

Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization (I O) Meeting Minutes 1/25/17

Attendance: Hilary Lambert, Cayuga Lake Watershed Network (CLWN); Tee Ann Hunter, Ithaca-T and I O chair; Michael Boggs, Ulysses-T; Darby Kiley, Ulysses-T; Lynn Leopold, Lansing-V; Katrina Binkewicz, Lansing-T; Bill Foster, The Floating Classroom; Mark Witmer, Caroline-T; Jackie Cassaniti, Caroline-T

This meeting was mainly to go over the draft of the updated Restoration and Protection Plan (RPP). Hilary and others spent a month writing out the updates to be part of the 2017 RPP. This update incorporates 2 meetings held in July and August 2015 plus an online survey; as well as suggestions and recommendations from the Watershed Advisory Committee, the Technical Advisory Committee, and local experts. This update has been sent to Deb Grantham, senior extension associate at Cornell, CLWN, and who started the original RPP; Stephanie Wojtorwicz, at the NY Department of State, and Tee Ann Hunter. Tee Ann made copies so we could better go over the front parts of the update, as well as full copies to go over for the next meeting. The important recommendations will be in the front of the document to show what is needed from NYS to keep Cayuga Lake clean and protected. This will be the I O's focus for the next 3 years, when the RPP should be updated again. Unfortunately there were only a handful of municipalities (munis) around the lake that sent in suggestions even though Tee Ann sent out 2 mailings to the 44 munis. Hilary was able to get information from the original RPP, the Characterization, ideas from other lake organizations such as Seneca and Owasco lakes, the Community Science Institute and Cornell. Hilary, Roxy Johnston from the City of Ithaca, and Darby will look at specific chapters.

The finance report was next. The I O has \$27,109.77 after the minis paid their membership fees and added to what the I O had in 2016. The biggest expense is the Floating Classroom (FC) which was started in the original RPP. The FC received 10,000 last fall and Bill Foster was at this meeting requesting that amount again. This is a great educational program for the schools around the lake to get students interested in taking care of Cayuga Lake into the future. The boat the FC program uses, the MV Haendel, is less reliable than it used to be and the FC program had to cancel some of the school trips last fall. Now Bill Foster will be looking to purchase the MV Haendel for rehab or for a different boat, possibly from Cayuga Lake or other places. He has asked for \$10,000 this spring for the FC program. This will be voted on at the February meeting. Bill not only talks to the students, but to parents and teachers and he will share the ideas of the updated RPP with groups around Cayuga Lake. It was students on the FC that found hydrilla in two areas of the lake, Ithaca and Aurora. The money will be used to continue the program and give scholarships and well as put in a fund for a new boat.

Tee Ann said she still is having trouble contacting Jerry Codner to get the domain name for the I O website so the group making up a new web design, Catch-A-Fire, can go ahead with their work. Tee Ann hopes to visit their office with the correct information when she goes to NYC soon.

Tee Ann met with Rebecca Schneider from the Cornell Local Roads Program about a watershed-wide ditching project the I O hopes to finance with a grant from NYS DOS. This can be connected to the new total maximum daily load (TMDL) testing program set up by the DEC to check the lake water for phosphorus and other pollutants. The I O needs a plan for best practices for ditching. Homeowners and road workers need guidance, also the tiling drains farmers use to send water to the road ditches that conducts polluted water to the lake. The water should be directed to areas on the property lands to be absorbed into the ground instead. Mike Thorne of the City of Ithaca, as well as Andy Zepp from the Finger Lakes Land Trust, and Ed Marx of Tompkins County (they have already started mapping ditches with the help of TCSW) also have an interest in cleaning up the ditches. Hopefully, the I O ideas and the ideas of the counties will match up for a large watershed project. According to the Clean Water Act of 1972 (CWA) which has become less effective, the tile drains are exempt from coverage of the CWA.

Submitted by Jackie Cassaniti