most complicated of their sites to manage.
- Foster suggested that a standardized AIS plan be part of the revised Otsego Lake Watershed management plan.
- Albright recommended that OLT approach Gretchen Sorin, Cooperstown Graduate Program, for possible assistance with AIS signage.
- Foster said OLT Executive Director Virginia Kennedy is working on a grant proposal for AIS signage directed at boaters coming out of the water.

7. OTHER

- None.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 2 p.m.

NOT PRESENT: Arnold Lake Association; Canadarago Lake Improvement Association; Cooperstown Village Water Committee; CCE; Goodyear Lake Association; NRCS; NYCAMH; NYSDOH; Otsego Lake Association; Otsego Lake Watershed Supervisory Committee; Otsego 2000; Richfield Springs Water Treatment Plant.