

**TOMPKINS COUNTY WATER RESOURCES COUNCIL**

June 17, 2024

Via Zoom

Final Minutes

**Attendance**

Member		Seat	Member		Seat
Annie Bastoni	P	At-Large	Frank Proto	P	At-Large
Shawn Bossard	P	Agriculture	Brian Rahm	P	Environment
Cynthia Brock	P	Recreation	Stephanie Redmond	P	At-Large
Liz Cameron	P	Co. Environmental Health	Steve Riddle	A	Water Purveyor
Amanda Champion	P	County Government	Becky Sims	P	Municipal Government
Jenna DeRario	P	Cooperative Extension	Linda Wagenet	E	At-Large
Brett Hayhurst	P	At-Large	Douglas Barnes	P	Associate
Kristen Hychka	P	Municipal Government	Roxy Johnston	P	Associate
Darby Kiley	E	County Planning & Sustain.	Lynn Leopold	P	Associate
Patrick King	P	Business & Industry	Rebecca Minas	P	Associate
Liz Kreitinger	P	Watershed Organization	Elaine Quaroni	P	Associate
Jon Negley	A	Soil & Water Cons. District	Grascen Shidemantle	A	Associate
Holly Payne	P	At-Large	Tom Vawter	E	Associate
Peter Penniman	P	Environmental Management Council			

**Guests:** Max Heitner

**Call to Order/Agenda Review** – Chair Cynthia Brock called the meeting to order at 4:15pm. No changes to agenda.

**Privilege of the Floor** – No privilege of the floor.

**Presentation: Finger Lakes Land Trust Update of Local Projects** – Max Heitner, FLX Land Trust

Max presented updates on Finger Lakes Land Trust projects, focusing on the organization's four-pronged mission to protect scenic vistas, local foods, clean water, and wild places. His presentation highlighted recently completed and pending projects, several funded by the Tompkins County Natural Infrastructure Capital Program, in the Cayuga Lake watershed. These included projects involving the Salmon Creek Bird Sanctuary, Lindsay-Parsons Preserve, Fischer Old Growth Natural Area, Etna Nature Preserve, the DEC's Cayuga Shores Wildlife Management Area (formerly known as Bell Station), Sims-Jennings Preserve at Cayuga Cliffs, and more. The Q&A session touched on multiple topics, including payment for ecosystem services, potential for integrating waterfront properties with the Cayuga Blueway Trail, harmful algal blooms, carbon sequestration programs, community outreach and education, tree planting, and comparative water testing.

**Action: Approval of draft minutes**

The May 2024 draft minutes were approved as submitted.

**Committee Reports**

Water Quality Strategy -- Since the last WRC meeting, the committee has convened three times to focus on updating the Water Quality Strategy. Discussions have aimed at establishing achievable goals for the next three years and working backwards to create a clear work plan. Notably, the committee has identified a strong call for increased engagement, advocacy, communication, and education efforts.

**Watershed Rules & Regulations** – Committee has reached out to other water purveyors with existing or developing watershed rules and regulations or drinking water source protection plans. Respondents have been invited to attend future committee meetings to share their experiences.

**Muni Training** – Michelle Wright from the Town of Ulysses will be speaking at Tompkins County Council of Governments in July about the town’s work on asset management, specifically culverts. The committee is also still working on the 201 Watershed training for highway officials.

**Chair and Staff Reports**

No reports.

**Member Announcements**

Members shared information on the Cayuga Lake Community Conference, the Cayuga Lake Summit, Lake Friendly Living Awareness Month, NYS Invasive Species Awareness Month, and more. Liz K also shared other CLWN related items, such as a pre-season hydrilla update, volunteer-led water quality sampling, and the relocation of CLWN's office to the Cayuga Nature Center. Additionally, the first edition of the HABS newsletter will be sent out weekly starting in July. The group also discussed the future of Wells College's water treatment plant and potential funding for inflow and infiltration studies.

Roxy's Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization report covered several key points, including hemlock woolly adelgid treatments, progress on Covert salt barn application funding, DEC permit applications, and a hydrilla update. The hydrilla update included the discovery of a 6-inch length of hydrilla on a motorized kayak in Cayuga Lake, suspected to be growing in a shallow, warmer area. The report also addressed the potential impact of decreased funding from the Army Corps of Engineers on hydrilla treatment efforts, as well as the Finger Lakes Regional Watershed Alliance event. The conversation then shifted solely to the topic of hydrilla funding, with members discussing the need to lobby for more funding and increase awareness and education on the topic.

**Action:** Frank Proto made a motion, which Cynthia Brock seconded, that the Executive Committee be authorized to issue a letter appealing for state and federal funding to support continued testing, monitoring, and treatment of hydrilla in Cayuga Lake. Motion carried.

In closing, Brett shared an update on his project team's development of a new graphene-based sensor that can detect microcystin toxins. They are working on a research project with CSI to test the technology.

**Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned at 5:33pm.