



# Tompkins County Water Resources Council 2013 Annual Report

Cayuga Lake March 6, 2004

Photo by: William Warmus

## *Introduction to the Water Resources Council*

The Tompkins County Water Resources Council (WRC) advises the Tompkins County Legislature on matters related to water resources management and planning, and is charged with identifying problems, proposing priorities, and promoting the coordination of activities in the management and protection of the County's water resources. The WRC provides a public forum for local communities and stakeholder groups to address and discuss their water resources concerns, and it is the intent of the group to coordinate the water resources-related efforts of local governments, public and private institutions, and agencies and organizations throughout the County.

The WRC also serves as the County's water quality coordinating committee, responsible for the development of the Tompkins

County Water Quality Strategy (WQS), which is intended to help prioritize local water resources issues and concerns and identify strategies to address these concerns. The strategies are incorporated into the WRC's bi-annual work plan, which is developed in conformity with the WQS, to help guide the activities of the WRC that are achieved through a number of standing and special committees. WRC membership consists of 21 voting members, who are appointed by the County Legislature, representing various water-related interests that include six non-voting members from relevant Federal and State agencies. The WRC welcomes Associate Members, who have committee-level voting rights.

# **TABLE OF CONTENTS**



Introduction to Water Resources Council .....	1
Table of Contents .....	2
Membership .....	3
Council Meetings and Collaborations .....	4
Committee Activities .....	5
You're Invited! .....	9

## **2013 Membership Roster**

Sharon Anderson - Cooperative Extension  
Fay Benson - Agriculture  
Ed Bugliosi - USGS  
Liz Cameron - Environmental Health  
Sarah Dwyer - Business Industry  
Barry Goodrich - Watershed Org., Vice Chair  
Jim McGarry - EMC Liaison  
Roxy Johnston - Water Purveyor  
Dan Karig - Recreation  
Marjory Rinaldo-Lee — Environment, Vice Chair  
Craig Schutt/Jonathan Negley - Soil & Water  
Lynn Leopold - Municipal Government  
Darby Kiley - Municipal Government  
Bill George - Municipal Government  
Dooley Kiefer - Legislature Liaison  
John Andersson - At-Large  
Elaine Quaroni - At-Large  
Scott Carpenter - At-Large  
Rick Manning - At-Large  
Gregg McConnell - At-Large  
Frank Proto - At-Large, Chair  
Jose Lozano - Associate  
John Mawdsley - Associate  
Todd Miller - Associate  
Steve Penningroth - Associate  
Mary Shelley - Associate  
Tom Vawter - Associate  
Linda Wagenet- Associate

# Council Meetings & Collaborations

*Guest presentations occur frequently at Water Resource Council Meetings. The following presentations occurred in 2013.*

## **March 18, 2013**

Hydrilla Task Force — *Roxy Johnston, Bob Johnson*

- 2012 Treatment Update — Roxy Johnston
- Plant Monitoring Results — Bob Johnson
- Introduction of Project Manager



## **May 20, 2013**

SPDES Permit Annual Report Public Hearing — *Angel Hinickle, Resource Conservation Specialist, Soil & Water Conservation District*

*Minutes from the monthly meetings of the WRC are posted on the Tompkins County Planning Department website at: <http://www.tompkins-co.org/planning/committees.html>.*

*To foster coordination and collaboration in the management of local water resources, WRC members serve as liaisons between the WRC and other groups, including the Finger Lakes-Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance, Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization and its Technical Advisory Committee, the Upper Susquehanna Coalition, Storm water Coalition of Tompkins County, Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board, and Tompkins County Environmental Management Council. Informal relationships also exist between the WRC and other organizations and agencies such as the Fall Creek and Six Mile Creek volunteer monitoring groups, the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network, and the Town of Caroline Watersheds Committee.*

## **Aquifer Committee 2013 Annual Report**



Cayuga Lake in Autumn Photo by: R D Welch

**Members:** *John Andersson, Fay Benson, Ed Bugliosi, Liz Cameron, Barry Goodrich, Dan Karig, Todd Miller, Marjory Rinaldo-Lee*

The Aquifer Committee had investigated arsenic in groundwater in Tompkins County in 2012. The results of this investigation indicated that elevated arsenic concentrations (greater than or equal to 10 µg/L) were detected in 8 percent of sample sites. The county's largest groundwater user, the Village of Dryden, which has one well that has been exceeding the NYS drinking-water limit for several years, is currently looking into options for alternative sources of water.

The Aquifer Committee, in 2013, began compiling a fact sheet that will provide information to county residents on (1) where arsenic may be a concern, (2) who should have their water tested, and (3) options for treating water for elevated arsenic. Work on the fact sheet is about 50% complete. The fact sheet will be completed and released in 2014.

In 2013, the Town of Enfield in conjunction with Tompkins County and USGS initiated an aquifer study.

## **Recreation Committee 2013 Annual Report**

**Members:** *Bill George, Dan Karig, Lynn Leopold, Rick Manning, Mary Shelley*

The Water Resources Council's Recreation Committee participated in and provided guidance for two projects during 2013 - the Cayuga Lake Blueway Trail and the Stewart Park Interpretive Sign Project.

**Cayuga Lake Blueway Trail Master Plan:** Tompkins, Seneca and Cayuga Counties cooperated on the preparation of the Cayuga Lake Blueway Trail Master Plan (<http://cayugablueway.weebly.com/>). Alta Planning was the lead consultant on the project and WRC member Rick Manning was a sub-consultant on this planning project. WRC members Lynn Leopold, William George and Dan Karig participated in field trips with Bill Foster, the consultant team members and the client committee to assist in the preparation of the plan providing information on existing and proposed public access and launch sites, parks and natural areas along the lakeshore, and possible paddling routes and itineraries. The report is complete and the three counties will use this document to support future grant applications to develop promotional materials and improve launch facilities and landing sites.



**Stewart Park Interpretive Sign Project:** Lynn Leopold and Rick Manning worked with the Cayuga Bird Club (CBC) to plan for two sets of interpretive signs that describe bird habitat and bird watching opportunities in Stewart Park. 2014 is the CBC's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary and they have pledged \$5,500 to fund the Renwick Wildwood sign and to support multiple signs at a Cayuga Lake bird watching overlook located at the lake edge adjacent to the Cayuga Waterfront Trail. Plans for this overlook and a set of three to four signs will be developed during the spring and summer of 2014

## **Education Committee 2013 Annual Report**

**Members:** Sharon Anderson, Lynn Leopold, Elaine Quaroni

The Education Committee participated in the activities of the Outreach group of the Hydrilla Task Force including hosting public information programs and distributing information flyers to residents living along the east shore of the south end of Cayuga Lake. Helping the Outreach Committee of the Hydrilla Task Force reach public officials and the local community will continue for the next few years. Links to up-to-date information on the progress in the fight against Hydrilla in the Cayuga Inlet can be found at the StopHydrilla.org website, which is maintained by Tompkins County Cornell Cooperative Extension.

The Education Committee continues to add pertinent information on water resources to the WRC web site. A link to the Cayuga Lake Modeling Project web site was added this year.

## **Executive Committee 2013 Annual Report**

**Members:** Frank Proto (chair), Marjory Rinaldo-Lee (1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair), Barry Goodrich (2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair), Elaine Quaroni, Craig Schutt, (Dooley Kiefer for Bylaws Review)

The Executive Committee continued to act in a supportive role regarding the Gas Drilling issue, and waits for Albany to move on the entire program.

The Committee weighed in on New York State's proposed 2014 Priority Water bodies List, including those for which a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) may be established, sending a response to the State after the ad hoc committee prepared it. This review is still ongoing and has prompted establishment of an ad hoc committee to continue the review in 2014. Most of the year was spent by the Executive Committee in reviewing the WRC Bylaws, and proposing a number of changes. An updated item regarding the budget process was included, as was clarification regarding Associate Members and committees. The revised proposal was passed, and approved by the County Legislature.

## **Grants Committee 2013 Annual Report**

**Members:** *Sarah Dwyer, Jose Lozano, Jon Negley*

The WRC Grants Committee was restarted on October 2013. The Committee held its first 2013 (e-mail) "meeting" October 10<sup>th</sup> to review the committee's charter and define a work plan. The Committee will identify available grant opportunities for the WRC.

Several grant opportunities were presented and discussed at the WRC meetings. Among these were:

1. - FL-LOWPA.
2. - NYS DEC Water Quality Improvement Grants
3. - New Jersey, New York and Connecticut Sea Grant Programs.
4. - Agriculture Energy Efficiency Research and Evaluation of Technology Barriers Program Opportunity Notice (PON) 2845.
5. - EPA Environmental Education
6. - Sustain Our Great Lakes RFP
7. - NYS Cleaner Greener program

## **Nominating/Membership Committee 2013 Annual Report**

**Members:** *Barry Goodrich, Joan Jurkovich, Dooley Kiefer, Elaine Quaroni*

This committee recommends to the Water Resources Council prospective members to fill vacancies of a 21-person voting council, six non-voting members of relevant Federal or State agencies, and associate members with committee-level voting rights. Members are chosen with these criteria in mind: credentials, skills, experience, background; diversity; residence time and location in Tompkins County; and other watershed-related activities.

The new members appointed by the Tompkins County Legislature for three-year terms commencing in 2014 are:

- **At-Large:** Roxy Johnston
- **Municipal Government:** Lynn Leopold
- **Recreation:** Dan Karig
- **Soil and Water Conservation District:** Jon Negley
- **Water Purveyor:** Chris Bordlemay

The new associate members appointed by the Water Resources Council for two-year terms commencing in 2014 are:

- Scott Carpenter
- Dooley Kiefer
- Steve Penningroth
- Linda Wagenet

This committee is also responsible for recommending a slate of officers for the Water Resources Council. The slate, approved by the unanimous vote of the members of the Water Resources Council for 2014 are:

- Frank Proto as Chair;
- Barry Goodrich as First Vice-Chair;
- Marjory Rinaldo-Lee as Second Vice-Chair.

## **Streams Committee 2013 Annual Report**

**Members:** *John Andersson, Liz Cameron, Scott Carpenter, Bill George, Barry Goodrich, Roxy Johnston, Dan Karig, Dooley Kiefer, Gregg McConnell, Jon Negley, Steve Penningroth, Marjory Rinaldo-Lee*

The Streams Committee worked on two projects in 2013. The first was the then impending remediation of the Dominion Gas pipeline crossing of Six mile Creek just downstream of German Crossroad. The previously installed stream-crossing structure, which created a 5' drop in channel elevation, was destroyed during the 2011 tropical storm. As planned by Dominion, the pipeline would be buried to about 5' below the channel bottom and the change in channel elevation would be removed. This would result in massive upstream migrating channel degradation, cause serious erosion of the bed and banks and threaten the bridge at German Crossroad.

The Committee brought this problem to the attention of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), the permitting agency, through a letter from the WRC and by contact with NYSDEC personnel. This resulted in advice and directive from NYSDEC to Dominion to preserve the grade change at the pipeline crossing. The remediation largely did preserve the grade change but may not be sufficient to resist flood erosion and communication with NYSDEC continues regarding this issue.

The second project was investigation of chloride (Cl) concentrations in county streams. Data from Sixmile and Fall Creeks indicates that Cl increases downstream and also has been increasing at all monitoring sites over time. The situation is complicated both as to causation and to effect. Some increase may have natural causes but road salting is an apparent major source and septic systems may contribute. At present, all Cl levels seem to be well below those that could impact human and biotic health. If salt (NaCl) is the main source of Cl, then Na (sodium) concentrations should be investigated because these may approach levels of concern for human health. This project is continuing.

## **Wetlands Committee 2013 Annual Report**

**Members:** *Scott Carpenter, Sarah Dwyer, Dooley Kiefer, Darby Kiley, John Mawdsley, Tom Vawter*

For a number of years, an objective of the Water Quality Strategy has been to identify and map wetlands that are not currently regulated by the State or federal government. The Wetlands Committee continued discussions with a local GIS consultant on how to use new mapping data to locate vulnerable wetlands. The committee partnered with the Storm water Coalition of Tompkins County, Tompkins County Soil and Water Conservation District, and the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network to garner sufficient funds to support a pilot project for mapping wetlands in a portion of Tompkins County. A contract between the consultant and Cayuga Lake Watershed Network was executed in late 2013, and we look forward to providing technical assistance in 2014.

## **You're Invited**

***We welcome visitors!** Residents of Tompkins County are invited to attend meetings of the WRC and apply for WRC membership. The Water Resources Council meets the third Monday of each month from 4:15 to 6:00 PM at the Transit Center (737 Willow Avenue, Ithaca). Feel free to phone the Secretary at 274-5560 about dates, or check our website.*

## **2014 Meeting Dates**

***January 27, February 24, March 17, April 21, May 19, June 16, July 21, August 18, September 15, October 20, November 17, December 15***

*For more information about the WRC or how to apply for WRC membership, please contact the Tompkins County Planning Department at 274-5560 or [planning@tompkins-co.org](mailto:planning@tompkins-co.org).*

