



Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization (CWIO)

Wednesday, July 26, 2023

Held VIA ZOOM

Minutes

Members, Associate Members, and Ex-Officio Members Present: Susan Ainslie, Michael Boggs, Jackie Cassaniti, Ben Darfler, Tony DelPlato, Laurie Ervay, Michele Henry, Tee-Ann Hunter, Roxy Johnston, Darby Kiley, Gary Mutchler, Mitch Rowe, Don Slocum, Liz Thomas, Seth Thomas, Michele Wunderlich.

Staff: none

Stakeholders, Partners, and Committee Members Present: Doug Barnes, Dereth Glance, Roy "JR" Jacobson, Peter Penniman, Emily Royce, Grascen Shidemantle,

Agenda Item 1: call to order

The August 23rd CWIO meeting will be in the Village of Cayuga at 3pm.

Agenda Item 2: Resolution to approve minutes and monthly financial report

RESOLVED that the CWIO approves the minutes of their 7/26/23 meeting and accepts the financial report ending 6/30/23 with a balance of \$256,186.07.

Moved by: Roxy Johnston, Seconded by: Tee-Ann Hunter. Vote: unanimous in favor.

The finance report makes it seem like none of the Seneca County municipalities have paid their dues, but in fact, the dues for ALL municipalities are paid by Seneca County.

Agenda item 3: Presentation: Wetlands Protections – Why Are They Important and What Municipalities Can Do – J.R. Jacobson, Head of Habitat Protection Section of the DEC Division of Fish and Wildlife.

JR has been with the DEC for 31 years helping to protect NY's freshwater wetlands. He explained what a wetland is, saying it is now greater than 12.4 acres, with a protection zone of up to 100 feet. Wetlands in the Cayuga Lake Watershed may change with new rules; they are classified in 4 categories, and there are 11 criteria to identify them. He talked about wetland maps and how they have, and will, change over the years. The earliest maps were hand-drawn, and in 2022 the maps were made educational not regulatory to take effect in 2025. Article 24 is the NY Freshwater Wetlands Act. Wetlands will now change from those being more than 12.4 acres to 7.4 acres. He is working with IRIS Labs at Cornell to create informational maps. The timeline is 2022 to 2025; [See the slides from the presentation](#). Email JR at roy.jacobson@dec.ny.gov

Questions for J R Jacobson: Liz: Can municipalities do anything to protect wetlands? Answer: Yes, back the DEC; no size for federal wetlands regulations. Q: Shawn: What is the new regulatory jurisdiction? A: They are still working on how to do that. Q: Shawn: The new limit is 7.4 acres for wetlands, is there any limit for vernal pools? A: No, could be any size, what is practical and/or too small. Q. Liz: Should we submit small wetlands to the DEC? A: Yes, the DEC will update maps regularly. Cornell will do it remotely but better with some live observations. Q: Liz: Regulatory from the state for 100 foot buffers? A: Yes, still have the permitting process; large developers will probably have consulting firms for precise measurements. The DEC issues over 1,000 permits a year. Q: Liz: Will critical environmental areas be checked? A: Only if they fall into one of the 11 criteria. Q: Michelle Henry: What is your official connection to aquifers? A: From the state perspective, if 2 wetlands are similar, and joined underground by an aquifer, not sure what the feds would say. Liz: Do you have any press releases CWIO can use to communicate the changes in NYS legislation? A. Any help will be good, we only have one outreach person.

Agenda item 4: Chair Report

- Liz said a grant proposal to visualize data for the Cayuga Watershed was submitted to the new funding for the Finger Lakes program at the DEC. The grant proposal was submitted by Liz Kreitinger from the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network with the help of Grascen Shidemantle from CSI, Aaron McKeon and

Lauren Darcy from the Central NY Regional Planning and Development Board, and Liz Thomas from CWIO. Grascen added that she is thankful for the help, and that if this funding source doesn't work, the text will be resubmitted to other funding sources.

- Liz said there is no word from FLI about the release of the job posting for the new CWIO watershed manager;
- Parts of the lake are being treated for hydrilla. A new area is at Sheldrake Point.
- Some NYS grants have extended their application deadlines to 8/11 because of flooding in parts of NYS.
- The August meeting will be in person in the Village of Cayuga.

Agenda item 5: Committees

- a. Executive Committee – see chair report
- b. Education, Public Participation and Outreach Committee (EPPOC)--Didn't meet on July 4
- c. Technical Advisory Committee Didn't meet on July 4 holiday
- d. State Outreach—Will meet with Senator May on 8/2 and Assemblywoman Kelles on 8/15 to review CWIO requests.

Agenda item 6: Reports from Partners

Andy Zepp from **FLLT** said they added 110 acres to the Bell Station preserve; with grants there were 43 acres added to the Cayuga Inlet acquisition in Newfield, 8.5 acres to the Lindsay Parson Preserve also along the Cayuga Inlet and FLLT added 11 acres to the Etna Preserve in Dryden along Fall Creek.

Grascen said the **CSI** 2022 annual report is online; volunteers have checked the water quality of Enfield and Canoga Creeks. CSI's annual volunteer meeting will be at Camp Comstock on 8/18 from 6-8pm. Grascen noted that HAB's are picking up again in the lake.

Darby said **Tompkins County** is working with the **City of Ithaca** to do a comprehensive assessment of erosion and possible flood areas of Six Mile Creek

Mitch Rowe said Kyle Luvell will succeed him, he retires in December 2023. **Seneca County** is in the second year of their Septic System Law. And Alpha Boats Unlimited won the bid to purchase a trailer for weed harvesting.

Michele Wunderlich from **Cayuga County Planning** said NYS hopes to have the Cayuga Lake TMDL out this summer.

Agenda Item 7: Motion to adjourn

Motion: Don Slocum Second: Michelle Henry

Submitted by Jackie Cassaniti and Liz Thomas