



A clean lake reflects well  
on all of us.

**(FINAL)**

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

### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

**April 28, 2008**

#### **1. ATTENDEES**

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

LTC John S. Hurley, District Commander, USACE, Buffalo District  
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. Charles Silver, Environmental Scientist, NYS Office of the Attorney General

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

Ms. Mary Jane Peachey, Project Committee Chair, NYSDEC  
Ms. Sue Miller, Outreach Committee Chair, OCDWEP  
Mr. John Davis, Attorney General's Office  
Mr. Steven Vriesen, OLP Program Manager, USACE, Buffalo District  
Ms. Julie Zielinski, OLP Recording Secretary, USACE, Buffalo District (VTC)  
Ms. Lindsay Speer, Office of Joe Heath  
Mr. Ron Heerkens, Department of Health  
Mr. Gary Sauda, Onondaga County Department of Health  
Mr. Joe Geraci, Onondaga County Parks & Recreation  
Ms. Jean Smiley, Onondaga County

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

Mr. William Owens, Contract Compliance Officer, City of Syracuse  
(Alt. for Mayor Matthew Driscoll, City of Syracuse)

#### **2. MEETING ARRANGEMENTS:** The meeting was held on Monday, April 28, 2008 at 1:00 p.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 March 5, 2008 minutes:** The minutes of the March 5, 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 received the committee member agreement from ESF appointing Drs. John Farrell and Kathleen McGrath as co-committee members to the vacancy on the Project Committee.

**5. STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**a. Outreach Committee:** Ms. Miller reported that the Outreach Committee met on March 19, and April 16, 2008. The following are highlights from those meetings:

- The Speakers Bureau held presentations with the NARF on April 10, 2008 and the Zoo Party for the Planet on April 19, 2008.
- 2008 Onondaga Lake Day is scheduled for June 7, 2008. Ms. Miller distributed a draft of activities and presentations for this year's event. The Go Green Trail follows the Go Green for a Blue Lake theme featuring environmentally sound presentations that are sure to interest the public. New this year in addition to the Green Trail is the power squadron mini boat show, the boat tours, and the remote controlled Seamoor the Sea Serpent. The program is sure to be another success.
- Family Fishing Tournament is scheduled for June 28-29, 2008 sponsored by the Izaak Walton League.
- The 2008 Annual Progress Meeting and After Action Review is scheduled for September 15 and 16, 2008.
- The next OLP tabloid is scheduled to be in the Neighbors Section of the *Post Standard* and mailed out on Thurs. June 5, 2008 to approximately 85k households. The OLP tabloid is now under contract with CNYRPB and no longer with Koenig.
- The Outreach Committee is in the process of reviewing the OLP website for outdated materials.
- The Outreach Committee Goals for 2008 were recommended for approval by the Outreach Committee and on today's Agenda for final approval. A Motion was moved by Mr. Coburn, seconded Mr. Lynch, and approved unanimously

**MOTION:** The Executive Committee approves the 2008 Outreach Committee Goals.

- The Outreach Committee budget was also recommended for approval by the Outreach Committee and on today's Agenda for final approval. The Outreach Committee budget has been scheduled out through 2010 presuming no new monies are authorized to the OLP. Each year about \$60k is proposed to ensure that the remaining funds are best allocated for the committee's programs/products. The following Motion was moved By Mr. Lynch, seconded by Mr. Ausubel, and approved unanimously.

**MOTION:** The Executive Committee approves the Outreach Committee budget for 2008 through 2010.

- Ms. Miller drafted a summary of Key Messages taken from the EcoLogic Lake Visioning Report. The summary of major topics from the visioning report were recommended for approval by the Outreach Committee recognizing that these opinions are those of the public and not those of the OLP. The Motion was moved by Mr. Lynch, seconded by Mr. Silver, and approved unanimously.

**MOTION:** The Executive Committee approves the roll-out plan of the Outreach Committee and the Key Messages as drafted by the Outreach Committee.

**b. Project Committee:** Ms. Peachey reported on the Project Committee Meeting held on April 17, 2008. The following are highlights from the meeting:

- Drs. Kathleen McGrath and John Farrell have signed the committee member agreement to fill the vacancy left by Ms. Brooks (NYSDEC Albany, Bureau of Habitat) on the Project Committee.
- A letter was sent to the NYS Parks Department to get their assessment on the buoys. They replied with concern over the contaminants and will work with DEC/OLP on locations.
- Phase 1, the Onondaga Lake Background, of the Onondaga Lake Watershed Progress Assessment and Action Strategies (OLWPAAS) has been completed and Phase II is underway.
- A Motion was passed to accept the findings and preliminary conclusions of the Resource Subcommittee on the ability of the OLP to accept private donations.
- An extensive discussion was held on the long term maintenance of the Tully Valley mudboils. A Motion was passed to develop a white paper outlining the options to address the mudboil issues.
- Discussion on the contradictions within the NYS Navigation Law on the requirements for a water body to be classified as a No-Discharge Zone. Further discussion to include Canal Corporation.
- Received monthly OEI update.

## **6. NEW BUSINESS:**

**a. Contact Recreation in Onondaga Lake:** The Executive Committee invited Mr. Ron Heerkens from the NYS Department of Health and Mr. Gary Sauda from the Onondaga County

Department of Health to discuss the controversial topic of swimming in Onondaga Lake and better understand their requirements. Although DOH regulates bathing beaches it does not regulate swimming in natural waters, ie. swimming in rivers and lakes outside of permitted bathing areas. Currently there are no regulated bathing beaches on Onondaga Lake and DOH is unaware of any proposal to construct one. Onondaga Lake is divided into two areas with different best use classifications; the north end classified "B", the south end classified "C". Voluminous bacteriological data collected by Onondaga County shows that water quality in the north end of the Lake generally supports the B classification except in localized areas immediately following significant rain events. Environmental contamination from industrial sources is of less concern in the north end in comparison to the southern portion of the Lake. Generally there does not appear to be a reason to prohibit recreational events that involve incidental contact with the water such as boating, fishing, water skiing, wake boarding being held in / on the Lake except in those areas most directly impacted by industrial contamination or combined sewer overflows. Of course everyone should follow the advice in the DOH Health Advisory regarding consumption of fish from the Lake. Should there be a proposal to construct a bathing beach on Onondaga Lake, the County and State Health Departments would collaborate along with DEC to review such proposal. It is understood that once remediation of the Lake sediments begins, a monitoring plan will be implemented to determine if contaminated sediments are released into uncontaminated areas of the Lake. This should allow DOH and DEC to determine the advisability of holding events while remedial efforts are underway. Likewise Onondaga County's monitoring efforts should allow the agencies to observe water quality patterns over time.

The OLP is in a unique situation. Although supportive to recreational events the OLP would be cautious not to over promote contact recreation and to take a neutral stand. The OLP and the Department of Health discussed the responsibility of whose role it is to cancel events in the case of high bacteria levels. The contaminants in the lake bottom pose a serious risk to contact recreation and to fish consumption. They also discussed developing a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and/or an advisory for recreational events on Onondaga Lake. No conclusions were drawn at the end of the lengthy discussion. The OLP recommended developing a list of questions and answers to serve as an informal statement concerning contact recreation in Onondaga Lake.

**ACTION ITEM:** USACE will take the lead in drafting a list of questions and answers regarding contact recreation on Onondaga Lake.

**b. 2008 Annual Progress Meeting:** Ms. Greer discussed the read ahead that outlines the recommendation made by the Outreach Committee for this year's event. Ms. Greer also requested feedback on the format, specifically, to develop one unified presentation or ask each agency to develop its own presentation on the past year's progress. The partners recommended that one presentation be prepared and to hold an open Q&A at the conclusion of the evening. They suggested that one unified presentation be developed to include fast facts about the progress and also include information on the future and where the OLP would like to be in 2014. The partners agreed with the tie-in of the lake visioning report and sharing the community's vision for the lake with the attendees.

**c. OLP Termination Date:** LTC Hurley explained that the Authorization for the partnership expires in 2014. LTC Hurley will be briefing the congressional and senate staff in June and asked if he should speak to Congressman Walsh about extending the OLP Charter completion date. The partners agreed that it would be in their best interest to do so should funding continue beyond 2014.

**7. OTHER BUSINESS:**

**a. Syracuse Office of Creek Development Update:** Mr. Owens was not present to provide an update.

**b. Issues:** None.

**8. PUBLIC COMMENT:** Ms. Speer thanked the OLP for inviting the Department of Health to the meeting today and to err on the side of caution when making decisions. Safety cannot be stressed enough for recreation on the lake.

**9. ADJOURN:** The next meeting will be scheduled via email.

Adjourned at 4:20 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

The following is what Ron Heerkens provided to me as a summary of their position. I would suggest that this be inserted after the first sentence of Section 6 a. and the remaining portions of the first and second paragraph be eliminated. The last paragraph can remain.

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