

Otsego County Water Quality Coordinating Committee

Otsego County Meadows Building

Wednesday, July 27th, 2011



Members Present:

Matt Albright, Biological Field Station

Karen Sullivan, Otsego County Planning Dept.

Darla Youngs, Otsego County Conservation Association

Scott Fickbohm, Otsego County Soil & Water Conservation District

Vince Stayter & Bruce Shultis, Goodyear Lake Association

Jill Eichler, BOCES

Ellen Pope, Otsego 2000

Tony Capraro, USDA Natural resources Conservation Service

Don Smyers, Schoharie-Otsego Cornell Cooperative Extension

Matt called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.

- I. **Review of Minutes** –June meeting was Tony Capraro and Bill Gibson presentation on riparian buffers.. No business was conducted at the meeting and no minutes were prepared.
- II. **Treasurer's Report** - Blanche Hurlbutt from SWCD was unavailable to personally provide the Treasurers Report. Scott communicated that, per Blanche, very little activity took place (only some purchases from the buoy account) and that a written report would be prepared for our next meeting.
- III. **WQCC Old Business**
 - a. **WQCC Nonpoint Source Strategy** –Matt and Karen offered some minor changes. Scott moved that the Strategy be adopted with the changes discussed. The motion was seconded by Ellen and passed unanimously.
 - b. **DEC Grant Deliverables** – Scott explained that an annual report of last years activities would be created and presented to the County Board. The Report would include the WQCC Nonpoint Source Strategy, our by-laws, a copy of the water quality report and annual reports from members. The WQCC Annual report would then be distributed to DEC and local municipalities. The same process will be repeated for accomplishments in 2011.
 - c. **Selection of Topic Meetings** – Darla reviewed the WQCC policy on the selection of topics. The August meeting will be a presentation by Army Corps on lakeshore protection measures and permitting requirements. The SWCD will explain their role in assisting landowners in the permitting process. It was suggested that NYS DEC also be present and participate. The group discussed the possibility of getting a DEC representative to speak on the newly re-released sGEIS document regarding gas drilling. In general, if a presentation cannot be arranged for in a given month, the group will still meet.
 - d. **Review By-laws regarding quorum** – A motion was made by Scott to reduce the number of members present required for a quorum from 7 to 5. The motion was seconded by Ellen and passed unanimously. Matt made a motion to further amend the by-laws to state that voting rights be given and taken away from members based on attendance at 3 of the previous 12

meetings from the date the vote is to be taken. The motion was seconded by Darla and passed unanimously. Question raised if a 'proxy' vote can be counted.

IV. Department Reports

- a. **BFS** – Matt reported that the intern season is ending and they wrapping up the summers research. The BFS received a NSF grant for a field lab at Upper Site and a grant for equipment needed to analyze the water quality of low impact agricultural practices.
- b. **Cornell Cooperative Extension** - Don reported that the Otsego office recently merged with the Schoharie CCE. The Otsego office also recently hired a new agricultural educator whose focus will be on business development and marketing and agriculture in general.
- c. **Natural Resource Conservation Service** – Tony reported that they are working on the last round of programming and have engaged in contracts with 12 landowners – 6 grazing farms, 2 organic operations, 1 livestock farm, 1 crop farm and wildlife contract. Tony also reported that staffing at NRCS is down as employees have been retiring early without backfilling.
- d. **Otsego County Conservation Association** – see attached
- e. **Otsego Planning Department** – Karen reported that a property purchased by the County during the FEMA buy out after the 2006 flood was recently transferred to DEC for public access on the Susquehanna River. The County moved to a single stream recycling system and is still trying to leave MOSA.
- f. **Otsego County Soil and Water Conservation District** – see attached
- g. **Otsego 2000** – Ellen reported that they are bust reviewing the DEC natural gas regulations and assisting local grass roots organizations on surveys regarding the prospect of natural gas development (results to date indicate approximately 60% concerned/against). Ellen is also working on a workshop to offer guidance to the public on how to properly write comments regarding the sGEIS to be held around the 15th of August. The Cooperstown Farmers market is also celebrating an anniversary and looking to expand to an all year operation.
- h. **Goodyear Lake Association** - Vince reported that conductivity measurements are being taken regularly on the Lake and that he data is available and that the Goodyear Lake Day is going to be held on August 13th.
- i. **BOCE** – no report

The meeting was adjourned at 2:45. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 31st at the County Meadows Building in Cooperstown.

Respectfully Submitted by Scott Fickbohm, August 2, 2011

OCCA Report –

Water:

- Water chestnut eradication on Goodyear Lake, 6/17 and 6/18 and 7/15 and 7/16; preparing for and soliciting volunteers for hand pulling sessions on 8/19 and 8/20.
- Scouting of Goodyear Lake stump lot to assess water chestnut and other invasive populations, 06/29.
- Participated in water chestnut eradication on Oneonta marsh with BFS, 7/19.
- Sent e-mail invitations to 50+ potential participants for the Susquehanna Invasives Paddle scheduled for July 25-29; mailed hard-copy personalized invites (e-mails and hard copy invitees include major donors, former Board members, invasives and water quality experts/professionals, etc.).
- Planning and preparation for Susquehanna Invasives Paddle survey includes: recruiting of participants, creation of timeline and task list, trailer inspection and registration, certificate of insurance, scouting of start and end points for individual legs of journey, equipment/supply list, invasive species identification materials, etc.
- Mailed \$2,000 to Dr. Devin Castendyk, SUNY-Oneonta for baseline groundwater chemistry study in the Butternut Valley (\$2,000).
- Confirmed funding for hydroseeding projects in the Otsego Lake Watershed from Scott Fickbohm, Otsego County Soil & Water Conservation District: \$1,500, Red House Hill Road (Town of Middlefield) and \$800, Springfield Hill Road (Town of Springfield).
- Confirmed that Win McIntyre will provide review of water-related dSGEIS sections on behalf of OCCA.
- Preliminary review of dSGEIS to determine approach to review of document: which sections to review, who will review them, etc.
- Review of Headwaters Youth Conservation Corps contract (water chestnut pulling and invasives paddle survey), conversation with HYCC executive director and questions regarding sessions.
- Follow-up e-mails and phone calls to Scott Wells, NYSDEC (6/14, 6/22, 7/8, 7/11) regarding advancement of Portlandville river access. Correspondence with V. Stayter specific to preparing artist rendering of the proposed boardwalk to be included with associated DEC permits.
- To complete depth sounding (measurement) of Goodyear Lake Stump Lot, 7/15 and 7/16, to assist DEC permitting process for boardwalk/dock project.
- We have begun raising money for Otsego Lake/Upper Susquehanna Watershed programs for 2012 and, hopefully, beyond. These include the septic system management program, boat washing facilities, riparian buffers, hydroseeding, education, etc. Also talked with SWCD and SUNY-Oneonta representatives re: proposed Integrated Watershed Studies Center, 7/22.
- Wrapping up fundraising toward water chestnut eradication on Goodyear Lake.
- Darla Youngs replaces Erik Miller on county's Natural Gas Advisory Committee, 7/25.
- Lake Appreciation Day, Glimmerglass Park, 8/13.

Other:

- Met with GIS intern on Natural Resources Survey, 6/30, to discuss basic parameters of project and preliminary details (template, payment, deliverables schedule, recording of methodology, information sources, possible partners, etc.) Follow-up meeting, 7/8 to discuss first set of maps to be created from template; preferred color scheme(s) based on data to be presented; and analysis of which maps cannot be generated based on available data. Anticipating first generation of maps within two weeks (7/21). Subsequent map sets to be generated in two week intervals; number of maps produced based on increasing level of difficulty—the first series of maps will be the largest as it represents relatively easy maps to create.
- Collaborating with Otsego 2000 on web-based map outlining municipal actions and positions, with links to town-specific data related to natural gas drilling and exploration.
- Upcoming nature walks: August 6, Milford State Forest, Dave Kiehm; August 13, Sleeping Lion Trail in Glimmerglass State Park; September 10, Betty and Wilbur Davis State Park, Joe Ritton; October 23, The Robert V. Riddell State Park, Trish and Steve Kent; and January 15, 2012, The Robert V. Riddell State Park, snowshoe hike with the Kents. Information blurbs to come.
- Submitted paperwork for renewal of Basswood Pond stewardship. Correspondence with OCCA member Lyn Edinger, whose property borders Basswood State Forest, on condition of trail. Reviewed photos and written descriptions. E-mail correspondence with NYSDEC regarding removal of fallen trees.
- Walked Basswood Pond Trail, 7/10, to further assess trail. OCCA member Lyn Edinger has done some work in clearing trail entrances and pond perimeter; OCCA to subcontract again this year for clearing of trail itself.
- Recycling brochure revise finalized; sent to printer 7/13; copies now available.

Otsego County Soil and Water Conservation District Report –

AGRICULTURE

- 1. Agricultural Environmental Management Program (AEM):** Activities for the 1st Qtr of Year 7 included updating the AEM master database and paper file system by going through the entire database and removing inactive farms, consolidating where we had multiple folders and AEM numbers for the same farm, correcting addresses and physical locations in the GIS system. This process will give us a more accurate and up to date information system and facilitate reporting to the various entities we report AEM activity to. John has begun work on the first of three CNMPs he needs to complete for his NYS planning certification. John also reviewed AEM Year 6 close out reporting with Cliff
- 2. Graze NY –** We will reach the end of our contract date this month. We have exceeded our deliverables by a factor of three. The Graze NY review team has looked at our work and made several recommendations that have been followed up by Bob and John. I have let the Graze NY counties know that we can take on an additional 120hrs of work before September if extra hours are available.
- 3. Upper Susquehanna Coalition Agreement –** The District has spent time facilitating USC's 2nd Annual Legislative Briefing on the EPA TMDL held in Binghamton on July 7th. Invitees included local, state,

federal legislators, natural resource professionals and other stakeholders. The meeting was well attended (list available) and we were able to clearly communicate our major messages: 1) the importance of funding to meeting the states WIP, 2) the consequences of not meeting the WIP and 3) reviewing the basic fairness and equity of NY's TMDL allocation.

4. **Agricultural Plastic Baler** – We have been out to 4 farms and, when completed, we will have approximately 6 bales in the field. Interest in the program is high. Next steps include a 'milk run' of existing bales to be delivered to MOSA.
5. **Ag. Non-Point Source Grants** –
ROUND XIV – Grazing Grant: Nothing new to report. We anticipate the grant to be complete by the end of this year.
ROUND XV – Waterpoint Farms: Construction is complete. We have made an interim payment to Winsor Acres and have begun the initial work of grant closeout. We will formally submit the closeout paper work after NRCS has officially signed off on all the practices. The farmer was very happy with the project and had many good things to say about Jeanine H's efforts. We also distributed an AEM sign to Dave Dickey at a meeting that included Senator Seward, Assemblyman Lopez, Tony and myself. We will try to use the success to promote the program and partnership in the press.
ROUND XVI – Cooperstown Holstein: The re-design is complete and the District and NRCS will be looking to put the job out to bid as soon as possible.
ROUND XVII: Official award announcement has not been made. Mike L from the state office believes the announcement will be made soon.
ROUND XVIII: While the RFP for Round 18 has not been made available, we are considering at least 5 potential applications.

FLOODING AND STORMWATER

6. **Hydroseeding** – We have put together a purchase order for approximately 56 loads of hydroseed – 50 of which will be applied to Town and County roads. Physical assessment of the 35 sites identified continues.
7. **Canadaraigo Lake** – County Attorney Cocomma believes the CLIA is most likely the owner of the dam. She will research some remaining issues and then issue a letter stating so. This will begin the process of investigating the repairs proposed in the H&H report. We are still waiting for the release of the State of the Lake Report by the BFS.
8. **Stream Projects** – Mike Lovegreen from the USC Stream Team visited 12 sites around the County where stream erosion is occurring. Mike will provide trip reports on each site including rehabilitation options and rough price quotes. Based on that information and the interest of the landowner, we will then proceed to the design and permitting stage. As of yet, little funds have been identified to implement the designs. Mike also provided a day-long watershed assessment training to members of the BVA. This effort is meant to result in the creation of a background report on the Butternut Creek watershed inclusive of a watershed wide streambank assessment.. The report will be used as the basis for future funding applications.
9. **Wetland Project** – No progress in addressing the beaver activity at the site of a wetland restoration project 2 years ago. We are working with DEC, the landowner and the BFS on receiving a nuisance permit and retrofitting the outlet such that it does not clog so easily.
10. **Oneonta Stormwater** – The District met with Town of Oneonta officials to discuss options in protection the City and Town's reservoir and further previous stormwater work in preparation of potential MS4 designation by the State or EPA.

MISCELLANEOUS

- 11. Natural Gas** – Water quality monitoring continues. The USGS local working group on ground/surface water quality will meet again in this week. Some progress has been made on organizing existing data. I have been working with Uni Blake to draft an RFP for water chemistry analysis at our 52 monitoring sites. The new DEC regulations are now available (700+ pages) for review. We will review this document and offer comments.
- 12. Nutrient Monitoring:** Jordan has continues to collect samples throughout the County. This months sampling will represent 2 full years of monitoring. After data has been received by the BFS, we will work to update our current water quality report.
- 13. Funding Opportunities:** The Scriven Foundation has agreed to support the updating of the County's Agricultural & Farmland Protection Plan. With the commitment of local cash match, the District, CADE and the Otsego Land Trust will create a budget and submit an application to the state in the coming months. Ag & Mkts is unsure when any funds will be released. NRCS is still not certain about their ability to of offering contribution agreements.
- 14. WQCC:** Nothing new to report. Next months presentation will be on the permitting issues for lakeside residents when trying to attempt shoreline protection on their properties. The WQCC has had difficulty reaching a quorum in recent months and has not been able to adopt the revise Otsego County Nonpoint Source Strategy. This is necessary for the presentation to the County Board and vouchering against our DEC WQCC grant.
- 15. 2011 Part C Projects:** The District is continues to log hours against this funding for work related to the Envirothon, Ag plastic recycling, stream and wetland restoration/design and permitting and riparian buffers.
- 16. Miscellaneous:** Bob B and I attended the NYACD/NRCS listening session in Cayuga and discussed the upcoming Farm Bill negotiations. At the meeting emphasis was placed on a need for more local involvement in priority setting and a need for NRCS to have more flexibility in implementing their programs and policy's. The District participated in the Springfield 4th of July parade by displaying the new plastic baler.