



A clean lake reflects well
on all of us.

(final)
ONONDAGA LAKE PARTNERSHIP (OLP)
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
March 11, 2011

ATTENDEES

Committee Members Present:

Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Stephen H. Bales, Commander, USACE, Buffalo District (vtc)
Mr. Seth Ausubel, Chief, New York Watershed Management Section, USEPA, Region 2 (vtc)
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 (vtc)
Mrs. Julie Gorecki, USACE, Buffalo District (vtc)
Ms. Mary Jane Peachey, Chair, Project Committee
Mr. Steven Vriesen, USACE, Buffalo District, Project Committee (vtc)
Ms. Lynn Greer, USACE, Buffalo District, Outreach Committee (vtc)
Mr. David Romano, USACE, Buffalo District, Chief, Planning Branch (vtc)
Dr. Edward Michalenko, President, OEI

Committee Members Absent:

None

MEETING ARRANGEMENTS: The meeting was held on Friday, March 11, 2011 at 1:30 p.m. at the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation 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 of January 27, 2011 Meeting Minutes: A Motion to approve the January 27, 2011 meeting minutes as amended was moved by Mr. Lynch, seconded by Mr. Ausubel, and approved unanimously.

b. Action Items: Action Items E10-3 and E10-6 remain ongoing.

c. Correspondence: Mrs. Gorecki reported that USACE did not receive any incoming or send any outgoing correspondence since the last meeting. The other partners did not report any incoming nor outgoing correspondence for this timeframe.

d. Review of FFY2011 Executive Committee Objectives: Mr. Vriesen reviewed the FFY2011 objectives and reported that Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 9 has been completed. The partners held a brief discussion on Objective No. 7 that states: By March 31, 2011, approve the scope and budget for the alleviation of sedimentation in Onondaga Creek from the Rogue Mudboil area project. The partners recognized that they would not meet the date as this objective was drafted in October 2010 when another project was proposed to address the sedimentation issue. Currently, Mr. William Kappel of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and Dr. Michalenko are drafting a work plan to address a long term remedy for the mudboils. The partners agreed to retain this objective as the intent is unchanged, recognizing that the date will not be met.

4. STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:

a. Project Committee Update: Ms. Peachey reported on the Project Committee's February 16, 2011 meeting. The following are highlights from that meeting.

- **Lake Model Collaboration:** Ms. Peachey reported that NYSDEC has held numerous teleconferences to discuss how to address the differing opinions regarding the application of the SED2K and QEA model. The peer review panel is currently reviewing the approaches and the OLP hopes to have a response soon.

The OLP requested that Anchor QEA run two preliminary model scenarios: a baseline scenario to model existing conditions, and a second scenario to model the impacts of a significant phosphorus load reduction, comparable to one of the SED2K model scenarios used by Upstate Freshwater Institute (UFI) for comparison purposes. The results of these scenarios will be utilized to provide additional guidance for development of the total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) for Onondaga Lake.

- **Mudboils:** The Project Committee has not yet decided how the Environmental Benefits Funds (EBP) will be spent. Mr. Kappel (USGS), Ms. McGrath (SUNY-ESF), Dr. Michalenko (OEI) are drafting a workplan to outline the path forward with respect to aquatic resources, monitoring and control, and public outreach. Mr. Ausubel advised the Project Committee to review and understand the EPA goals and New York State water quality standards when developing the workplan.

- **EPA Budget:** The EPA budget is reviewed on a monthly basis, but until the peer review has completed their work, any surplus from those funds is still unknown.

- **Mission Statement:** After much discussion at the February 16th joint meeting, the standing committees agreed to ask the Executive Committee for further direction to develop a mission statement for either pre or post 2014. The Project Committee has struggled with the path ahead for FFY2011 objectives Nos. 5 and 6 as both objectives relate to a mission statement and/or long term plan. LTC Bales suggested deleting objective No. 6 of the FFY2011 objectives to eliminate further confusion so that the Project Committee can focus on what work is left to be done and who will take on the OLP role after the authorization expires in 2014.

The following Motion was moved by Mr. Coburn, seconded by Mr. Ausubel, and approved unanimously:

MOTION: The Executive Committee approves the deletion of the FFY2011 Project Committee Objective No. 6 that reads, "...develop a long term action plan to support the Executive Committee strategic vision based on key lake and watershed documents including, but not limited to; the Onondaga Lake Watershed Progress Assessment and Action Strategies, 2010 State of Onondaga Lake report, Records of Decision, Amended Consent Judgment, mudboil white paper, microbial trackdown study report, Onondaga Creek Conceptual Revitalization Plan, Onondaga Nation's Vision for a clean Onondaga Lake, Onondaga Lake strategic mission statement and OLP outreach plan."

- **Joint Meeting:** The Project Committee met with the Outreach Committee on February 16, 2011 to discuss the way forward on the community forum, the status document, the mission statement and USACE's transition plan.

b. Outreach Committee Update: Mr. Adigun briefed the partners on the Outreach Committee's meeting on February 16, 2011. Highlights from that meeting includes:

- **Outreach Committee Budget:** Mr. Adigun presented the 2011 Outreach Committee's spending plan for \$42,750 out of the total \$72,500 approved budget to the Outreach Committee. If the committee had known the budget would be partially approved, the committee would have reprioritized some line items in their program differently. There is currently \$9k unallocated in the outreach budget that the committee recommends using to expand the signage program. Mr. Adigun requested concurrence on this request. LTC Bales referred to the Motion made on January 27, 2011 authorizing the Outreach Committee to spend \$42,750. LTC Bales recommended keeping the budget as approved and authorizing the Outreach Committee to expand the signage program. This program will provide the OLP with a sustainable product as desired.

- **Community Forum (Contact Recreation):** Mr. Adigun informed the partners that both standing committees held a lengthy discussion on the content of a community forum. The take away in holding a forum is that it has inherent risks. If the venue is strictly an information session regarding contact recreation in Onondaga Creek, then public input is not the focus. If the venue is an interactive session, public input will be encouraged. Since the contact recreation statement has been approved by the OLP, input has not been solicited. Either venue would include a portion of the meeting dedicated to Q&A. The Outreach Committee concluded that signage might be a preferred method of alerting the public to the risks of contact with the creek. Mr. Adigun requested input on that suggestion. Mr. Ausubel stated that the venue could be both informative and interactive. LTC Bales added that in

some cases, the panel simply thanks the public for their comments. The OLP has worked hard on finalizing a statement regarding public contact with Onondaga Creek. Mr. Ausubel stated that the OLP and a panel of experts would be providing advice on contact with the creek. If the public feels strongly about making changes to the statement, it should be considered. Mr. Lynch added that the forum is an opportunity for the panel experts to notify the creek users of the risks. Dr. Michalenko stated OEI is a proponent of both a forum and signage. He also offered OEI's assistance in organizing the forum. Mr. Coburn recommended hiring a skilled facilitator and to schedule it in early May. The partners agreed that a forum should be held prior to Memorial Day and summer events. Mr. Maxwell also agreed that the Outreach Committee should hold a forum and to obtain Ms. Speer's thoughts on the content to outline a clear message to the public. LTC Bales summarized that the Outreach Committee will schedule a forum prior to May 30, 2011 that provides the OLP's position on contact recreation in Onondaga Creek. The forum will also be interactive that could include draft signage in addition to the presentations. The Agenda will also include time allocated for public feedback.

- **Interpretive Signs:** Draft copies of the five interpretive signs were included in the read ahead package. Mr. Adigun requested all comments to be submitted to Ms. Greer.

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

a. Mudboils Update: Mr. Ausubel reported that EPA is participating in ongoing discussions with USGS and the Onondaga Nation regarding any new developments/issues with the mudboils. EPA is currently considering the need for NEPA review on closing the wells. A list has been drafted outlining the specific requirements and a request for proposals (RFP) should be issued shortly to see what the costs will be. The existing line item for well closure has \$150k remaining for that project. The bids could come in higher, which would require additional funds from another line item. Mr. Lynch was asked if the environmental benefit project (EBP) funds could be used to close some of the wells if they still provide useful data. Mr. Lynch believed that there is sufficient flexibility for the use of EBP funds to accommodate well closure if necessary.

Mr. Silver added that the OLP needs to look at a long term remedy and asked if there is an option to set EPA funds aside for future well closures. Mr. Ausubel reemphasized that EPA has a legal requirement to close all the wells by 2012 unless another entity has an interest in assuming the liability for them. Mr. Silver stated that it may be appropriate to take no action with the mudboils in lieu of looking for a plan to control them. There has been millions of dollars spent trying to control the mudboils, but the mudboils are a natural phenomenon. Mr. Lynch stated that EBP funds can most certainly be used to identify a long term remedy.

b. OLP EPA Budget: Mr. Ausubel stated there are two items that absolutely must be funded: 1) well closures, and 2) OEI administration and management. There is still a deficit in the amount of \$39,638.92 in the EPA budget. Mr. Ausubel stated that EPA wants to preserve funding for the outreach budget and the Agriculture Environment Management (AEM) program. However, the well closure bids may come in higher than estimated, but the wells must still be closed. The Honeywell EBP funding may be considered to fund mudboil work if necessary. More information will be known in the next few months.

c. Partnership Transition: LTC Bales reminded the partners that USACE's participation in the OLP is funded through March 2011. LTC Bales informed the partners that the reprogramming request for additional General Investigation (GI) funds is now with the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works (ASA(CW)) and, if supported, would then be forwarded to Office of Management Budget (OMB) and then to the respective Congressional committees for approval. The request may take up to two weeks to get to the committees. LTC Bales has asked his administrative staff (Mrs. Gorecki and Ms. Greer) to stretch out their remaining funds to be available for transition duties in April. The OLP grants funded with Construction General (CG) funds will continue through completion. If the reprogramming request is not approved, LTC Bales will check with USACE's Office of Counsel to see if LTC Bales can remain as OLP Chair. If not, another partner will be asked to assume the role as chair the Executive Committee.

Dr. Michalenko offered to assist in administrative duties in the interim. The partners thanked Dr. Michalenko for his offer.

6. NEW BUSINESS:

a. Onondaga Creek Community Forum: Mr. Adigun stated he will move forward with scheduling the community forum as requested.

7. OTHER BUSINESS: Ms. Dereth Glance of Citizens Campaign for the Environment has been nominated by President Obama to serve as the Commissioner of the International Joint Commission representing the Department of State. Ms. Glance is a member of the Outreach Committee. This is a great honor for Ms. Glance and for the OLP.

Mr. Vriesen has accepted another position within USACE in the Technical Services Division and will step down as OLP Program Manager effective 9 April 2011. The partners and Ms. Peachey congratulated Mr. Vriesen and thanked him for his years of dedicated service to the OLP.

8. Issues: None.

9. PUBLIC COMMENT: None

10. FUTURE MEETINGS: The next OLP Executive Committee meeting will be scheduled via Doodle in May 2011.

11. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 3:40 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
E10-4	13-Apr-10	Ongoing	Onondaga County	Outreach Committee is directed to reassess their 2010-11 outreach plan and budget as a close-out strategy to complete tasks to carry on outreach.	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
E10-7	04-Oct-10	31-Dec-10	Outreach Cmte NYSDEC	Project and Outreach Committees will provide a balanced budget for EPA-funded projects by the end of December 2010.	Ongoing