

Hamilton County Water Quality Coordinating Committee
Meeting Minutes
June 5, 2023

“Maintaining and restoring the quality and quantity of water resources in Hamilton County using a coordinated, comprehensive, and educational interagency approach.”

Kristel Guimara – Library Manager, Long Lake Public Library, and Science Instructor, North Country Community College

Jamila Page – Cornell Cooperative Extension of Hamilton County

Luke Thompson - Cornell Cooperative Extension of Hamilton County

Richard Armstrong – Lake Pleasant Sacandaga Association

Emily Fell – NYS DEC

Tom Bielli – District Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service

Sam Blake - Lake Champlain Lake George Regional Planning Board

Ryan Cunningham – Associate Environmental Analyst, Soil and Water Conservation Committee

John Hoekstra – President, Friends of Lake Algonquin

Blake Neumann – Clean Water Advocate, Adirondack Council

Erik Reardon – NYS DEC

Florence Braunius – New York Rural Water

Michele Curry – Chairperson, Blue Mountain Lake Committee

Sheila M Hutt – Blue Mountain Lake Water Watch

Rex Niles – Sixth and Seventh Lake Association

Willin Boyle – Project Manager, Amber Water Pros.com

Marti Evanoff – Blue Mountain Lake

Betsy Bain – Hamilton County SWCD Board Member

Vicki Buyce – Hamilton County SWCD Board Chairman

Katie Whitkovits – Technician, Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District

Caitlin Stewart – Manager, Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District

Jacob Vander Pyle - Intern, Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District

The meeting was called to order with introductions at 9am.

Guest Presentations:

- Florence Braunius of the NY Rural Water Association presented on well water programs and inspecting and maintaining your well.
- Erik Reardon, NYS DEC presented little known ways AIS are spread (canal systems) and provided detailed information on the invasive Round Goby. The question of educating anglers came up; Reardon said that education is a challenge. He likes to get info out to anglers at Fish and Game Clubs. Other avenues of education/outreach included fishing license requirements, info given in pamphlets, short videos, and angler forums.

The committee reviewed the 2012 Hamilton County Water Quality Strategy. Discussion ensued about challenges and solutions.

Discussion highlights:

- Would like to gear municipal projects more towards environmentally friendly development like green infrastructure. Coordination of development scheduling for townships is desired for zoning, with guidance on impervious coverage development for municipalities.
- A need for more county-wide GIS data was expressed. Specifically, would like to see a percent impervious surface cover GIS layer researched and made available. Widespread need for more surveys – i.e. trending of nutrients and plant growth.
- Once valuable parameter data is collected, a better method of communicating the data is needed.
- The general public lacks awareness of how much impact individuals can have.
- Major consensus of concerns including road salt, impervious surfaces, per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), microplastics, invasive species including Eurasian milfoil, sediment loading, increasing pervious cover, and acquiring funding for projects.
- Funding opportunities:
 - o Ryan Cunningham, Soil and Water Conservation Committee mentioned that usually, a larger partner like a municipality or planning department is involved when applying for grant funding, typically a lake association wouldn't hold a grant on their own.
 - o Blake Newman, Clean Water Advocate with the Adirondack Council is working to have DEC allocate funding for Septic System Replacement Fund to lakes with greater need.
 - o Tom Bielli - NRCS has funding for forestry plans, plant productivity, agriculture, and conservation planning.
 - o Sam Blake – Lake Champlain Lake George Regional Planning Board has several services they offer free to Lake Associations and Municipalities. Lake Management Plans take approx. 1 year to complete because they provide a high-level characterization specific to individual lakes. Drinking Water Source Protection Program (DWSP2) is a locally led, state-supported program related to protecting both surface water and drinking wells. Communities accepted into the program are provided free technical assistance to develop their own unique DWSP2 plan. Also available is the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program. This is more robust than the lake management plan and opens a community up to special implementation monies.
 - o John Hoekstra mentioned that a NYS Grants Gateway account is needed.
 - o Other potential grant funding sources include DEC Non-Agricultural Nonpoint Source Planning Grant to help pay for the initial planning of water quality improvement projects, and Water Quality Improvement Project (WQIP) program, which is a competitive, reimbursement grant used mainly for “shovel ready” projects.

Action Items

- Hamilton County SWCD will update the Strategy and email to the committee for review and comment.

Next meeting: Doodle poll to follow, meeting in approximately 6 months.

Meeting adjourned at 11:45am.