



A clean lake reflects well  
on all of us.

**(final)**

## **ONONDAGA LAKE PARTNERSHIP (OLP)**

### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

**March 5, 2008**

#### **1. ATTENDEES**

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

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

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

Mr. Jack Rintoul, DPM, USACE, Buffalo District  
Ms. Maria Clark, USEPA (VTC)  
Mr. Christopher Dere, Onondaga Lake Program Manager, USEPA Region 2 (VTC)  
Ms. Mary Jane Peachey, Project Committee Chair, NYSDEC  
Ms. Sue Miller, Outreach Committee Chair, OCDWEP  
Ms. Julie Zielinski, OLP Recording Secretary, USACE, Buffalo District (VTC)  
Ms. Lindsey Speer, Office of Joe Heath

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

none

**2. MEETING ARRANGEMENTS:** The meeting was held on Wednesday, March 5, 2008 at 10:00 a.m.

3. **AGENDA ITEMS:** An Agenda was provided which included the following items:
  - a. **Opening Remarks:** LTC Hurley welcomed everyone to the meeting.
  - b. **Executive Session:** An Executive Session was not deemed necessary for this meeting.
  - c. **Approval of the January 30, 2008 minutes:** The minutes of the January 30, 2008 meeting were unanimously approved as amended.

Ms. Zielinski reviewed the Action Item list with the respective agencies for status updates.

4. **CORRESPONDENCE:** Ms. Zielinski reported that USACE had not received any items of correspondence since the last committee meeting.

5. **New Business:**

- a. **Hydrogeologic Strategic Assessment:** Mr. Kappel from USGS prepared an Executive Summary providing recommendations to address the long term maintenance of the mudboils in the Tully Valley. To simplify the technical text, Mr. Kappel also prepared a matrix comprised of four alternatives that address alternative implementation strategies for the mudboils. The grant which funds the operation and maintenance of the mudboils expires in 2012. With that in mind the OLP is urged to address the alternatives set forth in the attached matrix.

While the OLP recognizes that ceasing all activities is not a preferred option, the challenge of funding the program in perpetuity is daunting. Mr. Ausubel requested that the Executive Committee reach consensus in supporting the Hydrogeologic Strategic Plan for the Tully Valley so that USEPA can initiate the NEPA process now. The Executive Partners held a lengthy discussion on this topic. Everyone was in agreement that due to limited available funds and possibly no new funding for the OLP, the O&M of the mudboils will require sources of funds other than Federal. Since the mudboils exist as part of a natural phenomenon related to hydrogeologic pressure, there is no one organization or entity to approach for funding. The mudboils do not fall under a Superfund designation which would enable the regulatory agencies to pursue a PRP to address the issue. Industrial activity (i.e., brine mining) may have contributed to the discharges but other natural conditions also factor into the mudboil activity. Federal agencies cannot lobby for funding but local governmental agencies and stakeholders were encouraged to contact their local officials to make them aware of the upcoming shortfall. Mr. Owens was reluctant to give the City's endorsement on the strategic plan where agreeing to the alternatives may be a predecessor for limiting future actions. Finally, the Partners did agree to accept the Hydrogeologic Strategic Plan and approve the initiation of the NEPA process by USEPA. The partners also agreed that there may be additional alternatives other than the four outlined in the matrix and does not lock the OLP into future decision making actions. The following Motion was moved by Mr. Coburn, seconded by Mr. Lynch and approved unanimously.

**MOTION:** The Executive Committee accepts the Hydrogeologic Strategic Plan for the Tully Valley and approves the initiation of the NEPA process by USEPA.

b. OLP Resolution 2008-1: The peer review panel for the Onondaga Lake Mechanistic Water Quality Model have completed their report. Onondaga County is in the process of preparing responses to the recommendations made by the panel. Mr. Coburn informed the Project Committee members at their last meeting that implementation of any or all of the recommendations will require additional funding. The Project Committee passed a Motion to allocate up to \$150k for this purpose. Resolution 2008-1 formally approves the allocation of the funds should they be needed. The Partners approved OLP Resolution 2008-1 with 5 Ayes and 1 Abstention (Onondaga County).

6. Unfinished Business: LTC Hurley asked the advocates of the 2008 Executive Committee goals to update the committee on the status of their respective goals.

Goal No. 1: The first goal was to approve the standing committee and the Executive Committee 2008 goals by January 31, 2008. The Outreach Committee goals have not been submitted for approval by the Executive Committee to date. Project and Executive Committee goals were approved by the January 31, 2008 date.

Goal No. 2: Approve the OLP Impacted Project List by January 31, 2008: USACE used the list as a script to communicate the OLP needs for the future during their February Congressional visits. LTC Hurley reported that the Congressional and Senatorial staff found the information helpful. LTC Hurley urged the partners to communicate the same messages to their local officials to inform them of the funding requirements needed to sustain the existing OLP priority projects.

Congressman Walsh has announced that he will retire at the end of his term in January 2009. Congressman Walsh has crusaded for millions of dollars to clean up Onondaga Lake and has delivered his promises to provide funding for the wastewater and industrial remedial actions needed to revitalize the lake.

Goal No. 3: Communicate the funding needs and impacts at the Federal, local, and state levels by February 29, 2008: USACE completed this goal as stated above. Mr. Coburn stated that the county also meets with the Congressional staff on an annual basis in addition to communicating legislative priorities on a state and Federal level. Mr. Lynch reported that the state agencies have regular interaction at state and local levels in addition to meeting with Albany officials on Environmental issues. Mr. Owens stated the city recommends contacting Congressional officials after replacements have been elected.

## 7. STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:

a. Outreach Committee: Ms. Miller reported on the Outreach Committee meeting held on February 20, 2008. The following are highlights from the meeting:

- Approved the 2008 Outreach Committee Goals.
- Reviewed the Outreach Committee budget through 2010.
- The OLP Mini-grant subcommittee recommended approval of 3 out of the 10 applications received from the December announcement.

- The 2008 Family Fishing Event will be held on June 28-29, 2008. The Outreach Committee approved the request from the Izaak Walton League for \$2500.00 for the event.

**MOTION:** The Executive Committee approved the recommendation made by the Outreach Committee to fund three mini grant applications for a total of \$9,994.00 as described in the attached summary. The Motion was moved by Mr. Coburn, seconded by Mr. Owens and approved unanimously.

b. Project Committee: Ms. Peachey reported on the Project Committee Meeting held on February 25, 2008. The following are highlights from the meeting:

- Awaiting a response from ESF to fill the vacancy left by Ms. Brooks (NYSDEC Albany, Bureau of Habitat) on the Project Committee
- Continued to discuss funding and placement of the buoys in Onondaga Lake, moving closer to a response
- Phase 1, the Onondaga Lake Background, of the Onondaga Lake Watershed Progress Assessment and Action Strategies (OLWPAAS) was presented to committee
- Report given by Resource Subcommittee on the ability of the OLP to accept private donations
- Project of the Month Presentation: Bacteria in Onondaga Creek
- Discussion on Phase 2 Peer Review Report for the Onondaga Lake Mechanistic Water Quality Model
- Received monthly OEI update.

8. OTHER BUSINESS:

Issues: Mr. Lynch provided an update on the Clinton Street RTF project. NYSDEC will make a decision shortly on exploring alternatives or proceeding with the project.

9. PUBLIC COMMENT: Ms. Speer stated that the Office of Joe Heath is supportive of any Onondaga Creek improvements.

11. ADJOURN: The next meeting is scheduled for TBD.

Adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

Number	Date of Origin	Due Date	Action Officer	Tasking	Status
E07-6	16-Jan-07		Lynch	Contact the State Department of Health for further information on the health risks associated with human contact with Onondaga Creek.	In-Progress
E07-10	27-Apr-07	Aug-08	Resource Subcmte	Provide a recommendation for a long term solution for funding the continuing operation and maintenance of the tully valley mudboils.	In-Progress
E08-1	30-Jan-08	Apr-08	Resource Subcmte	Convene to discuss the legality of the OLP to accept donations from private entities and if so the procedure to follow.	In-Progress
E08-2	30-Jan-08	Apr-08	DEC/EPA	Check with respective Agencies for requirements or process to designate Onondaga Lake, the outlet and portions of the 3 River system as a no-discharge zone.	In-Progress

## Alternative Strategy Matrix Mudboil-Related Projects – Tully Valley, New York

Alternative Strategies	Implementation Benefits	Ramifications	Annual Cost	Total Cost*
<b>1. No action</b> – immediate cessation of all mudboil-related projects. Final closure procedure (FCP) is implemented (as per agreement with Honeywell) – removal of mudboil dam, closure of mudboil ‘depressurizing’ wells. Closure of all monitoring wells also occurs.	None	Mudboil discharge quickly increases back to pre-remediation values of approximately 15-30 tons/day	None	<i>FCP funds (in escrow)</i> \$150,000
<b>2. Minimal Operations and Maintenance (O&amp;M)</b> projects. With escrow funds, continue to maintain mudboil dam, wells, and the O&M of these facilities until this fund is used up. Once these funds are expended, (FCP) will be implemented.	Mudboil turbidity discharges kept to a minimum but only while O&M funds lasts	While O&M funds available, mudboil discharge maintained at 1 ton or less/ day. Once O&M funds are depleted, the FCP project is implemented and the mudboil discharge value increases back to 15-30 tons/day.	~\$100,000 escrow funds until expended	<i>FCP and O&amp;M funds (in escrow)</i> \$250,000
<b>3. Status Quo – Monitoring, O&amp;M, and Educational efforts – through 2012</b> (if funding available). Mudboil projects can be maintained and monitored in hopes of determining near-term projection of mudboil activity, additional O&M funds available for continued remediation and costs to keep mudboil discharges low. After FFY 2012, (FCP) will be implemented.	Mudboil turbidity discharges kept to a minimum and O&M funding is available to keep remediation projects functioning.	Mudboil discharge maintained at 1 ton/day or less and results of monitoring may be used to determine costs for maintaining mudboil discharge at this rate in the near term. Once all funds are expended (4 years) the FCP project takes place and mudboil discharge returns to 15-30 tons/day. <b>Encumbers all remaining OLP funds for mudboil remediation as opposed to other priority environmental restoration projects.</b>	\$165,000 per year (+3%/yr)	<b><u>Monitoring \$700,000 Additional O&amp;M \$100,000</u></b>  <i>FCP/O&amp;M funds (in escrow)</i> \$250,000
<b>4. Near-term Mudboil Stewardship – through 2012</b> (if funding available). Monitoring, O&M, Education, and additional funding for studies to further reduce mudboil discharges. New mudboil projects may further reduce mudboil discharge. Monitoring results of projects provide long-term projection of mudboil activity and funding requirements for long-term. After FFY 2012, (FCP) will be implemented unless long-term stewardship (below) is then chosen to continue activities into the future.	Mudboil turbidity discharges kept to a minimum and O&M funding is available to keep remediation projects functioning. New projects may further reduce mudboil discharge and funds needed to remediate them.	Mudboil discharge maintained at 1 ton/day or less. Any additional work implemented in the valley (i.e., brinefield study) is assessed to determine long-term utility and cost to reduce future mudboil discharge. Once closure takes place mudboil discharge could return to 15-30 tons/day, but other projects should reduce recharge to mudboil aquifer, leading to less mudboil discharge (~ 5 tons/day, and possibly less). <b>Encumbers all remaining OLP funds for mudboil remediation as opposed to other priority environmental restoration projects.</b>	\$165,000 per year (+3%/yr) for monitoring \$150,000 per year (+3%/yr) for brinefield recharge reductions to mudboil aquifer	<b><u>Monitoring \$700,000 Additional O&amp;M \$100,000 Additional studies \$620,000</u></b>  <i>FCP/O&amp;M funds (in escrow)</i> \$250,000
<b>Long-term Mudboil Stewardship (Can be linked to any of the above alternatives including post 2012 non-federal funding)</b> – Reduced Monitoring, continued O&M, and Education activities could continue under	Mudboil turbidity discharges kept to a low value as O&M projects	Mudboil discharge maintained at a low tonnage/day basis.	Actual costs to be assessed based on the success of any	<b>Estimated cost – Non-federal funding source for</b>

this strategy. Following FFY 2012, if long-term non-federal funding is established for monitoring of mudboil activity by a Steward Organization, this group could determine when O&M activities should be implemented to keep mudboil discharges to a minimum. Educational activities could also continue	are implemented on an as-needed basis.		implemented Alternative Strategy from above (1 through 4).	stewardship -- ?/yr and ~\$20,000/yr for O&M costs (kept in escrow and not to exceed \$100,000)
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NOTE – Costs and verbiage in *italics* indicates money already placed in escrow as of FFY 2008

\* Total cost considers the end-date of the OEI/EPA grant which is **September 28, 2012** (4 additional Federal Fiscal Years)

<b>Management Options</b>					
<b>Option</b>	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Further Study</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Desired State of Mudboils</b>	<b>Preference</b>
<b>Option #A</b>	<b>Strategies #1 or #2</b>		<b><u>No</u> long-term non-federal funding identified</b>	<b>UNACCEPTABLE due to adverse impacts</b>	
<b>Option #B</b>	<b>Strategies #3 or #4</b>	<b>#3 - <u>NO</u> investigations to reduce O/M Cost #4 – Investigations to reduce O/M Cost</b>	<b><u>No</u> long-term non-federal funding identified</b>	<b>UNACCEPTABLE due to adverse impacts</b>	
<b>Option #C</b>	<b>Strategy #3</b>	<b><u>No</u> investigations to reduce O/M Cost</b>	<b>Long-term non-federal funding identified</b>	<b>PARTLY ACCEPTABLE</b>	
<b>Option #D</b>	<b>Strategy #4</b>	<b>Investigations to reduce O/M Cost</b>	<b>Long-term non-federal funding identified</b>	<b>ACCEPTABLE</b>	<b>Preferred Op</b>