

Quassaick Creek Watershed Alliance Monthly Meeting
MSMC, Aquinas Hall, Room 252
Monday, July 29, 2019, 5:00 PM

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

Present: Marcel Barrick, Matt Brady, Mary Chang, Bill Fetter, John Gebhards, Simon Gruber, Lance Haug, Kelly Morris, Jennifer Phillips, Monique Segarra

Meeting Notes – 8/8/19

Presentation

1. Bard Center for Environmental Policy Class: Professors Jennifer Phillips and Monique Segarra

Professors Phillips and Segarra discussed their recent student study of Environmental Policy related to the contamination of Washington Lake. They are interested in continued assistance with community involvement and awareness with the intent of devoting their department's full focus on Newburgh this coming semester. Further discussions are planned with involved parties.

Additionally, the professors indicated that Professor Meyer Armsted (sp?) of Bard is interested in teaming with a local college to study the environmental conditions of the City's drinking watershed.

There was also discussion of stakeholder mapping to better understand the City's diversity and how to better communicate with the community in terms of awareness and involvement.

Simon is curious what the City's involvement in further investigation will be given the broad based litigation that is currently occurring.

Reports

2. QCWA Board of Directors' report: John

John informed the attendees that Jack Caldwell will be the QCWA representative on Scenic Hudson's Newburgh Greenway Committee. John will continue to be the representative at the Greater Newburgh Open Space Committee.

The Board members agreed that the Alliance is in need of a volunteer to generate and distribute press releases. Kelly offered to provide a list of press contacts maintained by her office.

The Board also agreed that John (as the Executive Director) will continue to be the spokesperson for the Alliance in both written and interview policy statements.

3. QCWA Sail on the Woody Guthrie: John

John reported that in place of the Alliance's June monthly meeting Wayne Chernek arranged a private sail for Alliance members on the sloop Woody Guthrie out of the Beacon Sloop Club. All who attended had a wonderful peaceful evening sailing around Newburgh Bay. Thank you Wayne and the rest of the volunteer crew on the Woody.

4. Hudson River Watershed Alliance Roundtable: Lance

Lance and Jack Caldwell attended the recent HRWA Roundtable meeting held in Kingston. Lance said there was some discussion as to the fate of data and other information collected by the individual watershed groups – is there a possibility of a central repository where the information can be posted and accessible to all when needed. Lance and Kelly also mentioned a discussion led by Emily Vail about the history and current interest in the Tannery Brook currently piped and channeled in large part underground through Kingston. There is an ongoing public awareness campaign to educate the local citizens about the stream. John mentioned Bard's involvement with citizen scientist monitoring the condition of the Saw Kill which is being led by Eli Ducker of Bard.

5. Press Conference for Clean Water/PFOS & PFOA NYS drinking water limits: John

John reported on the press conference held on July 2nd at the City of Newburgh Water Treatment plant. Attendees included State and local officials with the goal of advocating for the reduction of allowable perflourinated compound concentrations in drinking water from the current 20 parts per trillion (ppt) to 1 ppt. The hope is that this message will be carried to the NYSDEC & NYSDOH for further action. Ophra Wolf of the Newburgh Clean Water Project recently spoke in Albany advocating for this change. There is also hope to advance these goals to the Federal level for further consideration.

6. Upper Bushfield Creek & Orange Lake: Bill

Bill reported that routine sampling continues monthly in the Upper Bushfield Creek Watershed with typical findings. Stan Thomas has reported recent algal blooms in the Lake which Bill has reported on the NYSDEC tracking website. Water samples from select locations on the UBC and Orange Lake will be collected in August for laboratory analysis of nutrients and other contaminants.

Additionally, there was discussion regarding concerns about the potential for HABs on Brown's Pond and whether the Water Treatment plant can effectively remove the toxins should there be an occurrence during the aqueduct shutdown. This is yet to be answered.

7. Mt. St. Mary College (MSMC) Stream Sampling Collaboration: Bill

Bill reported that Professor Lynn Maelia and a few students have been monitoring streams throughout the lower Quassaick Watershed for Total Dissolved Solids to evaluate general water quality and hopefully isolate select tributaries for more detailed investigation and testing. In addition, Bill reported that he has received permission to perform field testing on the section of the Crystal Lake tributary running through the Labors Union Hall property on Rte. 207 below the City of Newburgh Water Treatment Plant. Other portions of this tributary is currently being studied for enterococcus by Professor James Moran of MSMC. Hopefully, this access will facilitate expanded research on this tributary.

8. Marist College Micro-plastics Study-Chadwick Lake: Lance

Lance reported that members of the QCWA met with Professor Klos and students Gabi DeGennaro & Carter Schuh at Chadwick Lake for the purpose of collecting soil sediment

samples at select intervals where the Quassaick Creek enters into Chadwick Lake. The samples will be analyzed for the presence of micro plastics with the goal of studying the degree of plastics uptake in soil as the stream velocity diminishes when entering a standing waterbody. Lance later met with the group upon completion of sampling to note that all went well. Test results will be made available when laboratory analysis is completed and interpreted later this year.

This project is a follow up to a micro-plastics stream water study performed last year by Marist students Jason Randall and Carter Schuh in a handful of locations in the Quassaick Watershed.

9. Newburgh Clean Water Project (NCWP) Water Salon & Safari: Marcel

Marcel reported that the event overall was successful in the goal of educating the community about the source, condition and future goals of the City of Newburgh's historic surface drinking water supply represented by Washington Lake.

The Safari entailed a bus tour starting at the Ritz Theater and going out to areas surrounding Stewart Airport to elucidate the condition of the land over which the streams travel prior to being diverted into now unused Washington Lake for the City's drinking water supply. This includes commercial/industrial parks, shopping malls, Stewart Airport, residential developments, roads/highways, landfill/transfer station, etc.

The Salon portion of the event was held in the lobby of the Ritz Theater. Events included table displays such as maps of the areas (watershed) visited on the Safari, groundwater model showing how surface water percolating into the ground is influenced by topography, geology, septic systems, wells, surface spills, etc.

In addition, there were speakers from the City of Newburgh Water Dept., Riverkeeper, NCWP, etc. discussing the current condition of the water supply and some of the hopes and goals for the health and wellbeing of those reliant on this important system.

The NCWP is hopeful they will be able to repeat and expand this event in future months.

10. Hudson River Ramble: Lance

Lance reported that he spoke with the Ramble coordinator at the Hudson River Estuary Program to find out some of the particulars of the annual event during weekends generally in the month of September. He was informed that we had missed the deadline for advertisement in the printed catalog but we could still advertise on the event website. Regarding event insurance, he was informed that the Ramble does not provide insurance. (Marcel provided the link to www.theeventhelper.com recommended by Riverkeeper and used for insurance coverage by the NCWP event above).

Despite some talk among the Alliance, it was decided there was not enough lead time this year to organize a dry run event. With relevant information now in hand, QCWA is in a position to consider some different potential events next year allowing the necessary lead time for planning.

11. Columbia University School of Architecture: Bill

Background- As a course of study, students in the second semester of their 3 year graduate program were assigned to involve themselves in a project within the Quassaick Creek

Watershed. Each studio within the program worked on different features within the Watershed but not necessarily related to water. One group for example worked around the Dutch Reformed Church on Grand Street.

The QCWA worked with the community Adjunct Professor Robert Marino on a project actually focused on the Quassaick Creek in the City of Newburgh. Each student was instructed to design a water feature in and around the Creek that could serve as both a recreational attraction to the area as well as an educational facility for use by community.

In an effort to afford the students an opportunity to share their work with those of us living in the watershed and its surroundings, as well as providing future designers a forum to present their projects to the public, the QCWA is working toward arranging a venue in the area for display of their projects and possible live presentation of the design documents. Locations under consideration are a local gallery, the library, the Ritz, etc.

(John & Bill met with Chuck Thomas, Director of the Newburgh Library on 8/9/19 to describe our vision. He was receptive to the idea. More to come.)

Ideas and involvement from anyone interested are welcome. Contact Bill Fetter:

William.fetter@verizon.net

12. Other Business

It was decided that due to summer vacations, minimal pressing agenda items, etc., there will be no monthly meeting in August.

THE NEXT QCWA MONTHLY MEETING WILL BE MONDAY SEPTEMBER 30TH, 2019 AT 5:00 PM IN ROOM 252, AQUINAS HALL, MT. ST. MARY COLLEGE.

PLEASE JOIN US!