

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

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

**Present: Marcel Barrick, Matt Brady, Bud Breheney, Jack Caldwell, Wayne Cherneck, Bill Fetter, John Gebhards, George Jackman, Andrew Jacobs, Ted Kohlmann, Wayne Kocher, Lynn Maelia, Erin Roth**

**Meeting Notes - FINAL 5/9/19**

**Presentation**

**1- Stroock Felt Dam Removal Status & Bushfield Creek fish kill – George Jackman/Riverkeeper**

George began by saying a preliminary stream assessment has been performed on the Stroock Felt Dam just upstream of American Felt & Filter. The assessment verified the owners of the dam (City of Newburgh & Orange County) and the fact that there is no fine sediment behind the dam that may be contaminated and require removal and processing as hazardous waste for disposal.

Riverkeeper will be filing for the permits with the DEC. Riverkeeper is also currently working with Princeton Hydro & Riverlogic on a design build contract for the removal of the dam. Actual removal time is uncertain but hopefully late this year or 2020.

There was discussion of beginning a macro-invertebrate database to document any change in the water quality pre and post removal. (John G. subsequently provided George with a historic macro data presented in the Orange County Planning Department's Quassaick Creek Biomonitoring Project, January 2014.) George said that Riverkeeper would like to partner with a nearby college (West Point, MSMC, SUNY NP?) for conducting the monitoring. Also, there was a general consensus of attendees to begin an effort to memorialize the dam prior to removal. Anyone interested in joining a committee to begin this effort, please contact John, gebhards@outlook.net for further information. A site visit will be coordinated with George to discuss ideas for monumentation.

On April 15 at least 2 sources reported to the DEC that there were a number of dead fish floating in the upper pond of Algonquin Park along Bushfield Creek. Samples of the water and fish were collected by the DEC. They are currently being analyzed for a potential cause of death. John G. recalled a similar event during the spring in recent years on the lower pond. George asked that if any more fish are seen, please call the DEC quickly. It is important to have a distressed fish caught prior to death to best determine the cause of death.

## Reports

### 2. QCWA Board of Directors Report:

Jack discussed the BOD's continued effort to establish job descriptions for the new board members. Also, the operational guidelines continue to be developed. There was discussion on the desire for an experienced manager for improved and increased use of Facebook. This could be used for purposes such as public outreach, broadcasting information, community involvement, watchdog efforts, etc.

### 3. & 9. Stewart Airport Foam Spill & City of Newburgh water:

Marcel started by saying that a spill of firefighting foam was detected on April 13<sup>th</sup> in a Silver Stream tributary flowing from Stewart alongside Breunig Road Marcel also noted that the City of Newburgh has an independent consultant investigating the incident and tracking the DEC's effort.

Erin informed the group that the material originated in a hanger occupied by Atlantic Aviation. It appears a spill within the hanger somehow entered a flow drain leading to an approved SPDES site instead of being diverted to a holding tank (Rec Pond?) for capture and safe disposal. The foam reportedly contains C6 which is a replacement for the previous foaming agents containing PFOS. The manufacturer of C6 claims that their product does not contain PFOA or PFOS. However, samples taken from the latest incident by the City of Newburgh appear to indicate that the foam does contain the earlier perflourinated compounds. This continues to be a subject of discussion with the manufacturer/supplier of the material. Site infrastructure drawings are being reviewed to determine drain routes. There is continued on site presence of the emergency response company recovering any residual foam. The involved parties are developing an appropriate health & management plan for any potential future event.

George pondered if there is any potential hydrologic connection between recent spill location and the fish kill in Algonquin Park. Current maps and knowledge of the watershed does not lend itself to correlation between the two events.

Marcel noted that there are now Federal CERCLA funds available for the remedial investigation of the historical contamination. The DOD has expanded the area of investigation adding more sampling/testing locations to the original investigation. The group went on to discuss the fact that the Remedial Investigation has yet to select and convene the Remedial Action Board (RAB). John Gebhards suggested the QCWA draft a letter inquiring the status and advocating the formation of the RAB. This suggestion was unanimously accepted.

Finally, Marcel asked for the QCWA to advocate for the adoption of a combined limit of 10 parts per trillion (ppt) for PFOA & PFOS instead of the recommendation of 10 ppt for each compound currently before the NY State Clean Water Council in Albany. Marcel will provide the QCWA a copy of the NCWP correspondence to the NYSDOH on this topic. No QCWA action at this time.

#### 4. Glass Eel Count

Wayne reported that the net was back in the water after a brief take out for anticipated heavy rains. Daily contents are dwindling and may be a sign of the tail end of the eels' migratory season.

George said there is some evidence that the numbers may be related to the lunar cycle. Quantities seem to increase during the new and full moons. With the new moon only a few days following the meeting, we may get a chance to observe that affect.

An email from Wayne on May 2 stated that there is help required on May 10 & May 13 to perform the daily counts due to the normal group's availability. Let Wayne know if you are available. Please email Wayne Cherek [chernek9@msn.com](mailto:chernek9@msn.com) > if you need more information. Also, Wayne indicated the net will be removed on or about the 17<sup>th</sup> of May.

#### 5. Bushfield Creek

Bill reported that water quality testing will continue on the Upper Bushfield Creek. The next round of testing will be in mid-May. Contact Bill if you want to participate.

Later in the season, samples will be collected at select locations for laboratory analysis including nutrients and other select components.

In addition, the Orange Lake Homeowners Association has indicated to Stan Thomas their willingness to provide time for the QCWA to present our research to date as well as provide a potential course of action to study the lake at its surroundings to better identify the causes of impaired water and algal blooms on Orange Lake. The QCWA will develop a committee to develop a plan for the study. If you would like to be involved in developing and/or implementing this plan, contact Bill Fetter, [william.fetter@verizon.net](mailto:william.fetter@verizon.net)

#### 6. Earth Day Cleanup at Muchattoes Lake

John reporting for Lance said there were approximately 10-12 people at Muchattoes Lake on Monday April 22 to clean up trash around the north end of Muchattoes Lake in celebration of Earth Day. Ted informed us that there were on the order of 15-20 bags of trash collected in the 2-3 hour cleanup in anticipation of this week's fishing demonstration – See #8 below.

#### 7. Trees 4 Tribs

a) Ted reported that a Spring Trees 4 Tribs planting is set for the Town of Newburgh Mill Street site north of Chadwick Lake on Saturday, May 25 at 10:00 AM. **VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED.** Wear work clothes and work boots. Event is rain or shine and should take 2-3 hours. Contact Ted Kohlman, [kohlmannllt@aol.com](mailto:kohlmannllt@aol.com) for more information.

#### 8. Riversweep & "Spring into Newburgh"

a) John noted that the QCWA will participate in Riverkeeper's annual Hudson River Riversweep event on May 4<sup>th</sup>. The cleanup will be along the Quassaick Creek at Walsh Avenue and River Road. Volunteers can sign up on line at the Riverkeeper website. Lance informed us by email that some of the local business have committed to supplying cleanup materials and refreshments.

b) Also, Scenic Hudson has arranged for the NYSDEC to have a fishing demonstration at Muchattoes Lake on the same day as part of the City of Newburgh's annual "Spring into Newburgh" outdoor event. Anyone wishing to volunteer to help as an educator at this event can touch base with John G.

9. Foam Spill – See Item #3 above

10. QCWA & MSMC Collaboration

Prof. Lynn Maelia of MSMC is developing hoping to form a small student group going into the field and taking real time physical and chemical measurements of the water quality in the Lower Quassaick Creek Watershed and charting the data. This group will perform 2 or 3 cycles of this monitoring in May & June. The goal is to perpetuate this exercise over time to build a continuous water quality database.

Additionally, Prof. James Moran of MSMC has begun an Enterococcus sampling plan on the Crystal Lake tributary with one of his microbiology classes. More info as data becomes available.

11. Bard Center for Environmental Policy visits Washington Lake

John mentioned his meeting here in Newburgh with the Dan Shapley and the Bard Center for Environmental Policy Class with Dr. Jen Phillips. The class is studying land development policy with regard to Washington Lake watershed protection. John suggested that we ask the top few students to present their papers at a future meeting after the semester.

12. Facebook – See Item #2

Jack is asking how the QCWA can make the use of Facebook more useful and interesting to potentially get more community involvement. Marcel recommended trying to maintain one site manager to control content and posts. Erin said there is a means of turning off comments to particular posts if the discussion becomes too objectionable. If anyone is interested in developing Facebook strategies, contact Peter Smith, [psmitharc@aol.com](mailto:psmitharc@aol.com) or Jack Caldwell, [jdcaldwell1129@gmail.com](mailto:jdcaldwell1129@gmail.com)

13. Support for \$.05 fee for single use paper bags

The single use plastic bag ban to become effective in NYS as of March, 2020. This law provides an option for each County to assess a \$.05 fee to individual paper bag substitutes. This fee has shown to better foster reusable shopping bags. There is a coalition in Orange County advocating for the County to institute this fee. John asked for and received the meeting attendees' consent to issue a letter from the QCWA in support of the coalitions efforts.

Wayne K. recommended the movie "Bag It" which documents the use and detriment of single use plastic bags.

#### 14. Hudson River Ramble

John G. informed the group of the Hudson River Ramble. This is a series of events on, near, about the Hudson River during the weekends of September. The QCWA would like to initiate one or more events during that period to hopefully inspire increased community involvement in environmental issues related to Quassaick Creek. One event being considered is an interactive display in Algonquin Park including activities currently performed by the QCWA such as macro-invertebrate study, chemical testing, trees-for-tributaries, etc. Other activities and events can be added as interest grows.

#### 15. June 24 Meeting Special Location

Wayne Cherek has arranged for the June monthly meeting of the QCWA to be held aboard the sloop Woody Guthrie for an evening sail at 6:00 pm from the Beacon Sloop Club adjacent to the Metro North train station. Due to the size of the boat, attendance will be limited to less than 15 passengers on a first come – first served basis. More info to come.

#### 16. Other business:

Bill gave an update on the Columbia School of Architecture's theoretical design of a water feature and nature center along the Quassaick Creek in the area of the Holden Dam. Bill was able to return to Columbia to view the 12 students present their final design after incorporating comments provided earlier in the semester by invited architectural practitioners. The projects will be reviewed by the QCWA Board of Directors. Hopefully, a few selected students will be able to come to a future monthly meeting and present their vision to our members.

#### 17. Next meeting (Note special DATE change for May's monthly for meeting):

**May 20, 2019, 5:00 PM, MSMC, Aquinas Hall, Room 252.**