

# TOMPKINS COUNTY WATER RESOURCES COUNCIL

December 15, 2008  
Meeting Minutes

**Members Present (17):** John Andersson (Associate), Liz Cameron, Carol Chock, Barry Goodrich, Roxy Johnston, Joan Jurkowich, Dan Karig, Dooley Kiefer (Associate), Darby Kiley, Rick Manning, Frank Proto, Elaine Quaroni (Associate), Nick Schipanski, Cindy Schulte, Craig Schutt, Mary Shelley, Linda Wagenet

**Members Excused (2):** Ed Bugliosi, Roger Yonkin

**Members Absent (5):** Patrick Barry (ex-officio), Todd Miller (ex-officio), Dan Konowalow, Bud Shattuck, Paul Tunison

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

**Guests Present (6):** Rick Ewald, Janice Koski, Gregg McConnell, Jessica Miles, Eileen O'Connor, Marjory Rinaldo-Lee

Chairman Frank Proto called the meeting to order at 4:20 PM.

**Agenda Review and Approval of Minutes** – Linda Wagenet's agenda item on the Retiree Environmental Stewardship Program was postponed. The draft minutes of November 17th were moved by Joan Jurkowich, seconded by Craig Schutt, amended, and passed by voice vote.

**Overview of the Owasco Lake Watershed Regulations in Tompkins County** -- Jessica Miles was present. She is the Owasco Lake Watershed Inspector, and works out of the Cayuga County Soil & Water Conservation District office. Regulations for the Owasco Lake Watershed have been in place since 1984, but not in use in Tompkins County. Parts of the towns of Groton, Dryden and Lansing are within the watershed for Owasco Inlet, which contributes 55% of the water for Owasco Lake. Owasco Lake is much smaller than Cayuga, measuring 10.7 miles in length, 1.2 miles in width, and having a depth to 177 feet. It has 25 miles of shoreline. Compared to the size of the lake, the watershed is quite large, encompassing 208 square miles. Owasco is a drinking water source for half of Cayuga County and many of its shoreline residents. In 1997, it won the statewide drinking water taste test at the State Fair, but since then has high levels of disinfectant by-products. In 2008, Owasco Lake and Inlet were placed on the Impaired Waterbodies list. In 2006, the Lake was added to the 303d list, and the Inlet was added in 2008. The swimming areas at the northern end of the Lake have been contaminated by Canada Geese. Jessica's job was funded in its first year by grant money obtained by Senator Nozzolio, and future years will be funded by a slight increase in the water rate, which will cost a few dollars per year per household in the drinking water district.

The watershed regulations enacted in 1984 have 13 prohibitions. (1) Agriculture-associated animal waste areas must be more than 250 linear feet (lf) from a stream. (2) Cemeteries must be more than 250 lf from a stream. (3) Chloride salt storage must be more than 500 lf from stream. (4) Herbicide and pesticide use restrictions match those of DEC. (5) Human excreta and sewage failures are reported to the Health Department for regulation. (6) Junkyards must be more than 100 lf from a stream. If a municipality does not have a matching or stricter regulation, a junkyard is defined as having two or more unregistered vehicles. The Town of Groton has a regulation that is stricter. (7) Manure storage must be more than 75 lf from a stream. (8) Radioactive materials restrictions match those of DEC. (9) Refuse must be more than 250 lf from a stream (10) Refuse disposal areas must be more than 500 lf from a stream. (11) There is a regulation on structures near intake pipes in Owasco Lake, which does not apply to Tompkins. (12) Toxic substances restrictions match those of DEC. (13) Other wastes and pollutants are prohibited.

Jessica has no routine for inspections and enforcements. She responds to complaints and looks for apparent problems. She works with the landowner toward compliances, then violations might be written up. Ag violations are referred to SWCD, and septic violations are referred to the Health Department. Liz Cameron said the Tompkins County Board of Health will discuss the regulations in January. These regs don't match Tompkins County Health Code, so she will be checking to see what aspects the Board of Health wants enforced or changed. Roxy Johnston and Darby Kiley suggested that Jessica do a presentation to the Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization.

**Announcement of Elections for Chair and Vice Chairs** – Craig Schutt said the Nominating Committee found no new interest, but the existing officers are willing to serve another year. Slate moved by Craig, seconded by Joan Jurkowich. The slate will remain on the floor until elections at the January meeting. Carol Chock reported that the County

Legislature's Planning, Development & Environmental Quality Committee tabled the nomination of Roger Yonkin to the EMC Liaison seat, based on poor attendance. Members of the Nominating Committee affirmed that Roger is their choice for that seat. Carol will discuss with PDEQ chair, Martha Robertson. Dooley said she had already reported on the Nominating Committee deliberations to Martha Robertson.

**Draft: Activities for the Water Quality Strategy** – Joan Jurkowich provided handouts of the draft goals and action items. The WQS has been expanded to include all agencies, not just WRC, so it now includes work WRC won't be addressing. The gray highlighted lines show items with WRC input. A glossary will be included. The WRC organizational meeting will take place next month, and our committee structure will be clarified and applied to the WQS. This is a three-year document to be adopted by WRC with public input. February is the adoption target. Comments may be provided to Joan prior to the WRC meeting on January 26, 2009.

**Committee Reports** – Cayuga Lake Recreation: Dan Karig asked about the status of the letter to Wegmans, which Frank Proto is editing. City Forester Andy Hillman is happy to participate in the tree planting project along the Inlet. Planting is expected to take place in April. Dredging: Dan Karig said the website is up, maintained by EcoLogic on the City webpage. There are two subcommittees, Education and Technical. Tech will meet 1/12. They are trying to get more benthic macroinvertebrate examination incorporated into the biological study from EcoLogic. Grants: Frank has signed a letter of support for a FLOWPA special project, and the materials were submitted in today's mail. Craig Schutt reported he was in Albany on 12/9. There is much concern about the Environmental Protection Fund, which is a dedicated fund from real estate taxes. When the governor's recommended budget comes out there will be time to make comments. Due to the amount of time between today's meeting and the January meeting, members felt the Executive Committee should provide comments to the governor if deemed necessary. WRC/CU Monitoring Plan: Roxy Johnston said Jose Lozano presented info at the last joint meeting. Ithaca Area Waste Water Treatment Plant data shows so much reduction of phosphorus loading (around 50%), that Jose felt he could ask for reduction of mandatory testing. Roxy and Darby Kiley met with some Cornell staff members about posting information on the web for public access. CU folks were very supportive and innovative. Dan Karig suggested Jose could compare his data against soluble phosphorus records instead of total phosphorus. This might show even more improvement and be more meaningful. Roxy said discussion continues with DEC.

**Chair's Report** – Frank asked committee chairs to provide summaries to Kathy Wilsea for the annual report. In preparation for the organizational meeting next month, Kathy will email the list of existing committees. Handouts were available with meeting dates for 2009. The Board of Health passed a resolution that provides comments on the DEC scoping document for the supplemental generic EIS on gas exploration, and copies are in the mail folder. Also in the mail folder are copies of Frank's letter to the City regarding selection of a drinking water source. The baseline material mentioned agriculture burial of animals on streambanks, and he sent comments. He has not received any response yet. Roxy said comments on buried animals and privies concern practices from 40 or more years ago. Further chance to comment will be available when Common Council has public meetings on the proposal. Frank received a letter from USGS about the 12/31/2008 discontinuance of the Lansing gaging station. Frank will contact Linda Szabo at USGS to see what she suggests WRC can do. Craig thought the data from the gaging station would be useful for the Ludlowville flood control and remediation project.

**Legislature Liaison's Report** – Carol Chock said the County budget passed, and it included stream monitoring funds and SWCD rent. Adoption of the Energy & Greenhouse Gas Emissions element of the County Comprehensive Plan is on the agenda for 12/16. She sees lots of interest among legislators on water issues. She is aware of an attorney who is using grant funds to examine where counties have jurisdiction for water resources. Watersheds are a maybe so far. Carol is not sure who will be the Legislature Liaison next year. If another person is selected, she wanted WRC members to know she enjoyed her time here.

**Announcements** – Darby announced that today is Roxy's birthday. A quick round of Happy Birthday was sung as a salute to the momentous occasion.

**Adjournment** -- The meeting was adjourned at 6:14 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kathy Wilsea, Planning Department Secretary  
Adopted by the Council on January 26, 2009.