

TOMPKINS COUNTY WATER RESOURCES COUNCIL

**September 19, 2011
Meeting Minutes**

Voting Members Present (16): Sharon Anderson, Liz Cameron, Bill Garthwaite, Barry Goodrich, Roxy Johnston, Dan Karig, Darby Kiley, Lynn Leopold, Rick Manning, Gregg McConnell, Jim McGarry, Elaine Quaroni, Marjory Rinaldo-Lee, Damon Rodnac, Cindy Schulte, Craig Schutt

Voting Members Excused (4): Ed Bugliosi, Carol Chock, Joan Jurkowich, Frank Proto

Voting Member Absent (1): Mary Shelley

Non-Voting Member Present (1): John Andersson (Associate), Jose Lozano (Associate), Linda Wagenet (Associate)

Guests Present (2): Ben Girtain Plowe, Tom Evans

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

Call to Order: Vice Chair Barry Goodrich called the meeting to order at 4:23 PM.

Agenda Review and Approval of Minutes – There were no changes to the agenda. The draft minutes of July 18, 2011 were moved by Roxy Johnston and seconded by Lynn Leopold. One clarification was added, and the revised draft was accepted by voice vote.

Hydrilla Verticillata in Cayuga Inlet – Roxy Johnston reported that this invasive weed was identified August 4th during a trip of the Floating Classroom. She passed around a map of locations with dense infestation and some lesser infestations. She also shared photos of the area by the Farmers Market. Right now the densely infested areas combine for about 9 acres, but she warned that could expand to 90 acres by next year if not treated. This weed can grow an inch a day vertically and horizontally, plus fragments can root. On Labor Day weekend, a team tested 347 locations and found rooted fragments, and Roxy also passed around a map of those locations. These locations will also be distributed to members by email.

We need to knock out this invasive species quickly. \$75,000 might cover herbicide application for 2011. Roxy is contacting property owners about consent and concerns, and SWCD is helping to obtain permits from DEC. Another phase that will be necessary is removal of tubers next year. California spends \$2 to \$5 million annually for eradication, and is 95% successful. Florida works on control, but does not attempt eradication. Roxy warned the Inlet could be filled with Hydrilla within three years. The City is requesting all boat traffic cease. The boatyards and Treman Marina have wash stations for boats and trailers, and are even suggesting to boaters that they leave their boats until herbicide has been applied, as that would treat their boats. The community has not reacted to the possibility of herbicide application with a huge outcry. Roxy noted the Hydrilla itself has a risk of killing off fish, waterfowl, plants, and birds. Herbicide application is seen as a better alternative than not treating the Inlet. Volunteers have not extended their checks to the south end of the Inlet. Herbicide application could start two days after all releases are gathered from landowners. The worst case scenario would be 21 days from the original mailing date, and DEC has the right to modify the permit based on comments received. Herbicide application must be done prior to the plants producing turions, or it would be useless. Ithaca College crews intend to keep practicing until boating on the Inlet is banned.

Bob Johnson, a retired Cornell professor working with the control team, felt the storm flow was strong and probably some Hydrilla went into the lake. Outreach is needed so lake property owners can identify Hydrilla in the spring. Vegetative segments have washed up in Stewart Park, but will freeze and die. Boating centers are nervous about timeframe to move boats out for the winter. Liz Cameron pointed out herbicide tests have not been conducted anywhere in New York State, because they are not required to test for this one. Jose Lozano said the

Ithaca Area Wastewater Treatment Plan has not decided about monitoring at their test points, but have offered to help make it happen for other testing entities.

Craig Schutt said DEC has \$50,000 for the project, and the herbicide manufacturer said infestation in this area is a big deal and has offered \$15,000. Craig has also dialoged with Martha Robertson, chair of the County Legislature, and she has the County Administrator looking into providing \$26,000 in funding. Roxy said DEC has no mandate for aquatic invasive plants. Since the Inlet is bounded by City of Ithaca property, it became a City project. At this stage the tubers cannot be moved, so dredging of the Inlet is on hold. DEC doesn't have authority to shut down the Inlet, the County Sheriff would have to enforce a boating ban. The herbicide will kill some or all other aquatic plants, but it is expected the seed banks of plants that have been in the Inlet for years will restore normal plant variety. Roxy asked members to email any questions to her, so she can organize concerns. Comments related to the DEC permits should go to Craig Schutt. Next phase would be getting rid of tubers next year, which is planned for diver-assisted dredging, which involves tubers being pulled, vacuumed up, and sent to the IAWWTP where the digester would destroy them. Eradication is a five-year commitment, according to a California expert.

Introduction of Guests – Ben Girtain Plowe was visiting, and he is an intern working for Jose Lozano at IAWWTP. Tom Evans was also visiting, and he is a senior planner with Southern Tier East Regional Planning & Development Board in Binghamton. Tom is becoming familiar with water programs of the counties within the agency's area.

Committee Reports – Gas Drilling: Marjory Rinaldo-Lee reported the deadline for comments to DEC on the gas drilling dsGEIS is 12/12. They expect draft regulations to be issued, too, with the same deadline. They intend to use the DEC electronic format for submitting comments, and working comments into that format will be part of the committee meeting on 9/26. Draft comments will come to the full council on 10/17. Some previous comments were incorporated in the update, primarily to our satisfaction, and the new comment period can only include concerns that were not mentioned in the previous round. The response process is still complaint-based, so DEC did not incorporate our prior suggestions about monitoring programs. Grants: Craig Schutt had no news to report. Nominating/Membership: Cindy Schulte reported they will meet Wednesday about applications for membership appointment/reappointment. She announced they also seek nominations for 2012 officers. Streams: Dan Karig reported they met in the summer. At their next meeting they will talk about the work items assigned to them in the Work Plan. Kathy Wilsea pointed out the work items came from the Water Quality Strategy. Wetlands: Darby Kiley said she will be scheduling a meeting. Aquifer: Chair is excused today. Cayuga Lake Monitoring Partnership: Roxy Johnston said they did not meet, as she has been involved in responding to Hydrilla. Education: Sharon Anderson reported they are working on outreach for Hydrilla. It is possible they will arrange a public meeting on the intended herbicide use, but the tight timeframe may prevent that. If held, they may Skype in a California expert. Executive: Copies of a letter authorized by the Executive Committee on Chesapeake TMDLs were available in the mail folder.

Chair & Staff Reports – Chair: Barry said all concerns he discussed with Frank Proto were touched on during today's meeting. Staff: Kathy Wilsea reminded the Chair of NomComm that we did not receive an application from Todd Miller of USGS.

Announcements/Other Business – Jim McGarry said he read the report on the Lower Sixmile Creek aquifer study and found it very interesting. Todd Miller is scheduled to do a presentation at the November WRC meeting. Cindy Schulte announced a pharmaceuticals collection event on 10/1, with locations at the Transit Center, Dryden Fire Department, and Lansing Town Hall. Roxy Johnston said the team working on Hydrilla still seeks weekend volunteers for outreach work. Also, Cayuga Lake Watershed Network will host their Sunset on Cayuga fundraiser on 10/8. Sharon Anderson said the Network is considering a Hydrilla conference, and that may be held 10/17 at the Unitarian Church annex.

Adjournment -- The meeting was adjourned at 5:22 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Kathy Wilsea, Planning Department Secretary
Adopted by the Council on October 17, 2011.