

TOMPKINS COUNTY WATER RESOURCES COUNCIL

**May 16, 2011
Meeting Minutes**

Voting Members Present (15): Liz Cameron, Carol Chock, Bill Garthwaite, Barry Goodrich, Roxy Johnston, Joan Jurkowich, Dan Karig, Lynn Leopold, Gregg McConnell, Jim McGarry, Elaine Quaroni, Damon Rodnac, Cindy Schulte, Craig Schutt, Mary Shelley

Voting Members Excused (4): Ed Bugliosi, Darby Kiley, Frank Proto, Marjory Rinaldo-Lee

Voting Member Absent (2): Sharon Anderson, Rick Manning,

Non-Voting Member Present (4): John andersson (Associate), Dooley Kiefer (Associate), Todd Miller (Ex-Officio), Lisa Wright-Mathews (Associate)

Guests Present (2): Scott Doyle (T C Planning Dept.), Susan Riha

Staff Present (1): Kathy Wilsea (T C Planning Dept.)

SPDES Permit Annual Report Public Hearing -- WRC Vice Chair Barry Goodrich called the public hearing to order at 4:25 PM. Written questions were submitted by Craig Schutt:

1. Question 3: What about printed materials? The SWCD has conducted 4-hour contractor trainings in erosion and sediment control. The SWCD has also conducted trainings for Town officials in erosion and sediment control/stormwater. The contractor trainings have been posted in our newsletter and on the NYSDEC stormwater site.
2. Minimum Control Measure 2, #5.a: The date for the public meeting is dated for 5/16/11. Therefore, how can you say that no comments were received for the reporting period in question 6?
3. MCM #2: No outfalls were screened during dry weather? Have you contacted the highway dept.? The MS4's will be signing a contract with the SWCD to do outfall screenings.
4. MCM3 #12F: Future trainings will also include Town officials.
5. MCM4/5 #5: The coalition does provide education and training for contractor SWPPP review. They do it through the SWCD.
6. MCM4 #5: The contractors need to use the NYS Construction Stormwater Inspection manual. If they aren't using it, what are they using?
7. MCM4 #7d: This question was not answered.
8. MCM5 #1: What about highway road side ditches?
9. MCM5 #5: There has to be someone who has been trained in green infrastructure.
10. MCM6 #1: None of those facilities are addressed in the SWMP?
11. MCM6 #2: I think you need to speak to County Highway. Also speak to them about questions 3,4,5, and 6.
12. MCM6 #7a: Who from the County coordinates and participates in the stormwater committees?

The hearing was adjourned at 4:30 and the meeting of the Water Resources Council was called to order by the Vice Chair. Responses are attached at the end of these minutes.

Agenda Review and Approval of Minutes – There were no changes to the agenda. The draft minutes of April 18, 2011 were moved by Roxy Johnston, seconded by Craig Schutt and accepted by a show of hands (Lynn Leopold abstained) with two changes.

Adapting to Climate Change – Susan Riha began by saying there is a Climate Change office within NYS DEC and that office created the Climate Smart Communities campaign. The two phases of the campaign are Mitigation (reduction of greenhouse gases) and Adaptation. Mitigation consists of reduction of greenhouse gases. According to the International Panel on Climate Change Commitment, Adaptation is adjustment in natural or human systems

in response to actual or expected climate stimuli (2007). Climate change is expected to be at least 2 degrees centigrade due to thermal inertia of the oceans. So, how will human systems adapt?

Managing climate risks takes into consideration the effect of climate uncertainty, and scientists like to try to quantify uncertainty. Susan shared precipitation maps for New York that showed maximum recorded precipitation within a three hour period, for five years (1.8") and for one hundred years (3.5"). But these are based on stationary climate records, and can we rely on stationary climate for new general circulation models (GCM)? There are about 20 GCMs ongoing at a time throughout the world, and the scientists report every four years. Each GCM is based on 500 square kilometers. GCM data is used to develop regional climate models, then local process models. Balloon data is used for local forecasts. This all leaves much room for uncertainty.

GCMs also are used for non-quantitative assessment of climate risks. Will we have more extreme rainfall events? More flooding? More droughts? She provided graphs that compare predictions to a slope of the theoretical value of the ability to hold more moisture when temperature increases (Clausius–Clapeyron relation). But these theories are ineffective for some places that have constant moisture, like Cape Cod. They will have some effect, but not on every precipitation event. Most GCM models predict we will have more annual rainfalls. But using GCMs on historical data, many large storms and the drought of the 60s are not predicted because GCMs don't model cloud systems. Susan provided a chart of Fall Creek flooding and spoke about how maximum flow does not relate to the biggest storm events due to saturation of soil, so flooding is not clear. Drought predictors use transpiration models, but they are developed under current precipitation records. In the future we might see more aggregate drought, but not hydrologic drought.

Risk management theories include Share/Transfer, such as insurance and hedge products; Reduce/Mitigate based on reducing the likelihood or severity of climate risk (infrastructure, operations, stockpiling, disaster response); Avoidance, which aims at elimination rather than initiation; and Retain, which can be used in the cases of very small or very large risks. Non-optimal approaches for managing risk include adaptive management, precautionary principle, no-regrets options, and scenario planning/robust decision making (big water utilities use this).

There is much water resources information available for local governments, and this information is already designed to reduce climate risk. Assets Management can mean gray water resource infrastructure, including dams and privately owned water treatment, and these are expensive and deteriorate with age. There are opportunities for consolidation, downsizing, elimination, and replacement with green infrastructure.

Susan also addressed some more random topics: If air temperature increases, does water temperature increase? Some water treatment sites are restricted for discharges because the water temperatures are above a determined level. An example of this is Indian Point nuclear energy plant, which sometimes has to cool water before it can be discharged. There is also increasing pressure to use sophisticated water treatment systems. The Netherlands is a delta for the Rhine, which they don't control. Their climate change plan is to re-route the Rhine. Susan got involved in local government because of stormwater flow issues near Sapsucker Woods. The County's redesign plan for Hanshaw Road involves bigger stormwater pipes, which will help. Regionally, we can make better decisions about where to build – like stay out of the floodplain in Ithaca. The Netherlands changed their water management philosophy to "Room for Rivers", and will be moving dikes so rivers have room to flow. This means the government has the right to flood land and is buying up property within the new dike areas. Susan sees a need for less highly engineered systems. Green systems are lower tech but effective. Joan Jurkovich said many of our water systems are 50 to 80 years old, which is true of all our infrastructure. It would be nice to have a global approach. Susan said we need to develop a basin-level approach, and noted that infrastructure is expensive. She feels NYS won't be bad off under climate change. Discussion has begun on if/how we can take advantage of changes. Can more agriculture move here, and can we promote that? Can we ship water to other states, and when and where?

Dan Karig said he sees contradictory, confusing approaches. For example, we know Cayuga Lake's flood level is 387', but big box stores have built south of the Inlet on land below the flood level. They know, but are willing to take the risk. Then when the land floods, they are yelling. Susan said maybe the big boxes are the best things to have there -- this is an example of moral hazards. John Andersson sees the same thing with properties that have

flood insurance – they keep rebuilding. Insulation is the best investment to make in a building over time, but owners don't invest in it because they won't keep the building long enough for payback.

EPA Proposed Rule on Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Program – Roxy Johnston reported EPA does this periodically to stay current on contaminant issues. The law limits to 30 the number of contaminants that can be considered at a time. Technical difficulty and cost of tests can be considered, along with the potential of finding such contaminants in drinking water. The cost shares will differ, with operations only designated small or large. All Ithaca area plants (Ithaca, Bolton Point, Cornell) would be considered large and would have to pay for tests. 800 small systems will be selected to receive aid. EPA is looking at 8 new items – 6 contaminants and 2 viruses. The water plant fills bottles and ships them to the testing lab, and the three local plants already use the same lab and get a discount rate for current work. They might be able to save costs by bidding out to another contractor. Each water plant would be assigned a 12-month period for testing, which would fall within the calendar years of 2013-2015. Roxy thinks cost would be over \$12,000. None of this is finalized yet, and she expects county health departments will be informed. Labs need to prove they can handle this, and maybe the lab we use won't even apply.

Committees – Aquifer: Todd Miller said they will meet in early June. The second SixMile Creek aquifer report has been published and will be available next month at WRC. C L Monitoring Partnership: Roxy reported they met in May. They have had no response to contacts with DEC, so are re-examining their goals. All are interested in the benefits of the collaboration and will focus on outreach with local elected officials and serving as a sounding board for the County on related topics. They can adapt their current data collection system for a quality assurance plan, which would be required by DEC if TMDLs are developed. It would be minor work on the partnership's part, but they are trying to find out if it would be acceptable to DEC. TMDLs have not been decreed for Cayuga Lake, but may be in the future. Dredging: Members have heard nothing from the City or EcoLogic. Education: No report. Executive: Barry reported they are working on the WRC Work Plan and will communicate with the Planning Department and committee chairs. Gas Drilling: Members report they are currently waiting for the SGEIS from DEC. Grants: Craig Schutt reported NYS finally released a lump sum of \$1.1 million to FLOWPA for 2008-2009 projects that got folded into the 2009-2010 plan. Nominating/ Membership: Cindy Schulte reported they are ready to examine a list of expiring seats and discussion will be on the July WRC agenda concerning skills to look for in recruiting. Streams: Dan Karig reported they will meet next Monday. Wetlands: Barry reported they met and discussed the model ordinance and compared it with the new DEC regulations.

Chair & Staff Reports – There were no reports.

Announcements/Other Business – Roxy Johnston reported the Drinking Water Week Celebration was held yesterday at the Farmers Market. Attendance was good, and Bolton Point won the taste test. The draft design for the City's new drinking water treatment plant is on the next agenda for the Board of Public Works. Construction bids can be sought when the design is accepted. Core samples are now being taken to plan for dredging in the silt pond and reservoir for some repairs. Lynn Leopold asked about the new constructed wetlands by Goetchius Wetland Preserve. Craig and Barry provided information that it is a NYS DOT mitigation project to replace a wetland destroyed by construction of Route 86 by Horseheads. It connects to natural wetlands, and is adjacent to property of Finger Lakes Land Trust.

Adjournment -- The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Wilsea, Planning Department Secretary
Adopted by the Council on June 20, 2011.

MS4 Annual Report for permit NYR20A278

Responses to 5/16/2011 Public Hearing comments:

13. Response to question 3: What about printed materials? The SWCD has conducted 4-hour contractor trainings in erosion and sediment control. The SWCD has also conducted trainings for Town officials in erosion and sediment control/stormwater. The contractor trainings have been posted in our newsletter and on the NYSDEC stormwater site. [Added.](#)
14. Response to MCM2 #5.a: The date for the public meeting is dated for 5/16/11. Therefore, how can you say that no comments were received for the reporting period in question 6? [Form only allowed toggle between “yes” and “no”. Response is now “yes”.](#)
15. Response to MCM3 #2: No outfalls were screened during dry weather? Have you contacted the highway dept.? The MS4’s will be signing a contract with the SWCD to do outfall screenings. [Confirmed with Highway Division that no outfalls were screened during dry weather.](#)
16. Response to MCM3 #12F: Future trainings will also include Town officials. [Added.](#)
17. Response to MCM4/5 #5: The coalition does provide education and training for contractor SWPPP review. They do it through the SWCD. [Response changed to “yes”.](#)
18. Response to MCM4 #5: The contractors need to use the NYS Construction Stormwater Inspection manual. If they aren’t using it, what are they using? [Response changed to “yes”.](#)
19. Response to MCM4 #7d: This question was not answered. [Added](#)
20. Response to MCM5 #1: What about highway road side ditches? [Now listed in chart as “Open Water”, 12 inspections, 6 maintenance.](#)
21. Response to MCM5 #5: There has to be someone who has been trained in green infrastructure. [No staff members were trained during this reporting period.](#)
22. Response to MCM6 #1: None of those facilities are addressed in the SWMP? [Salt Storage moved to “yes” column for self-assessment, based on recent review of cost saves and environmental impacts.](#)
23. Response to MCM6 #2: I think you need to speak to County Highway. Also speak to them about questions 3,4,5, and 6. [County Highway was the source of this data. The street sweeper was not operational during the reporting year. Second contact made to confirm.](#)
24. Response to MCM6 #7a: who from the County coordinates and participates in the stormwater committees? [Ryan Sherry of Tompkins County Public Works.](#)