

Otsego County Water Quality Coordinating Committee Minutes
140 County Highway 33, Cooperstown, NY 13326
Monday April 17, 2017

Present:

Jordan Clements (Otsego County Soil and Water Conservation District)
Mike Empey (Dave Brandt Chapter Trout Unlimited)
Tammie Harris (Otsego County Planning Department)
Holly Waterfield (SUNY Oneonta Biological Field Station)
Matt Albright (SUNY Oneonta Biological Field Station)
Leslie Orzetti (Otsego County Conservation Association)
Danny Lapin (Otsego County Conservation Association)
Anders Bergfjord (Cooperstown Wastewater Treatment Plant)

The meeting was called to order by Facilitator Holly Waterfield at 1:28 p.m.

Water Quality Incentives Program, Jordan Clements

- Clements began the meeting with a general overview of the Water Quality Improvement Project program (WQIP) application process. Clements described the type of projects that the Otsego County Soil and Water Conservation District had received funding for in the past.
- Orzetti and Waterfield asked if only agriculturally-related projects have been funded. The streambank erosion issue at the Susquehanna Animal Shelter was brought up. Clements said that other projects could be funded.
- Currently, the SWCD has placed two to three applications for consideration in the current WQIP funding cycle.
- Clements described SWCD's ongoing work along Route 11 in the Village of Laurens. Clements also described SWCD's work along Otego Creek.
- Clements said that WQIP money can be utilized for streambank restoration and for mini-grant programs. Discussion ensued.
- After some discussion, it was resolved that WQIP funding could be used to increase the Committee's capacity. Waterfield will suggest the idea of applying for WQIP money to bolster WQCC's mini-grant program to the rest of the committee. Additional discussion ensued.
- Clements reiterated the point that water quality improvement projects can be funded, not just those dedicated to agriculture. Orzetti asked if the Request for Proposals should be sent out to the whole group. Discussion ensued.
- Clements said that it will be important to see how much WQIP money is made available in the current funding cycle. Once the official state budget is released, it will be easier to figure out how much WQIP money is available.
- Albright suggested using former SWCD District Manager, Scott Fickbohm's, WQIP application template. Orzetti suggested forming a list of potential WQIP proposals. Discussion ensued. Clements agreed to reach out to Erica Cruden of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to learn more.

- Clements reported that he has been trying to get more County support for various water quality projects. Clements has also been in contact with certain beer companies who are looking to implement water quality projects. Clements described potential projects which could be implemented using beer company funds.
- Orzetti and Clements discussed additional watershed studies that could be conducted in the Butternut Creek watershed.
- Orzetti asked if water quality parameters could be included in the study in addition to the watershed's physical characteristics. Discussion ensued.
- Albright asked if the Butternut Study would be similar to other large-scale sampling initiatives carried out in the County. Clements provided clarification.
- Additional discussion on how best to incorporate water quality studies into WQIP proposals ensued. The committee proceeded to discuss other watersheds in need of study. Waterfield and Albright brought up the Cherry Valley Creek watershed. Clements said that the Butternut Creek study was funded due, in part, to the presence of hellbender salamanders in the creek.
- Empey suggested studying the Elk Creek watershed. Clements said that studies in high-priority watersheds are typically funded.
- Orzetti asked how many high-priority watersheds there are in the county. The Committee responded that there were approximately 8-10. Albright suggested focusing on slightly to moderately degraded systems so that benefits can be made apparent.
- Clements suggested focusing on streambank restoration, riparian buffer planting, and flood attenuation practices.
- Albright said he could review the Priority Waterbodies List to verify. Orzetti requested clarification. Albright obliged. Additional discussion ensued.
- Waterfield asked about how the size of WQIP funding awards is determined. Clements responded that the Priority Waterbodies List, in part, dictates the amount of funding awarded.
- Orzetti suggested focusing mainly on watershed studies. Substantial discussion ensued.
- Waterfield and Albright suggested having increased attendance from state agencies at WQCC meetings. Empey asked about the Butternut Valley Alliance attending WQCC meetings.
- Empey brought forth discussion on the fishing derby which the BVA and the Dave Brandt Chapter of Trout Unlimited will be hosting at Copes Corners Park. Discussion ensued.
- Albright said the Biological Field Station can help with water quality lab analysis and sampling support. Clements said WQIP funding can be used to cover sampling-related costs. Orzetti said OCCA's Citizen Monitoring Program can be used to aid sampling efforts. Discussion ensued.
- After much discussion, Clements said he would reach out to the DEC. Orzetti and Clements discussed reaching out to elected officials to obtain buy-in on key projects.
- Orzetti brought forth discussion on Otsego Lakes Festival mailing efforts. There was discussion on the Cooperstown Chamber of Commerce having OCCA's name on the mailing and on contacting Senator Seward.

- The Committee discussed several Otsego Lakes Festival-related matters including: tent layouts, number of tents, vendor fees, and which portions of the event would be conducted indoors/outdoors.
- Waterfield said that the Committee needed to identify potential speakers for upcoming topic meetings. Orzetti said she had a colleague who specialized in Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV) who may be interested in speaking. Discussion ensued.
- Waterfield said she will publicize the topic meeting once more information is gathered. After some discussion, the Committee agreed to move the next topic meeting to June to provide more time for publicizing the presentation.
- The Committee meeting in July will focus on WQIP grant applications. Orzetti will contact her colleague to arrange the June topic meeting. Empey made mention of Trout Unlimited's collaboration with the Arbor Foundation. The two organizations will engage in tree planting initiatives in Delaware County. No initiatives are proposed in Otsego County.

The meeting adjourned at 2:38 p.m.