



A clean lake reflects well  
on all of us.

(final)

## ONONDAGA LAKE PARTNERSHIP (OLP)

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

January 16, 2007

#### 1. ATTENDEES

##### **Committee Members Present:**

LTC John S. Hurley, District Commander, USACE, Buffalo District (VTC)  
Mr. David Coburn, alt. for Mr. Nicholas Pirro, County Executive, Onondaga County  
Mr. Kenneth Lynch, Regional Director, NYSDEC, Region 7  
Mr. William Owens, Contract Compliance Officer, City of Syracuse, alt. for Mayor Matthew Driscoll  
Mr. Seth Ausubel, Chief, Freshwater Protection Branch and Outreach Committee Chair, USEPA Region 2, alt. for Mr. Mario DelVicario, Chief, Community and Ecosystem Branch USEPA-Region 2 (VTC)  
Mr. Charles Silver, Environmental Scientist, Attorney General, NYS (teleconference)

##### **Others In Attendance:**

Mr. Christopher Dere, Onondaga Lake Program Manager, USEPA Region 2 (VTC)  
Mr. Ronald Kozlowski, Deputy P3M, USACE, Buffalo District (VTC)  
Mr. Steven Vriesen, OLP Program Manager, USACE, Buffalo District (VTC)  
Ms. Julie Zielinski, Recording Secretary, USACE, Buffalo District (VTC)

##### **Committee Members Absent:**

None

**2. MEETING ARRANGEMENTS:** The meeting was held on Tuesday, January 16, 2007 at 10:00 a.m. by VTC.

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

**Opening Remarks:** LTC Hurley welcomed everyone to the meeting.

- a. Executive Session:** An Executive Session was not deemed necessary for this meeting.
- b. Approval of the December 19, 2006 minutes:** The December 19, 2006 minutes were tabled until all revisions were received. An e-mail vote will be taken upon completion of all revisions.
- c. Action Items:** Ms. Zielinski reviewed the open Action Items and will revise the list as appropriate.
- d. Correspondence:** Ms. Zielinski reported that USACE received one item of incoming correspondence from Mr. Frank McKay, Director of HUD informing the OLP that he will not replace Mr. James Murphy on the Project Committee. No outgoing correspondence to report.
- e. Standing Committee Reports:**
- (1) Outreach Committee:** Mr. Ausubel reported that the Outreach Committee had not met since the last Executive Committee meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for January 17, 2007. Two key items of importance were discussed:
- A Motion to allow the Outreach Committee to expend funds in the Outreach Support Services line item identified for 2007 in the previously approved 2006-2009 Outreach Committee budget.
  - Executive Committee Action Item No. E06-29: The Outreach Committee recommended referring speaking Bureau requests to OLP members, however, in requests for specific topics non-OLP members may be recommended on a case by case basis. The speakers would speak on behalf of their agencies and not on behalf of the OLP. The Executive Committee agreed with the Outreach Committee's recommendation.
- (2) Project Committee:** Mr. Vriesen reported that the Project Committee also had not met since the last Executive Committee meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for January 18, 2007.
- f. Unfinished Business:**
- (1) EcoLogic Draft Vision Project:** The Executive Committee was asked prior to the meeting to review the draft report for discussion and/or comment at this meeting. Overall, it was viewed as a good report but sections of the report could be misinterpreted by the public and create unrealistic expectations. Specific comments related to the draft report and proposed public outreach include the following:
- Will the final roll-out of the vision be presented as the Community's vision or the OLP's vision? (Answer: The purpose of this project was to determine the Community's vision for the lake.)
  - EcoLogic's position regarding the sustainability of a cold water fishery were not appropriate for inclusion in the report and may have precluded part the public's vision for the lake.

- Although the intent of EcoLogic’s conclusion was to avoid creating unrealistic expectations, this was not an appropriate time to be managing expectations.
- Clearly define message of OLP and the community
- Sections of report shape the public’s expectations of what the lake could be.
- It is premature to rush out with a “splash” PR event presenting the vision and creating expectations prior to having plans in place; need to decide how the community’s vision fits in with the lake’s master plan and the watershed vision.
- Exercise caution in proceeding with lake cleanup efforts without a vision in place; should release the vision before cleanup is complete to demonstrate that we are working towards the vision.
- See vision as a snapshot in time. Recommend moving forward and turning the final report over to the communities.
- Recommend completing the Visioning project and conducting further outreach consistent with the OLP planning process.
- Outreach Committee to review comments at their January meeting

Further discussion was tabled until all partners reviewed the report and its appendices. This topic will be an Agenda item at the February 23, 2007 OLP Executive Committee meeting. The request for a time extension and additional costs will also be discussed at the February meeting to allow EcoLogic to move forward.

**ACTION ITEM:** USACE to prepare a checklist outlining the tasks listed in the EcoLogic work plan and the status of each by February 15, 2007.

**ACTION ITEM:** OEI to provide copies of EcoLogic contract sections that lists what tasks are funded under the original budget by February 15, 2007.

- (2) **Executive Committee 2007 Strategic Goals:** A Motion to approve the 2007 Strategic Goals was made by Mr. Coburn and seconded by Mr. Owens. The goals were approved unanimously.

**MOTION:** To approve the 2007 OLP Executive Committee Strategic Goals.

(3) **Standing Committee Chair Assignments and Vacancies:**

**Project Committee Vacancy:** LTC Hurley informed the partners that HUD does not intend to replace Mr. Murphy which leaves a vacancy on the OLP Project Committee. LTC Hurley inquired if the partners wished to pursue inviting NYS Canal Corporation to fill the vacancy. The partners discussed inviting another community based organization. It was explained that HUD was originally invited to the Resource Committee based on their potential to provide resources to the Partnership. It was later determined that it was not possible. NYS Canal Corporation was previously a member of the Resource Committee and there may be a potential for them to provide in-kind services. The Executive Committee agreed with the recommendation from the Project Committee to

invite NYS Canal Corporation to fill the Project Committee vacancy. The following Motion was moved by Mr. Coburn, seconded by Mr. Lynch and approved unanimously.

**MOTION:** The Executive Committee endorses the recommendation made by the Project Committee to invite the NYS Canal Corporation to fill the vacancy on the Project Committee.

**ACTION ITEM:** USACE to send a letter to Canal Corporation inviting them to serve on the OLP Project Committee by February 23, 2007.

**Project Committee Chair Vacancy:** Mr. Lynch informed the partners that Mr. Jim Burke from NYSDEC has filled the vacancy in the Water Division left by Mr. Steve Eidt. Mr. Burke has experience in the Water Division and with Onondaga Lake issues. Mr. Lynch has not made a decision yet whether or not he will request to fill the vacant Chair position with Mr. Burke. Mr. Burke will, however, attend the next Project Committee meeting. Mr. Lynch will update the partners once a decision has been made. LTC Hurley proposed that Mr. Vriesen serve as the interim Chair until a decision has been reached.

**Outreach Committee Chair:** As discussed at the last meeting and according to the OLP By-laws, the chairs of the standing committees are appointed for a two-year term. The Outreach Chair is up for re-appointment and Mr. Ausubel has requested that a local member of the OLP chair the Outreach Committee. The partners agreed to wait until the Project Committee Chair is named until a decision is made on a successor for the Outreach Committee. The partners were asked to bring recommendations to the table next month at their February committee meeting. Mr. Ausubel agreed to serve as Chair until then.

**ACTION ITEM:** The partners will assess their existing staff and provide a recommendation for the Outreach Committee Chair position by February 23, 2007.

**g. New Business:**

**(1) Watershed Management Study Update:** Mr. Vriesen informed the partners that the Watershed Management Study is on hold due to funding. Mr. Vriesen briefed the Executive Committee on the September 20, 2006 meeting where the Partners met to reach a consensus on the approach to the Watershed Management Plan. Based on the recommendations made by the IMAP panel, the focus was placed on quantitative watershed assessment for water quality parameters only through ongoing modeling efforts. As a result of that meeting there was little to no support for the development of a new assessment tool (MAWI) for a quantitative assessment of all watershed components. Review of the Watershed Restoration and Protection Action Strategy (WRAPS) for the Susquehanna and Chemung River Basins for applicability in the Onondaga Lake watershed was suggested as an alternative approach. Mr. Ausubel asked if the OLP should consider moving forward with hiring a technical coordinator since this role has already been funded. Mr. Coburn suggested that the OLP first agree on the process before moving ahead.

**h. Other Business:**

**(1) Syracuse Office of Creek Development Update:** Nothing to report.

**(2) Issues:**

**ACJ STIP:** Mr. Lynch provided an update on the ACJ STIP. Onondaga County, New York State and ASLF came to agreement on the modifications to the ACJ (STIP) that were approved by the court in mid-December. Under these modifications, Onondaga County agreed to fund an Environmental Benefits Project for \$145k within the Harbor Brook area. ASLF has submitted a proposal for Project Committee consideration. If this proposal is not approved the funds will be available for another project in the Onondaga Lake Watershed.

**Honeywell Consent Decree:** The court approved the Honeywell Consent Decree in early January. NYSDEC is in the process of implementing the Consent Decree with Honeywell.

**Environmental Benefits Project Closure of Mudboils:** Additionally, \$70k or \$7k for a ten-year period may be available from a mining permit condition that was intended for closure of the Tully Valley mudboils but was never implemented. This Environmental Benefits project may be used within the Onondaga Lake Watershed. Mr. Lynch said that NYSDEC will review the permit and advise the OLP of its status.

The partners discussed using these funds for general projects but were advised by Mr. Coburn to focus on the mudboil area and determine the scope of closing the mudboils and the cost associated with that activity.

**ACTION ITEM:** The Executive Committee tasks the Project Committee to provide a recommendation by March 15, 2007 for a long-term solution to achieve closure of the mudboils.

The partners also discussed the appropriate mechanism for receiving these funds, which has been a challenge in the past, as well as where the funds would be held. Mr. Owens suggested that the City of Syracuse's Community Development Office could hold the funds until a project is identified. Mr. Owens will confirm that option at the next meeting.

**CSO Warning System:** Mr. Owens requested an update on the health issue of human contact with Onondaga Creek water during storm events. Mr. Coburn and Mr. Lynch agreed that further information is needed to determine the appropriate mechanism to warn of CSO events, or general health risks in Onondaga Creek, based on potential exposure. Bacteria levels are found in the creek due to sources other than CSOs. The OLP expressed caution in creating a false sense of security for the public that it is safe to have contact with the creek when the warning system is not on.

**ACTION ITEM:** Mr. Lynch will contact the State Department of Health for further information on the risk of human contact in Onondaga Creek by February 23, 2007.

**Signage:** Mr. Coburn informed the partners that the Outreach Committee is proposing to install signage on the highways entering the Onondaga Lake watershed. The County Highway Department estimated that the cost would be approximately \$100.00 per sign and an additional \$100.00 for the labor to install each sign. There are presently 80 crossings of County roads into the watershed. Further updates to come.

**i. Public Comment:** None in attendance.

**4. ADJOURN:** The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, February 23, 2007 via VTC.  
Adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

Number	Date of Origin	Due Date	Action Officer	Tasking	Status
E06-36	19-Dec-06	23-Feb-07	All	Review the EcoLogic, LLC draft Visioning report.	In-Progress
E07-1	16-Jan-07	15-Feb-07	USACE	Prepare checklist outlining the tasks listed in the EcoLogic work plan (scope) and status of each.	In-Progress
E07-2	16-Jan-07	15-Feb-07	OEI	Provide copies of the EcoLogic contract sections that lists what tasks are funded under the original budget.	In-Progress
E07-3	16-Jan-07	23-Feb-07	USACE	Send letter of invitation to NYS Canal Corp to fill vacancy of OLP Project Committee.	In-Progress
E07-4	16-Jan-07	23-Feb-07	All	Provide a recommendation for the Outreach Committee Chair position.	In-Progress
E07-5	16-Jan-07	15-Mar-07	Project Cmte	Discuss and provide a recommendation for continuing maintenance of the tully valley mudboils and the long term needs.	In-Progress
E07-6	16-Jan-07	23-Feb-07	Lynch	Contact the State Department of Health for further information on the health risks associated with human contact with Onondaga Creek.	In-Progress