

Quassaick Creek Watershed Alliance Monthly Meeting
MSMC, Aquinas Hall, Room 252
Monday, January 27, 2020, 5:00 PM

<http://waterauthority.orangecountygov.com/quassaick.html>

Present: Matt Brady, Bill Fetter, John Gebhards, Anthony Grice, Joe Gross, Simon Gruber, Lance Haug, Ted Kohlmann, Kelly Morris (phone), Erin Roth, Dan Shapley, Matt Tether, Ophra Wolf

Meeting Notes – 2/4/2020

Prior to starting on the agenda, all attendees introduced themselves and offered a welcome to Matt Tether for his initial meeting with the QCWA. Thanks to all who were able to attend.

Reports:

1. Board of Directors Nominations: John

John explained that two seats on the Board of Directors are open for election at the QCWA February 24 meeting.

The positions are for a two year term with no term limits currently. Bill occupies one seat and Ted holds the other. Any active member wanting to become a candidate is welcome to submit their name to John for consideration.

Bill will run again. Ted will not be able to run for re-election.

John nominated Matt Brady for candidacy and he accepted. Any additional members asking to be nominated will be announced via QCWA email and included on the February ballot.

(P.S.-At the meeting there was discussion about the pros & cons of e-mail voting. The Board is currently taking this under consideration. Early indications are not favorable for on line voting.)

2. Orange Lake/Upper Bushfield Creek: Bill

Bill gave a brief summary of the water quality monitoring the QCWA & OLHA have done over the last two-three years which appears to indicate that the NYSTA rest area wwtps in the northern part of the Town of Newburgh may not be fully compliant with all SPDES and surface water requirements.

The information was compiled into a letter report outlining the field work and resulting concerns arising from that work. The report was addressed to the NYSDEC Regional Engineering with relevant parties copied requesting that compliance with the requirements of the individual SPDES permits for these facilities be both administratively and operational compliant. The package was submitted toward the end of December 2019.

We will announce any response from any of the contacted parties.

We currently plan to continue monitoring the Upper Bushfield this coming season with an emphasis on increased laboratory analysis.

3. Lower Quassaick Creek Trail: John

John informed us that a meeting was held among many of the interested parties for the development of the long envisioned Quassaick Creek Trail. Stakeholders included Kelly Morris/Orange County Planning, Ali Church/City of Newburgh Planning, John Gebhards/QCWA, Scenic Hudson, Orange County Land Trust and Steelways, Inc.

The attendees were able to delineate the many barriers that have held this project back over the years and begin to chart some new strategies for potentially overcoming some of the impediments. These include property ownership/easements, environmental cleanup, railroad conflict and funding among others.

It was suggest that an easement be explored with Steelways to facilitate the continuance of the Newburgh Waterfront Trail across Water/Front Street to the base of the Quassaick.

It was noted that the Warex Building on Water Street and Walsh Rd. is for sale.

(Perhaps this could be developed as an environmental learning center.)

Kelly said the County is reviewing their Brownfield Grant application for cleanup of the Candle Factory ruins to determine why it was not awarded.

Stakeholders will meet in the future as needed.

4. MSMC Community Collaboration Survey: Bill

Bill explained that MSMC is assessing its curriculum. With that is a heightened effort to increase community service. To that end, the college asked the QCWA to complete a survey asking series of questions aimed at identify qualities for both the college and its students that would improve the efficacy of their efforts. We hope to continue of work with the students and faculty.

5. Trees-for-Tribs: Ted

Ted explained that the QCWA is looking for new candidate sites for tree planting. There was discussion about looking at select portions of the Lower Quassaick for future plantings. Another possibility is to expand the Mill Street site in the Town of Newburgh that has been worked on over recent years.

Ophra asked if there maybe be a spot along the lower Quassaick that might meet the requirements. We will be mindful of the idea while scouting. Access and personal safety may be a concern at this point for that area. Future trail development from Muchattoes Lake down toward the Hudson may provide some opportunities.

Ted will confer with Beth Roessler, the program director for the NYSDEC upon her return from vacation in early February for potential 2020 plantings.

The next existing site planned for cleanup and overall plant maintenance will likely be Crystal Lake in the spring. Updates will be posted as things develop.

A final note- Ed Helbig of the Birch School contacted Ted volunteering his students to help with new plantings during week days in the spring months. This will be kept in mind when scheduling our work.

6. Izaak Walton League Road Salt Monitoring Plan: Bill

Bill presented portions of the Izaak Walton League's 2019 Annual Report for meeting attendees to view.

The League is developing a nationwide database of road salt concentrations in community streams.

Simon alluded to a project by Monroe Woodbury AP students that performed field monitoring in 2 lakes near them. Subsequently, they charted, interpreted and presented the data to the Moodna Creek Watershed group with good reviews and high student interest. The presentations had the added benefit of bringing parents to the meetings for a broader exposure of the water quality issues.

Dan mentioned that the Wappingers Central School District has added a 3 hour middle school watershed study program to their curriculum.

Anthony said he would forward the salt sampling project information to the NFA Science Director - Al Romano for consideration of student participation.

Additionally, John put out a call for any member who may want to take the lead on this effort for the QCWA. Please notify John if you can afford some time to research and preparation for initiating the program in our area next fall.

7. ATSDR PFAS Health Study: Lance/John

Background: The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) is a branch of the National Center for Environmental Health within the U.S. Center for Disease Control (CDC). ATSDR is preparing to perform a PFAS Expose Assessment in the City of Newburgh Water District this year along with 8 other sites within the continental US.

Anthony started by saying that ATSDR will be issuing a press release imminently announcing a kickoff meeting on February 11th at the Newburgh Armory discussing the study. Efforts to maximize public awareness, understanding and participation is needed. (The announcement did occur soon after this meeting.)

At a meeting with ATSDR in early December 2019, the QCWA along with other community partners were informed that community outreach would be an early focus of this study to explain that it is separate and apart from other health impact work that has already been performed or is yet to be performed through the NYSDOH & CDC. There was much discussion on cultural diversity within the population as well as a need to develop and maintain a sense of trust among the residents. It was brought up that not all the consumers of the City water are residents of the City of Newburgh. Many people such as students, teachers, work force, etc. come to the City for the day and leave when work/school is done. There was also discussion at the December ATSDR meeting about potential religious, educational, medical, social leaders/institutions that would be good information conduits to the many parts of the water district community.

More information about this study: www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/

8. Riverkeeper/City of Newburgh (CoN) Source Water Protection Scorecard: Dan

In an effort to establish a baseline and memorialize the state of The City's drinking water supply, Riverkeeper and CoN jointly performed an evaluation of the water system. When completed, the City had a final score of 15 on an assessment scale of 0-100. The assessment

address water quality on a broad spectrum to build a more sound argument for watershed protection and land acquisition outside the City's jurisdiction. Surrounding municipal collaboration would be a great development. Dan also made it clear that Newburgh is not alone in this jurisdictional conflict and this will hopefully bring awareness to the broader statewide discussion.

Simon pointed out that the State is expanding their grant reviewing staff. Perhaps some opportunities in the future for the City.

The study is available on the City's website and Riverkeeper's website.

Tangential to this it was noted that limits for select surface water parameters including phosphorus are currently under review within the NYSDOH.

9. Columbia University School of Architecture/Planning/Preservation: Bill

Columbia and QCWA have set up the students' display of their projects about the Quassaick in the Library's lobby. The exhibit is viewable during all of February. Supplemental to the student exhibition, there is a small display of ideas developed over the years for a Lower Quassaick Trail which encompasses the area of study for the architectural students. Also there is a map of the lower Quassaick available on a table to add post it comments, suggestions, memories, etc. We hope to make the next exhibit more detailed in presentation. Comments/help are welcome.

10. Algonquin Park Kiosk Status: John

John let us know that the new Algonquin Park Powder Mill Trail map is nearing completion and will be installed on one side of the QCWA kiosk in the park.

11. Lake Street Bridge: Bill

Bill announced that a public notice for bids was in the newspaper recently for the installation of the Lake Street Bridge replacement. Bids are due in mid-March likely resulting in construction beginning this summer.

Of note on this project is that the span of the bridge is wide/long enough to accommodate a foot trail below it and along the Quassaick. (Could this be the start of something big?)

11. Stewart ANG RAC Activities: Ophra

Ophra wanted to let everyone know that the Newburgh Clean Water Project is organizing a pre-RAC meeting of all 15 Community representatives both individuals and representative groups. The meeting would be to build consensus prior to the next ANG RAC meeting on February 4th. Ophra is concerned about the lack of lead time for information and data coming from the ANG. This in turn limits the RAC's ability to process and interpret the information for the community. The next quarterly RAC meeting is Tuesday February 4th in the Newburgh Armory at 6:00 pm.

12. Current & Upcoming Events:

- John announced that he would be attending the Ulster County Watershed Alliance for a Roundtable meeting on March 5th at Muds Puddles in New Paltz

- Scenic Hudson will be hosting a Winter Festival at Crystal Lake on Presidents' Day, Monday February 17 from Noon to 3:00 pm. There will be activities, art, food and more. Visit Scenic Hudson's Facebook page for more info.

13. Contacts:

John Gebhards- Executive Director	gebhards@outlook.com
Jack Caldwell- President	jdcaldwell1129@gmail.com
Bill Fetter-Secretary/Treasurer	William.fetter@verizon.net

**THE NEXT QCWA MONTHLY MEETING WILL BE MONDAY FEBRUARY 24TH, 2020 AT 5:00 PM
IN RM. 252, AQUINAS HALL, MT. ST. MARY COLLEGE, NEWBURGH**

PLEASE JOIN US!