



A clean lake reflects well
on all of us.

(final)

ONONDAGA LAKE PARTNERSHIP (OLP)

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

March 27, 2009

(teleconference)

1. ATTENDEES

Committee Members Present:

LTC Daniel B. Snead, District Commander, USACE, Buffalo District
Mr. Kenneth Lynch, Regional Director, NYSDEC, Region 7
Mr. Seth Ausubel, Chief, New York Watershed Management Section, USEPA Region 2
Mr. Charles Silver, Environmental Scientist, NYS Office of the Attorney General
Mr. David Coburn, Director, Onondaga County Office of the Environment
(Alt. for Ms. Joanie Mahoney, Onondaga County Executive)
Mr. William Owens, Contract Compliance Officer, City of Syracuse
(Alt. for Mayor Matthew Driscoll, City of Syracuse)

Others In Attendance:

Ms. Traci Clever, DPM, USACE, Buffalo District (Alt. for LTC Daniel Snead)
Ms. Mary Jane Peachey, Project Committee Chair, NYSDEC
Ms. Susan Miller, Outreach Committee Chair, Onondaga County
Mr. Steven Vriesen, OLP Program Manager, USACE, Buffalo District
Ms. Julie Zielinski, OLP Recording Secretary, USACE, Buffalo District
Ms. Lindsey Speer, Office of Joseph J. Heath, Esq., Onondaga Nation General Counsel
Mr. Gary Sauda, Onondaga County Department of Health
Mr. Ron Heerkens, NYS Department of Health
Mr. Jon Cooley, Onondaga County Department of Parks
Mr. John Davis, Project Committee, NYS Office of the Attorney General
Mr. Chris Dere, Onondaga Lake Program Manager, USEPA, Region 2
Dr. Donald Hughes, OEI
Dr. Ed Michalenko, OEI

Committee Members Absent:

none

2. MEETING ARRANGEMENTS: The meeting was held on Friday, March 27, 2009 at 10:00 a.m. at the John H. Mulroy Civic Center.

3. AGENDA ITEMS: An Agenda was provided which included the following items:

a. Opening Remarks: LTC Snead welcomed everyone to the meeting.

b. Executive Session: An Executive Session was not deemed necessary for this meeting.

c. Approval of the February 2, 2008 Meeting Minutes: A Motion to approve the minutes of the September 24, 2008 meeting, as amended, was moved by Mr. Silver, seconded by Mr. Lynch, and was approved unanimously.

d. Review Open Action Items: Ms. Zielinski reviewed the Action Item list with the respective action officers for status updates. E07-10 was completed and will be removed from the action item list. E08-1 would be addressed by the standing committee chairs to be reported later in the agenda. This Action Item was later tabled until the April 29, 2009 meeting due to time constraints.

4. CORRESPONDENCE: Ms. Zielinski reported that USACE had not sent any outgoing correspondence since the last meeting. However, Mr. Vriesen announced that the OLP received an Earth Steward Award from the Syracuse Commission for Women on March 24, 2009 for their efforts in revitalizing Onondaga Lake and its watershed. Ms. Miller was also recognized in the category of "Women Taking the Lead to Save Our Planet" for her efforts in developing and implementing green infrastructure as well as initiatives in partnership with the OLP.

5. STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:

a. Outreach Committee: Ms. Miller reported on the Outreach Committee meeting held on February 18th and March 18, 2009. The following are highlights from the meeting:

- 2009 Outreach Committee Operating Budget: The Outreach Committee recommended a Motion to approve the operating budget for 2009. The budget combined line items of public education events to one line item. Ms. Miller also presented the operating budget for 2010-2012 extending the balance of existing USEPA funds. A Motion to recommend approval of the out year budget was also passed. A formal OLP resolution will be submitted for approval at the April Executive Committee meeting.
- OLP Newsletter: The next OLP newsletter will be produced by USACE. The Visual Information (VI) office staff is able to assist without cost to the project for one year. CNYRPDB's contract will not be renewed due to limited resources.
- OLP Website: The Outreach Committee is in the process of updating the OLP website.

b. Project Committee: Ms. Peachey reported on the Project Committee Meetings held on February 19th and March 19, 2009. The following are highlights from the meeting:

- Onondaga Lake Water Quality Model: Ms. Peachey contacted Dr. Atkinson to see if the peer review panel found the lake model to be adequate for the purposes of the OLP. A response was received from Dr. Atkinson addressed to OEI stating that:

“...[the peer review panel] believes that the requirements for Phase 2 have been met at a level sufficient for the process to move on to Phase 3.”

The Project Committee interpreted the response to mean “pencils up” for QEA to continue work on Phase 3 of the model. The Project Committee will continue to collaborate with all interested parties and anticipate a reply from Dr. Atkinson on whether the peer review panel would like to meet with Dr. Effler and others.

- Onondaga Creek Conceptual Revitalization Plan: The Project Committee reviewed the scope of work to determine if the work elements in the project proposal were satisfactorily completed. Of the five work elements, three were not yet complete: B.2 (regulatory jurisdictional guide), E.4 (reproducing and distributing the plan), and B.5 (release of the plan through the local media). The Project Committee was informed by OEI that there was insufficient funding for them to complete the work elements. The Project Committee was unaware of this issue and wanted to know if the draft plan could be completed with existing funds. The Project Committee requested that OEI provide details on how the funding for the original project was spent as OEI did not have that information readily available. The Project Committee was not prepared to consider the new proposal without information on the costs needed to complete the remaining work elements (B.2, E.4, and E.5) from the original proposal.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

a. Contact Recreation in Onondaga Lake: The discussion began with a short *mea culpa* by John Davis (OAG) related to the definition of “infrequently used full body contact recreation” in the November 2004 Federal Register, 40 CFR Part 131, Water Quality Standards for Coastal and Great Lakes Recreation Waters; Final Rule. The Part 131 E. coli criteria for infrequently used full body contact recreation is 575 colony forming units (cfu) per 100 milliliters water, which is higher than the 235 cfu value OAG has been using to evaluate and illustrate concerns about E. coli levels over the past several months.

Mr. Silver, joined by Mr. Davis, continued to propose drafting a protocol for contact recreation events held on Onondaga Lake after a heavy rainfall. Mr. Silver began the discussion by posing the following questions: although not expected, if a heavy rainfall occurs within 48 hours of a scheduled primary contact recreation event in Onondaga Lake, how will event participants, including children, be notified that they could be exposed to elevated levels of bacteria and potential gastrointestinal illness? What will be the specific words used in the notification and how will they be communicated to event participants? In addition, how do event participants know where they should and should not go on the lake? Are there markers present that inform event participants what areas of the lake are off limits? Mr. Silver presented three GIS maps that had been developed to track E. coli during a heavy rain event at Onondaga Lake in mid July 2006. The GIS maps were used to illustrate one pathway that E. coli can take when it migrates to the northern end of the lake (where primary contact recreation events are scheduled). Mr. Silver was particularly concerned that a protocol had not been developed in consideration of the upcoming jet ski event scheduled on Onondaga Lake in late May 2009.

Mr. Gary Sauda (Onondaga County DOH) and Mr. Ron Heerkens (NYSDOH) both attended the meeting. Mr. Sauda commented that it is difficult to identify the sources of elevated levels of bacteria at Onondaga Lake. He further commented that elevated bacterial levels at the end of the lake are infrequent and that additional research might or might not indicate a need for primary contact recreation participant notification.

Mr. Ausubel explained that EPA adopted the November 16, 2004 Water Quality Standards for Coastal and Great Lakes Recreation Waters. The standards were not adopted for inland waters such as Onondaga Lake. However, EPA believes that it is appropriate to use the criteria as guidelines for inland fresh waters.

Mr. Silver recommended that if a heavy rainfall occurs 24 - 48 hours prior to a scheduled primary contact recreation event at Onondaga Lake that event participants be notified before they enter the water of potential adverse health impacts caused by ingestion. Mr. Davis agreed that some type of written protocol is needed. LTC Snead recommended that this should be an action item. Mr. Coburn agreed to take this message back to county officials. If approved, he would draft a protocol to notify primary contact recreation event participants of potential bacteria risks in Onondaga Lake, after heavy rainfall events. While the OLP shares the Attorney General's concern, they agreed to wait until the next meeting to review the draft notification and primary contact recreation protocol that the County develops.

ACTION ITEM: Mr. Coburn will take the message back to county officials to draft a protocol/notification to sponsors of recreational events that high levels of bacteria may be present in Onondaga Lake after heavy rainfall.

7. NEW BUSINESS:

a. Microbial Trackdown Study: Drs. Michalenko and Hughes gave a PowerPoint™ presentation on the dry weather sampling results to date.

b. Onondaga Creek Cleanup: Mr. Davis recognizes that the Onondaga Creek clean up event spurs interest in the community and is a successful event removing debris from the creek. However, since the OLP sponsors the event, Mr. Davis recommended notifying participants of the potential hazards and health issues associated with entering the creek without the proper attire.

c. Mudboil White Paper Transmittal Letter: A draft cover letter was included in the read ahead package that will be sent to elected officials informing them of the challenges associated with long term management of the Tully Valley mudboils. Mr. Ausubel stated he will be forwarding comments on the letter and that the letter in general is acceptable to USEPA as long as it remains in the format of an “informational nature.” The Partners requested that they be copied on the final package.

d. OEI Grant Funds Status: Mr. Ausubel informed the partners that the grants with OEI will expire in 2012 and USEPA recommends re-allocating any remaining unexpended funds for priority projects. This may include setting aside funds to continue operation and preparation for the closure of the mudboils. A spreadsheet of current projects in which funds may be reallocated will be sent to the Project Committee for their review at the April committee meeting.

e. Outreach Committee Chair Term Expiration: In accordance with the OLP By-laws,

standing committee chairs are appointed for a two-year term. The Outreach Committee Chair term expires in March 2009. The Partners asked Ms. Miller if she wished to remain in the position of committee chair. Ms. Miller agreed to remain as the chair of the Outreach Committee. The following Motion was moved by Mr. Lynch, seconded by Mr. Owens and approved unanimously.

MOTION: The Executive Committee approves the extension of Ms. Miller as the Outreach Committee chair person for a second two-year term.

8. OTHER BUSINESS:

a. Committee Housekeeping: Tabled until the April committee meeting.

b. Issues – None.

9. PUBLIC COMMENT: Ms. Speer requested that the OLP continue to look at contact recreation events in Onondaga Lake. Ms. Speer thanked OEI for the presentation, and asked to be notified when the Executive Committee meetings are scheduled.

10. ADJOURNMENT: The next meeting is scheduled for April 29, 2009 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Water Environment Protection Office- Phosphorus Building.

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

Number	Date of Origin	Due Date	Action Officer	Tasking	Status
E08-1	18-Dec-08	29-Apr-09	Peachey/Miller	Review 2008 committee meeting records for committee member attendance.	In-Progress
E09-1	27-Mar-09	Spring 09	Coburn	Propose a protocol for notification of event participants regarding contact recreation and bacteria level concerns.	In-Progress