



A clean lake reflects well
on all of us.

(final)
ONONDAGA LAKE PARTNERSHIP (OLP)
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
January 27, 2011

ATTENDEES

Committee Members Present:

Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Stephen H. Bales, Commander, USACE, Buffalo District
Mr. Seth Ausubel, Chief, New York Watershed Management Section, USEPA, Region 2 (tc)
Mr. Kenneth Lynch, Regional Director, NYSDEC, Region 7
Mr. Charles Silver, Environmental Scientist, NYS Office of the Attorney General (tc)
Mr. Andrew Maxwell, Director of Planning and Sustainability, City of Syracuse
Mr. David Coburn, Director, Onondaga County Office of the Environment

Others In Attendance:

Mr. Bj Adigun, Chair, Outreach Committee Chair
Mr. Chris Dere, USEPA, Region 2, Project & Outreach Committees (tc)
Mr. John Davis, NYS Office of the Attorney General, Project Committee (tc)
Mrs. Julie Gorecki, USACE, Buffalo District
Ms. Mary Jane Peachey, Chair, Project Committee Chair
Mr. Steven Vriesen, USACE, Buffalo District, Project Committee
Ms. Maria Clark, USEPA, Albany, Region 2 (tc)
Ms. Lindsay Speer, Office of Joe Heath

Committee Members Absent:

None

MEETING ARRANGEMENTS: The meeting was held on Thursday, January 27, 2011 at 10:00 a.m. at the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) Region 7 Office in Syracuse, New York.

- 1. OPENING REMARKS:** LTC Bales welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- 2. EXECUTIVE SESSION:** An executive session was not deemed necessary for this meeting.
- 3. ADMINISTRATIVE:**

a. Review September 17, 2010 and November 30, 2010 Meeting Minutes: A Motion to approve the September 17, 2010 meeting minutes as amended was moved by Mr. Lynch, seconded by Mr. Coburn, and approved unanimously. A Motion to approve the November 30, 2010 meeting minutes was moved by Mr. Coburn, seconded by Mr. Lynch, and approved unanimously.

b. Action Items: Action Items E10-3 through E10-10 were reviewed. Action Items E10-4, E10-7, E10-8, E10-9, and E10-10 were completed.

c. Correspondence: Mrs. Gorecki reported that USACE, and all OLP Partners, received correspondence from Dr. Michalenko requesting acknowledgement for contributions to the 2010 State of Onondaga Lake report. USACE prepared a response letter requesting additional information that will be sent to Dr. Michalenko on January 28, 2010. The other partners did not report any incoming nor outgoing correspondence since the last Executive Committee meeting.

d. Review of FFY2011 Executive Committee Objectives: LTC Bales stated that review of the FFY2011 objectives is now a recurring agenda item. The recommended OLP Impacted Project List was included in the meeting package for updates if necessary. This list helps to communicate OLP capabilities and impacts to elected officials.

Due to the availability of Environmental Benefit Project (EBP) funds from Honeywell for the mudboils program, FFY2011 Executive Committee Objective No. 8 which states “continue to communicate the need for mudboil remediation and seek a sustainable funding source and program to ensure that sediment input from mudboils is minimized” may need to be modified to reflect the recent agreement.

4. STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:

a. Project Committee Update: Ms. Peachey reported on the December 16, 2010 and January 20, 2011 Project Committee meetings. Highlights from those meetings include:

- **Lake Model Collaboration:** The phosphorus bioavailability study technical memorandum has been sent to the peer review panel, and their response is expected next week. There is a difference in the model approach between Upstate Freshwater Institute (UFI) and Anchor QEA regarding the sediment flux study and disagreement over how the results should be incorporated into the lake model. Mr. Ausubel requested that Dr. Michalenko remind the peer review panel of the short timeframe and request a date that their review will be completed.

NYSDEC is anxious to receive outputs from the model to begin developing the total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) for Onondaga Lake. Mr. Coburn directed Anchor QEA to proceed with validation of the lake model on all aspects not expected to have issues related to the sediment flux study. LTC Bales suggested establishing two challenges for the peer review panel: 1) determine which model approach (UFI or Anchor QEA) is most appropriate for the lake model, and 2) provide a full explanation of the significant impacts of each approach. Mr. Coburn expressed that the second proposed deadline is more urgent than the first. Ms. Peachey will schedule a meeting next week with DEC, EPA, Onondaga County and OEI to work out issues related to the schedule.

- **EPA Budget:** The Project Committee reviewed the budget and has no updates to report on any additional funding balances. The committee should know shortly what the balance will be from the peer review panel's work. Honeywell's EBP funds have provided an opportunity for flexibility in addressing the mudboil and well closure projects. The Project Committee is comfortable that there is a path forward to achieve a balanced budget.
- **Mudboils:** The Project Committee continues to discuss the mudboil issues and well closures. There is now \$1.25 million of EBP funds made available from Honeywell to address mudboil issues. However, the committee recognized that may not be enough to completely identify impacts to Onondaga Creek and the lake and implement a remedy to reduce mudboil activity. The Partnership may need to consider doing something more attainable with the EBP funds, such as studying the impacts of the mudboils and expanding our outreach program. Mr. Lynch explained that there is flexibility in both the use of the EBP funds and the start date.
- **OLP Strategic Mission Statement:** The Project Committee will meet with the Outreach Committee on February 16, 2011 where this topic will be discussed. LTC Bales advised that it would be prudent for the OLP to have a strategic vision to hand off to whomever succeeds the OLP.
- **Project Committee Vacancy:** The New York State Canal Corporation has appointed a replacement for Steve Eidt and Mr. Lynch will provide their contact information to Mrs. Gorecki.

b. Outreach Committee Update: Mr. Adigun reported on the December 15, 2010 and January 19, 2011 Outreach Committee meetings. Highlights from those meetings include:

- **Interpretive signs:** The bulk of the Outreach Committee's remaining 2010 budget will be spent on the interpretive signs. The signs are scheduled to be installed in the spring.
- **Watershed Signs:** The committee completed actions related to the content and layout of the watershed signs, which were approved by the county and city. Installation of 7 signs is scheduled in the spring. The committee will consider looking at additional sign locations in the city for 2011.
- **Time Warner Cable:** Time Warner Cable is still interested in pursuing the Connect a Million Minds program with the OLP. The committee received a proposal from Time Warner Cable for \$10,000 to develop a program in 2011 and evaluate its effectiveness and value at year end before making a decision to continue the program. The Outreach Committee has committed to provide the matching \$10,000 to develop a sound educational program for this year.
- **Outreach Committee Budget:** Mr. Adigun presented the proposed 2011 Outreach Committee budget of \$72,500. The Outreach Committee reviewed the budget to determine priorities and those programs that offer the most return on investment. The proposed budget includes programs already in progress, such as the popular mini-grants program, the OLP newsletters, the Teachers' Education Fund, and Outreach Activities. Mr. Ausubel stated that EPA fully supports the proposed outreach plan but recommends setting short-term priorities until uncertainties in the EPA budget, including well closure

costs, the mudboil maintenance program, and OEI's administrative proposal, are resolved. Mr. Ausubel asked what portions of the program are a priority in the short term. Mr. Adigun responded that the press release is out for the mini grants program so that should be honored (\$25,000), as well as the first OLP newsletter (\$8,750), the Connect a Million Minds program (\$5,000), and the Onondaga Creek Community Forum (\$4,000). Mr. Lynch suggested approving the budget of \$72,500 with the caveat that only \$42,750 is authorized to be expended at this time. The Executive Committee agreed with this proposal and agreed to fund \$42,750 for now. The remaining budget will be addressed once other EPA budget shortfalls have been addressed. The following Motion was moved by Mr. Lynch, seconded by Mr. Coburn, and approved with 5 Ayes and 1 Abstention (Mr. Davis).

MOTION: The Executive Committee approves the 2011 Outreach Committee budget of \$72,500, but only authorizes the expenditure of \$42,750 as of January 27, 2011.

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

a. Mudboils Update: Mr. Lynch recommended that the OLP look at the bigger picture for the next 5 years regarding the use of Honeywell EBP funds to develop a long term solution to the mudboils. He suggested the OLP should focus on effectively utilizing EPA funds first, as they need to be expended by September 30, 2012. The remaining EPA funds could be used for monitoring the mudboil impacts, maintenance of existing control features, determining needs for well closures and installation of new wells. All of this will help guide the planning for future years' actions to be funded with EPB funds. Ms. Peachey expressed concern over closing wells that may provide useful data in the future. Mr. Ausubel stated that EPA has a legal obligation to close the wells and emphasized that they must begin closures soon to meet the funds expiration deadline. If another party believes some of the wells may provide useful data, they must assume the liability for closure of the wells. Mr. Kappel has communicated that he feels strongly that the majority of the wells will provide no future value. The OLP also needs to determine what existing data there is and what more is needed. Mr. Ausubel added that he will ask OEI to work with Mr. Kappel to develop a work plan that identifies what work needs to be done now. EPA is open to suggestions on funding an advisory committee to submit a plan for moving forward. The OLP needs a broader understanding of the most effective uses for the remaining EPA funds before spending the EBP funds.

The 2004-05-06 Continuing Clean Water Improvements (CCWI) grant includes three line items for the mudboil program: 1) Tully Valley Mudboil Area Program – Mudboil Remediation, Monitoring and Control (TVMB4), 2) Tully Valley Mudboil Area Program – Maintenance of Remediation Works (MBM2), and 3) Mudboil Dam and Well Closure (MBWC1). The TVMB4 line item has the largest amount of remaining EPA funds (approximately \$400k). Mr. Lynch suggested using these funds first. Mr. Ausubel stated that the OLP needs a short term and long term plan and suggested forming a technical committee to identify what wells need to be closed and the cost associated with those closures and decide if the OLP wants to conduct water quality monitoring downstream to determine the impacts to the lake and creek. Mr. Ausubel will contact Dr. Michalenko to discuss a work plan and report back to the Partners at the next meeting. Ms.

Clark reminded the partners that the NEPA document will identify the impacts to the lake and creek.

Ms. Clever explained that USACE may conduct a section 905b reconnaissance study under the Tribal Partnership Program authority. The study is allowed to take up to 12 months at a cost of \$100,000 at full Federal expense. The study would include consultation with the Nation, documentation of existing conditions and identification of problems, determine if there is a Federal interest, and identify a cost share sponsor. However, the reconnaissance study does not provide a short term solution to the problems.

Mr. Ausubel recommended focusing on the short term plan working with the Onondaga Nation. Mr. Lynch added that the issue needs a fresh perspective, but the OLP also needs to stay engaged. Ms. Clark added that the webinar recently held by EPA was intended to obtain fresh perspectives but did not meet expectations due to low attendance. The committee was still unclear of what type of work plan is needed and for what. The challenge is to determine what the impacts would be to the creek and the lake if the mudboils were left alone.

Ms. Speer added that the Onondaga Nation would not support funding more monitoring work.

b. OLP EPA Budget: Mr. Ausubel stated there is no need for further discussion beyond what was previously discussed during the meeting.

c. FFY2011 Project Committee Objectives: The Partners reviewed the revised Project Committee objectives for FFY2011 and proposed minor changes to Objective No. 6. Mr. Vriesen will revise the objectives for final posting. The following motion was moved by Mr. Maxwell, seconded by Mr. Ausubel, and approved unanimously.

MOTION: The Executive Committee approves the FFY2011 Project Committee objectives as amended.

6. NEW BUSINESS:

a. Outreach Interpretive Signs: Mr. Adigun requested that the partners review the text of the Interpretive signs to be posted throughout Onondaga County and the City of Syracuse.

ACTION ITEM: All comments on the Outreach Interpretive signs are due to Mr. Adigun by February 10, 2011.

b. Partnership Transition: LTC Bales reminded the partners that USACE's participation in the OLP is funded through March 2011. LTC Bales has signed a request for additional General Investigation (GI) funds to fund the participation of Mr. Vriesen, Mrs. Gorecki, and Ms. Greer through the end of fiscal year 2011. LTC Bales stated he expects the request to be approved. However, USACE will face the same challenge in October of 2011. If USACE is not funded, the remaining Partners will need to decide if the OLP will continue to function and who will take on the leadership and other roles. Further details on funding availability will be discussed once LTC Bales receives a decision on reprogramming funds to continue USACE participation.

7. OTHER BUSINESS:

a. USACE Customer Satisfaction Survey: LTC Bales reminded the Partners to submit their responses to the customer survey as he looks at each response personally.

b. Issues: None.

8. PUBLIC COMMENT: Ms. Speer thanked Mr. Maxwell for his suggestion to the revisions to the Project Committee FFY2011 objectives that include review of the Onondaga Nation's visioning statement on Onondaga Lake.

Ms. Speer also requested that the partners give thought to a visual form of fish advisory for those members of the public that do not speak nor read the English language and eat the fish from Onondaga Lake.

9. FUTURE MEETINGS: The next OLP Executive Committee meeting will be held on March 11, 2011 via video teleconference (VTC).

10. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Number	Date of Origin	Due Date	Action Officer	Tasking	Status
E10-3	13-Apr-10	Ongoing	NYSDEC	Project Committee will review OLP projects funded by USEPA grants to ensure completion by September 30, 2012 and recommend agencies to leverage ongoing projects.	Ongoing
E10-6	15-Jun-10	Ongoing	USEPA	Mr. Ausubel/Dere to provide any updates or new information for the USEPA grant budget standing Agenda item to Mr. Vriesen.	Ongoing