



(final)

ONONDAGA LAKE PARTNERSHIP (OLP)

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

August 17, 2009

1. ATTENDEES

Committee Members Present:

Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Daniel B. Snead, District Commander, USACE, Buffalo District
Mr. Seth Ausubel, Chief, New York Watershed Management Section, USEPA Region 2 (VTC)
Ms. Mary Jane Peachey, Regional Engineer, NYSDEC Region 7
(Alt. for Mr. Kenneth Lynch, Regional Director, NYSDEC, Region 7)
Mr. John Davis, Environmental Scientist, NYS Office of the Attorney General (tc)
(Alt. for 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. Stephanie Harrington, Citizen Participation Specialist, NYSDEC
(Alt. for Ms. Susan Miller, Outreach Committee Chair, Onondaga County)
Mr. Chris Dere, Onondaga Lake Program Manager, USEPA, Region 2 (VTC)
Mr. Steven Vriesen, OLP Program Manager, USACE, Buffalo District
Ms. Lynn Greer, Outreach Program Specialist, USACE, Buffalo District

Committee Members Absent:

(none)

2. MEETING ARRANGEMENTS: The meeting was held on Monday, August 17, 2009 at 2:00 p.m. at New York State Department of Conservation (NYSDEC) Region 7 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.
- b. **Executive Session:** An Executive Session was not deemed necessary for this meeting.
- c. **Approval of the June 30, 2009 Meeting Minutes:** A Motion to approve the minutes for the June 30, 2009 meeting, as amended, was moved by Mr. Coburn, seconded by Mr. Ausubel, and approved unanimously.
- d. **Review Open Action Items:** Mr. Vriesen reviewed the Action Item E09-2 and reported that the letter was finalized.

4. CORRESPONDENCE: Mr. Vriesen reported that USACE had not received any incoming correspondence since the last Executive Committee meeting. The Buffalo District sent letters to the Outreach Committee organizations identified as having attendance issues regarding their continued involvement in the OLP and, sent letters to Rep. Maffei and Senators Schumer and Gillibrand inviting them to attend the Annual Review Meeting.

5. STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:

a. **Outreach Committee:** Ms. Stephanie Harrington, on behalf of Ms. Susan Miller, reported on the joint Outreach/Project Committees meeting held on July 22, 2009 at the “Sainte Marie among the Iroquois” Museum. The following are highlights from that meeting:

- **Joint Meeting:** Outreach Committee members provided presentations on Beartrap Creek (Les Monostory), Public Outreach Efforts for Onondaga Lake Bottom Remediation (Stephanie Harrington), and Green Initiatives from Onondaga County (Sue Miller).
- **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:** The Syracuse Center of Excellence held a press event at 515 Tully Street to showcase green infrastructure (GI) initiatives. The Center of Excellence received a Mini-grant from OLP in the amount of \$3,013 for a small-scale green roof and signage at this GI demonstration project. The Post-Standard covered the story online and in the weekend paper.
- **World Water Monitoring Day:** This year’s event will be held on September 16, 2009 with three city high schools: Nottingham, Fowler and Corcoran, and two middle schools: Danforth and Expeditionary Learning School.
- **OLP Website:** The OLP website has been refaced and is currently undergoing review by the website subcommittee.

b. **Project Committee:** Ms. Peachey reported on the joint Outreach/Project Committees Meeting held on July 22, 2009. The following are highlights from that meeting:

- **Microbial Trackdown Study:** There has been follow up action regarding the bacteria trackdown study. A meeting is scheduled to scope the remaining \$60k of the Environmental Benefit Funds (EBF) with Onondaga County and OEI.
- **Onondaga Lake Watershed Progress Assessment and Action Strategies (PAAS):** Comments for the Phase III Action Strategies section of the PAAS have been received by CNY RPDB.

- Onondaga Lake Water Quality Model: USEPA and NYSDEC are drafting a response to Dr. Effler regarding the role Upstate Freshwater Institute (UFI) will serve towards lake model collaboration.
- Project of the Month: A presentation on the HSPF Surface Water Watershed Model from USGS has been rescheduled for September; USGS will be completing high flow measurements in Gowanda, NY in support of recent flood events and therefore are unavailable to participate at the August meeting.

LTC Snead inquired if the letter to Dr. Effler will be vetted through Project and Executive Committees. Ms. Peachey commented that the response letter will come from the respective agencies (NYSDEC and USEPA) who were approached by Dr. Effler. The letter is expected to be released in one to two weeks. LTC Snead requested to be copied to the letter if there is reference to the Partnership and inquired if the Partnership should endorse what is being said by NYSDEC and USEPA in the letter. Mr. Ausubel was agreeable to the Partnership endorsing the letter if necessary. USEPA and NYSDEC will keep the Partners informed.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

a. **Onondaga Creek Contact Activities:** Ms. Greer received a call from Mr. Pete Plumley from the Museum of Science and Technology and Research Associate Professor at LC Smith College of Engineering and Computer Science at Syracuse University, who inquired on the status of OLP hosting the annual Onondaga Creek cleanup event. Ms. Greer advised that OLP has previously served as a sponsor of the event which is hosted by Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) of Onondaga County. Ms. Greer provided Mr. Plumley with a contact at CCE. Mr. Plumley proceeded to share his opinion that the best way to see the creek is from a canoe or kayak ride down the creek. Mr. Plumley recently hosted such an event and observed that the amount of debris (shopping carts, baby strollers, etc.) was dangerous to the boaters in the creek who were performing barrel rolls and other kayaking maneuvers. The OLP agreed that Creek Cleanup is a successful event in removing debris from the creek but that the Partnership encourages this activity to be completed during dry weather due to the hazards associated with swift currents and Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) along the creek during wet weather. Mr. Plumley commented that the group who just completed the kayak trip saw first hand the impacts from CSOs because prior to the event, the Syracuse area experienced several days of rain which led to active CSOs during the scheduled canoe trip. Mr. Plumley believed this was a great opportunity for the students to see the impacts of the CSOs on the creek. Mr. Plumley also advised there is a group considering a business of canoe and kayak tours along Onondaga Creek.

LTC Snead opened the floor for discussion and inquired about the Partnership's role in endorsing, or not endorsing, the annual creek cleanup event. Mr. Davis was startled to hear that canoers/kayakers were in the creek while the CSOs were active. Mr. Ausubel advised the Partnership has a general communication role and recommended that the Partnership may want to make additional efforts to stress the creek is not suitable for primary contact recreation. Mr. Owens agreed the Partnership has a role and believes that the City and County have jurisdictional authority over access to the creek. Mr. Owens added that it would be irresponsible to take a passive approach and recommended the Partnership develop a plan to discourage use of the creek and develop a statement/position regarding contact recreation in the creek. Mr. Coburn recognized that there are too many points along the creek to preclude public access, and recommended public education to advise the community about CSO abatement and overflows,

such as posting signs along the creek at appropriate locations and intervals to provide a succinct message. Mr. Owens recommended, in addition to signage, to engage the jurisdictional authorities to restrict access and communicate with developers who are planning the creek walk and other projects that encourage contact recreation activities. Mr. Davis recommended including the respective Departments of Health. Mr. Ausubel confirmed that, based on existing information, the OLP should not encourage primary contact recreation activities in the creek.

The following Action Items were identified with responsible persons in parentheses:

1. Confirm if warning signs are posted at CSO outlets and what message appears on the signs (Mr. Coburn).
2. Schedule a meeting with stakeholders and jurisdictional authorities to discuss access and contact recreation in the creek (Ms. Peachey).
3. Draft/develop OLP position regarding primary contact recreation in the creek (Mr. Ausubel).
4. Determine the number of creek users (Mr. Owens).

7. NEW BUSINESS:

a. **OLP Resolution 2009-4:** The Project Committee recommended approval of draft OLP Resolution 2009-4 for continued funding of the Tully Valley Mudboil Area, Remediation Monitoring and Control. The following motion was moved by Ms. Peachey, seconded by Mr. Ausubel and was approved with 5 Ayes and 1 Abstention (City of Syracuse).

MOTION: The Executive Committee approves OLP Resolution 2009-4 to increase the budget of the Tully Valley Mudboil Area, Remediation Monitoring and Control project by \$165,000 to fund the FFY2010 portion of the project.

b. **Evaluate FFY 2009 Executive Committee Objectives:** Mr. Vriesen summarized the 2009 Executive Committee Objectives as follows:

- Objective 1. Achieved late (February 2009).
- Objective 2. Was on track to be achieved. However, project is on hold due to inquiries from Upstate Freshwater Institute.
- Objective 3. Achieved.
- Objective 4. Achieved at Federal level via February Congressional visits to Congressman Maffei, Senator Schumer and Senator Gillibrand.
- Objective 5. Expect to achieve by 30 September.
- Objective 6. Achieved.
- Objective 7. Achieved.
- Objective 8. Partially achieved through development and distribution of the Mudboil Whitepaper but have not identified a funding source.
- Objective 9. Achieved.
- Objective 10. Will not be achieved based on recommendation from Outreach Committee to eliminate APM.
- Objective 11. Will not be achieved based on recommendation from Outreach Committee to eliminate Lake Day.

Objective 12. Achieved late (April 2009).

Objective 13. On track.

c. **Draft FFY 2010 Executive Committee Objectives:** Mr. Vriesen provided for review, the draft FFY 2010 Executive Committee Objectives. Comments and edits should be provided to Mr. Vriesen in advance of the September 30, 2009 meeting.

8. OTHER BUSINESS:

a. **Issues:** LTC Snead suggested that, in lieu of an Annual Progress Meeting, the Partnership conduct a press interview or editorial board to discuss what the Partnership has accomplished thus far and the path forward. The event could potentially be scheduled on September 30th, in conjunction with the Annual Review Meeting. Mr. Coburn recommended planning the outreach event once the PAAS is complete in November 2009. Mr. Owens inquired how the Partnership can structure an event to distribute/share information that will capture the audience and reinforce the good work of the OLP at the same time. LTC Snead concurred with Mr. Owens and recommended multiple events (i.e., Editorial Board in the fall, event in early 2010). Mr. Coburn stressed the Partnership has a limited outreach budget which will limit the public education campaign. The Executive Committee will work with Outreach Committee to identify potential events.

9. PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

10. FUTURE MEETINGS: The next meeting will be the Annual Review Meeting on September 30, 2009. The Executive Committee requested that Project and Outreach Committees evaluate their 2009 objectives and develop 2010 objectives in advance of the meeting.

11. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 3:35 p.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
E09-3	17-Aug-09	30-Oct-09	Coburn	Confirm if warning signs are posted at CSO outlets and what message appears on the signs.	In-progress
E09-4	17-Aug-09	30-Oct-09	Coburn	Identify proposed message for new signs, if needed.	In-progress
E09-5	17-Aug-09	30-Oct-09	Peachey	Schedule a meeting with stakeholders and jurisdictional authorities to discuss access and contact recreation in the creek.	Complete
E09-6	17-Aug-09	30-Oct09	Owens	Determine the number of creek users.	In-progress
E09-7	17-Aug-09	30-Oct-09	Ausubel	Draft/develop OLP position regarding primary contact recreation in the creek.	In-progress