



A clean lake reflects well
on all of us.

(final)

ONONDAGA LAKE PARTNERSHIP (OLP)

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

June 30, 2009

1. ATTENDEES

Committee Members Present:

Lieutenant Colonel (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 (VTC)
Mr. Charles Silver, Environmental Scientist, NYS Office of the Attorney General (tc)
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. Mary Jane Peachey, Project Committee Chair, NYSDEC
Ms. Susan Miller, Outreach Committee Chair, Onondaga County
Mr. Chris Dere, Onondaga Lake Program Manager, USEPA, Region 2 (VTC)
Ms. Traci Clever, DPM, USACE, Buffalo District
Mr. Steven Vriesen, OLP Program Manager, USACE, Buffalo District
Ms. Lynn Greer, Outreach Program Specialist, USACE, Buffalo District
Ms. Julie Zielinski, OLP Recording Secretary, USACE, Buffalo District
Mr. Jerry Jamieson, Onondaga Nation
Ms. Lindsey Speer, Office of Joseph J. Heath, Esq.
Dr. Ed Michalenko, President, Onondaga Environmental Institute

Committee Members Absent:

(none)

2. MEETING ARRANGEMENTS: The meeting was held on Tuesday, June 30, 2009 at 10:00 a.m. at New York State Department of Conservation (NYSDEC) office in Syracuse, New York.

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

a. **Opening Remarks:** LTC Snead welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Mr. Lynch for hosting the meeting.

b. **Executive Session:** A Motion to enter into an Executive Session to discuss future potential Federal appropriations related to the OLP was moved by Mr. Silver, seconded by Mr. Lynch, and was approved unanimously. The Executive Session occurred from 10:10-10:15 a.m.

c. **Approval of the April 29, 2009 Meeting Minutes:** The draft April 29th meeting minutes were reviewed and amended. A revised version will be forwarded for approval via e-mail.

d. **Review Open Action Items:** Ms. Zielinski reviewed Action Item E09-2 that will be completed by Mr. Vriesen within one week.

4. CORRESPONDENCE: Ms. Zielinski reported that USACE had not received any incoming nor outgoing correspondence since the last meeting.

5. STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:

a. **Outreach Committee:** Ms. Miller reported on the Outreach Committee meetings held on May 20 and June 17, 2009. The following are highlights from that meeting:

- **OLP Newsletter:** The OLP newsletter was published on June 4, 2009 as an insert to the Neighbors section of the Post Standard. The newsletter reaches approximately 85k households and is a wise use of OLP funds.
- **OLP Mini-grants:** Three min-grants were awarded to Upstate Freshwater Institute (UFI), Syracuse Center of Excellence, and the Liverpool Elementary School District for a total of 13,013.00. Upstate Freshwater Institute (UFI) requested \$5k to educate students in the city schools about the diversity of aquatic macroinvertebrate community in Onondaga Lake. Liverpool School District requested \$5k to expand the "Living Lake Project" that includes 5th grade students and teachers in the Liverpool School District to promote environmental education in the classroom and a field trip to obtain water samples from Onondaga Lake. The Syracuse Center of Excellence requested \$3013.00 to construct a green roof and create permanent signage describing green infrastructure at 515 Tully Street.
- **Teachers Education Fund:** Two Teachers Education Fund applications were awarded. Both went to Salem Hyde Elementary School in Syracuse for field trips. The first, to Elmwood Park to explore stream ecology. The second, to South Onondaga, Save the County Preserve, and the Inner Harbor.
- **Free Fishing Weekend:** The free fishing weekend was held on June 27-28, 2009. The Izaak Walton League will report their results at the next Outreach Committee meeting. The OLP sponsors the Free Fishing Weekend event.

- World Water Monitoring Day: This year's event will be held on September 16, 2009 with three local schools: Danforth, Corcoran, and Experian Learning School.
- Joint Meeting: The joint Outreach and Project Committee meeting will be held on July 22, 2009 at the Ste. Marie Museum in Liverpool, NY.
- OLP 2009 Public Events: Leadership Greater Syracuse was scheduled to sponsor boat tours of Onondaga Lake on June 10, 2009. The Outreach Committee approved supporting the event with a \$500.00 donation. The tours are being re-scheduled but a date has not been announced yet.
- Izaak Walton League: Recent reports have documented the return of trout to Bear Trap Creek. This is particularly significant since there have not been trout in this creek in approximately 30 years. Due to the vast improvements in creek habitat through the efforts of the Izaak Walton League, and students from Roxboro Road Middle School and Liverpool High School, an increase in the macroinvertebrate populations and fish species is being documented.

Following Ms. Miller's report, LTC Snead asked Ms. Miller if she contacted those Outreach Committee members whose attendance has been poor in the past year. She informed LTC Snead that she contacted them but their attendance has not improved. LTC Snead will send out letters to see if those agencies are interested in continuing support to the OLP.

b. **Project Committee**: Ms. Peachey reported on the Project Committee Meetings held on May 21 and June 24, 2009. The following are highlights from that meeting:

- Microbial Trackdown Study: A new proposal for funding the next phase of the Microbial Trackdown Study with the remaining Onondaga County Environmental Benefit Funds (EBF) was submitted to the Project Committee. The Project Committee passed a motion recommending approval of the draft OLP Resolution 2009-3 that will be discussed later in the agenda.
- PAAS: The draft Phase III Action Strategies are under review and comments are due July 10, 2009.
- Onondaga Lake Water Quality Model: Dr. Effler from the Upstate Freshwater Institute (UFI) gave a presentation to representatives from NYSDEC, USEPA, Onondaga County, the Attorney General's office, and the Onondaga Nation regarding his work on Onondaga Lake. Dr. Effler is seeking a potential funding source to develop a one-dimensional lake model using data collected by UFI. Dr. Effler also reiterated his concerns that the lake model being developed by Onondaga County does not adequately address plunging inflow from Onondaga Creek and phosphorus bioavailability. Onondaga County and QEA are discussing the potential for a collaborative effort with UFI. If the two models can be developed in concert, professional (i.e., academic, scientific, regulatory, etc.) stakeholders may consider the model as being more robust.

Mr. Silver questioned why the lake model is being challenged at this late date. Mr. Coburn replied that QEA's qualifications and ability to complete the model are not being questioned. UFI is recognized as a subject matter expert on Onondaga Lake and has collected a great deal of data. Onondaga County is looking into combining efforts of the lake model with UFI. If a collaborative effort is feasible, it could possibly strengthen the current effort and the outcome within the scientific community. Mr. Silver expressed concerns over the impacts if UFI's

lake model does not support the County's model, and questioned the derailing of the lake model's progress since funding is not available for the UFI model at this time. Mr. Lynch recommended contacting UFI to discuss the matter further and then decide on whether or not to involve UFI in the process.

Dr. Atkinson, the lake model Peer Review Panel Facilitator, agrees that UFI has volumes of data and acknowledges the benefits that additional data would have on the lake model. Mr. Ausubel added that USEPA is exploring what the collaboration effort would entail. Mr. Coburn informed the partners that QEA was directed to put "pencils down" while discussions of a moving forward with a collaborative effort are ongoing. Mr. Coburn added that this delay may cause QEA to incur additional overhead costs and recommended that the OLP move forward as expeditiously as possible. Dr. Effler has also contacted the County to find out the status of the OLP's recommendation. LTC Snead recognized the need to make a unified decision soon.

- Onondaga Creek Conceptual Revitalization Project – Jurisdictional Guide: Dr. Michalenko has assured the OLP that the jurisdictional guide is in progress.
- 2009 Objectives: Reviewed the Project Committee's objectives
- Joint Project/Outreach Meeting: Discussed the Agenda items for the joint meeting.
- Onondaga Creek Clean-up event: Mr. Esposito will meet with CCE to discuss the possible creek clean-up event.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

a. **Onondaga Creek Cleanup Event:** Mr. Silver referred to the results of the Microbial Trackdown Study in discussing the 2009 Onondaga Creek Clean up event. The OLP has provided funding for that event in the past. In light of recent findings of elevated bacterial levels in the creek during dry weather periods and the potential hazards for participants, Mr. Silver expressed his concern over people entering the creek water without adequate protection. To date, Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) has not requested funding from the OLP, nor indicated that they would be sponsoring the event this year. Mr. Lynch stated that the event has a positive outcome and believes it can be conducted with the appropriate equipment and advisory. As data changes day to day, the OLP should agree on the appropriate way to approach the event sponsors. Mr. Coburn stated that the County Health Department voiced concern if the primary exposure pathway to the creek water is by ingestion. Mr. Owens added that there are other pathogens to consider in addition to bacteria in the creek. He recommended assessing all the hazards as the OLP are stewards of the public's trust. In his opinion he would advise the public to stay out of the creek. Ms. Clever recommended allowing the public to make their own personal choice but to inform them of the potential risks. LTC Snead agreed that it should be a personal choice but to follow the notification process developed for primary contact recreation by Onondaga County and agreed upon by the OLP Partners to minimize any risks. LTC Snead stated that there are many outlets to get the word out and recommends forming a unified position for all OLP agencies for this event and future events. Mr. Lynch was asked if NYSDEC had protective equipment to contribute to the event. NYSDEC does not but agreed to work with Cornell Cooperative Extension to notify the volunteers of the potential risks if the event is scheduled this year.

Mr. Ausubel reminded the partners that this is a positive event that provides a meaningful service. He recommended discussing the risks with CCE by informing them of the recent creek data and receiving assurances that a reasonable approach would be undertaken to minimize potential risks before withdrawing OLP support. As data results have shown, potential risks lie in both dry and wet weather conditions and both should be discussed with CCE. Ms. Miller agreed to contact Ms. Samuel at CCE to find out if the event is being scheduled this year and will get back to the OLP.

Jet-Ski Event Update: Mr. Coburn informed the partners that the event was held in June. Onondaga County representatives met with the sponsors and reviewed the County's protocol. Since there was rain the night prior to the event, samples were collected and indicated typical low levels of bacteria. The sponsor was grateful for the notification and awareness.

7. NEW BUSINESS:

a. **OLP Resolution 2009-2:** The Project Committee recommended approval of draft OLP Resolution 2009-2 at their last meeting. Mr. Vriesen explained to the Partners that the draft resolution increased the budget of the FFY2007 OLP Approved project list. In particular, the budget of project FY07-3 will be increased in the amount of \$3,020,000 for a total of \$7,100,000. Mr. Silver asked why the budget increased almost twice the amount of the original budget. Ms. Miller replied that the cost of \$4,080,000 was only an estimate made in 2007. Since then initiatives of green infrastructure are being considered and costs have increased due to these initiatives along with the commitment to the property owners to restore the area to the same condition within the same construction season. The following motion was moved by Mr. Lynch, seconded by Mr. Owens and was approved with 5 Ayes and 1 Abstention (Onondaga County).

MOTION: The Executive Committee approves OLP Resolution 2009-2 to increase the budget of the FFY2007 OLP Approved Project List, (Proposal No. FY07-3) by \$3,020,000 to a total project cost of \$7,100,000.

b. **OLP Resolution 2009-3:** Ms. Peachey explained that OLP resolution 2009-3 approves the proposal entitled "Proposal for Remaining Environmental Benefit Project" (EBP) and the expenditure of the remaining \$60k in EBP funds for said proposal. The following Motion was moved by Mr. Owens, seconded by Mr. Lynch and approved with 5 Ayes and 1 Abstention (Onondaga County).

MOTION: The Executive Committee approves OLP Resolution 2009-3 which approves the proposal entitled "Proposal for Remaining Environmental Benefit Project" EBP) and the expenditure of the remaining \$60k in EBP funds for said proposal.

8. OTHER BUSINESS:

a. **Tully Valley Mudboil Whitepaper:** Mr. Ausubel reported that an internal meeting was held with the Acting Regional Administrator and senior management at EPA. The outcome recommended reaching out to Honeywell to have a role in the future of the operation and maintenance of the mudboils after 2011. Mr. Lynch added that it never hurts to ask and will also follow up with Honeywell on this issue.

b. **USEPA FY10 budget:** Mr. Ausubel informed the partners that USEPA is the lead on the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) that has a budget of \$475 million. This is substantial

funding for the Great Lakes watershed. USEPA has also been asked to submit a strategy for 2011-14. Public meetings are scheduled to be held in July and August 2009. CNY stakeholders and the Onondaga Nation will be included in the coordination efforts.

c. **Issues:** None.

9. PUBLIC COMMENT: Ms. Speer urged caution in the use of protective equipment for recreational events in Onondaga Creek. Specifically, waders can fill up with water and weigh volunteers down and could cause them to fall into the creek water.

10. FUTURE MEETINGS: An Executive Meeting will be scheduled in August via Doodle if necessary.

11. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 11:46 a.m.

Number	Date of Origin	Due Date	Action Officer	Tasking	Status
E09-2	29-Apr-09	30-Jun-09	Vriesen	Draft OLP cover letter to announce public release of the OCCRP.	Complete