

**St. Lawrence County Environmental Management Council**  
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**Draft**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**September 18, 2019**

**2<sup>nd</sup> - Floor Conference Room, Public Safety Complex  
49½ Court Street, Canton, New York**

***Action items in bold italics / Motions underlined.***

Blue boxes indicate internal links to sections of these Minutes.

1. **Call to Order:** In the absence of the Chair, Vice-Chair Don O’Shea called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM.

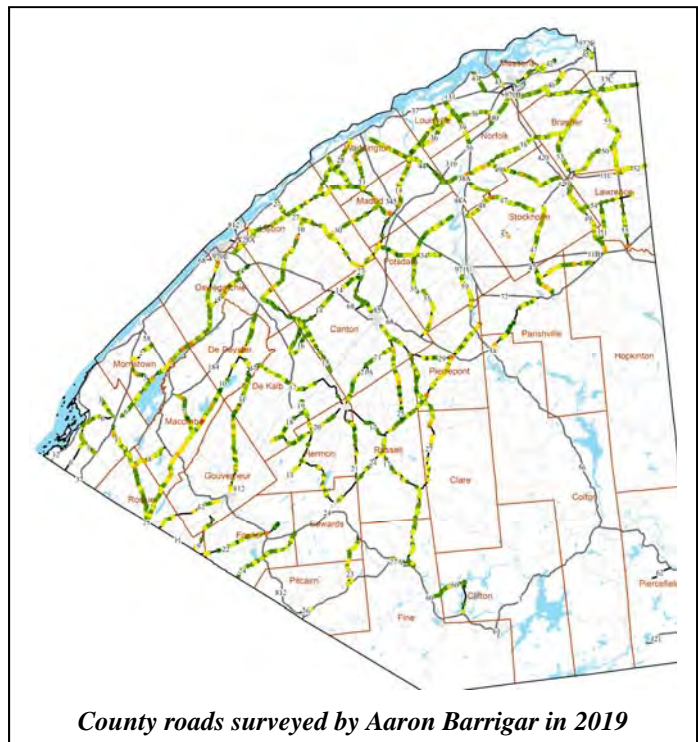
2. **Roll Call, Determination of Quorum:** A quorum was achieved during the presentation.  
Members present: Dave Barnes; Aaron Barrigar; Catherine Bennett; Jennifer Berbrich; Ryan Burkum; Don O’Shea, *Vice Chair*; Tiernan Smith; Rod Tozzi; Brian Washburn.  
Members absent: ; Joseph Brant, *Chair*; Erica Leonard; Richard Marshall; Sue Rau; Lance Rudiger; Nicole Terminelli, *BOL Liaison*; Pat Whalen, *Secretary*.  
Guest(s): John Pinkerton, SLC Industrial Development Agency; Emily Sheridan, DEC.  
Staff: John Tenbusch; Keith Zimmerman.

3. **Acceptance of Order of Business:** The Order of Business was accepted by consensus.

4. **Hearings, Comments from the Public.**

Aaron Barrigar, District Forester with the St. Lawrence County Soil & Water Conservation District, and Chair of the County Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Task Force, presented the initial results from the “Right-of-Way Ash and Hazard Trees Assessment Project”.

Barrigar reported that over the course of the summer 2019, he inventoried trees along 571 miles of County-owned roads.



He indicated that this comprised a 100% sample of County roads, and 18.9% of all roads in the County, a statistically significant sample. Therefore, the results he found might be extrapolated to other roads (State-owned or Town-owned) in communities affected by ash and other hazard trees. He noted that this survey effort took 229 hours for him to complete.

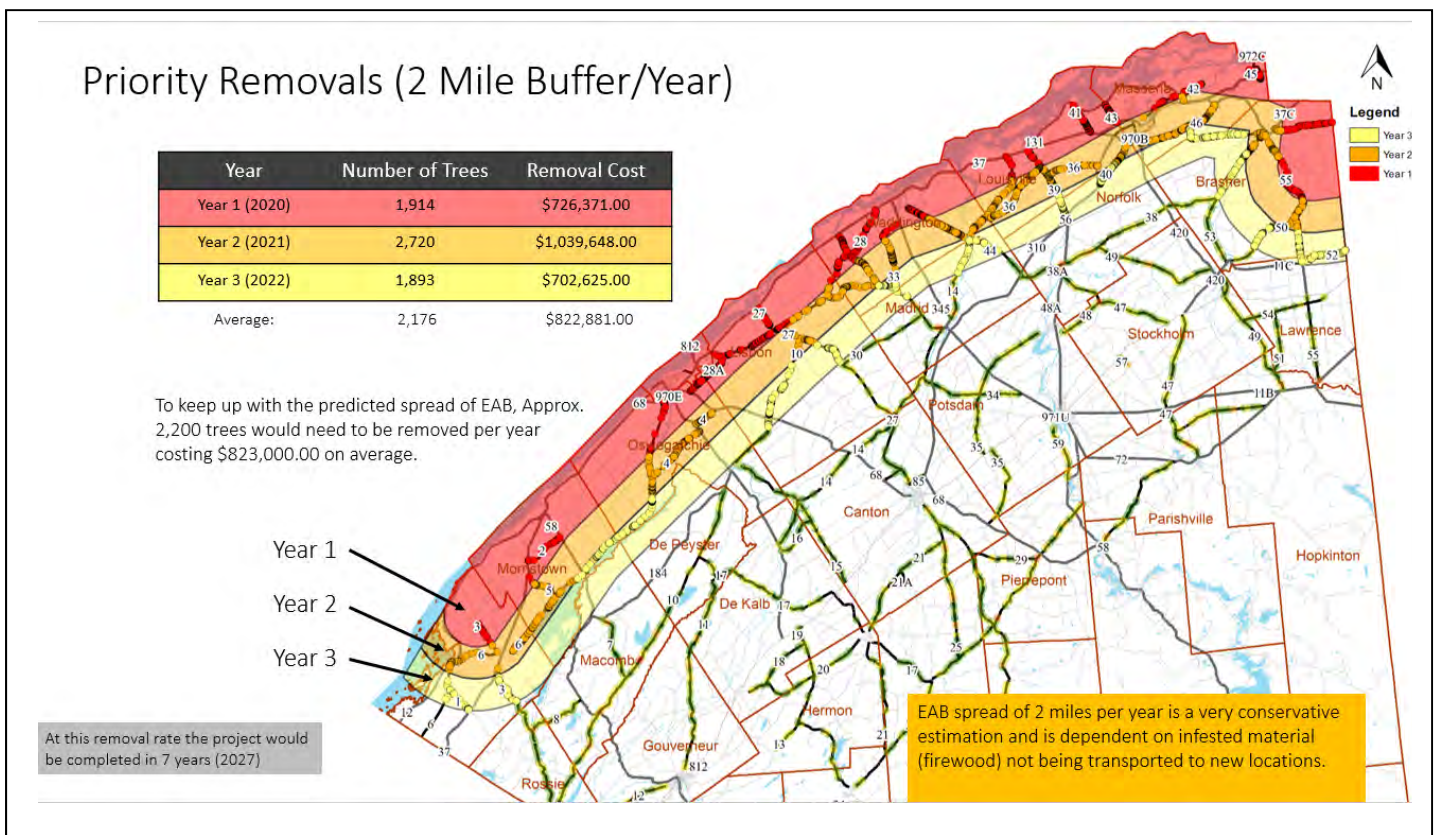
Barrigar counted 2,772 hazard trees (exclusive of ash trees). These included dead or deteriorated trees; infested, uprooted or struck by lightning. He also counted 11,856 ash trees. All of the ash trees are considered hazard trees, since they will almost inevitably become infested with EAB and die, thus becoming hazardous. The majority of trees surveyed (hazardous and ash) were in the 8-inch to 12-inch Diameter-at-Breast-Height (DBH). Therefore, a total of over 14,000 hazardous trees are found along County-owned roads.

Using pro-forma estimates for tree removal (one from an arborist company; one from a non-profit organization), Barrigar estimated that total cost to remove all hazardous and ash trees along County roads will be \$5.3 million. Overall, Barrigar reported that there are 25.6 hazardous or ash trees per mile of County-owned road; removal is estimated at \$9,374 per road mile.

He noted that the County might save almost \$500,000 by partnering with utility companies to have them remove all trees located near powerlines and equipment.

Barrigar proposed that the County undertake a multi-year program to remove these hazardous trees. He noted that EABs are already found in communities along the St. Lawrence River; these trees might be addressed during Year 1 and 2 of a Tree Removal program. See chart, below.

**According to Barrigar’s timetable, all hazard trees, including ash, would be removed within 7 years. An average of 2,176 trees per year would be removed, at an annual cost of \$823,000.**



There was considerable discussion about Aaron's findings. Keith Zimmerman, Planning Director, was attending the meeting to hear about the cost/impacts on County budgets. John Pinkerton, of SLC IDA, was attending because the EAB Task Force and the EMC are looking for ways to recoup some value from the effort needed to remove 14,000 trees. The downed trees will become a waste product unless they can be made into the raw material for some process.

Chai Pro-Tem O'Shea called a recess at approx. 7:15 PM; the meeting resumed at 7:20 PM.

5. **Approval of the Minutes of the July 2019 EMC meeting:** On a motion by Ryan Burkum (Tiernan Smith), the Minutes were approved.
6. **Report by Representative of the Board of Legislators.** No report.
7. **Reports by EMC Members on Conversations with County Legislators:** Catherine Bennett reported sending an email to Henry Leader.
8. **Report of the Committees:**
  - a. **Executive Committee:** No meeting; no report.
  - b. **Conservation of Resources Committee (CRC):** Jennifer Berbrich reported. See attached.
    - 1) Keith Zimmerman reported that he has spoken with Luke Martin, who had spoken at the June meeting of the EMC; Martin had reported that work crews were spraying herbicide along County roads adjacent to organic and near-organic produce farms. Martin claimed that some herbicide was being carried by wind onto these produce fields. Some organic producers have had problems with inspectors from organic certification programs as a result.
    - 2) Zimmerman stated that he is working on a program whereby the County would take requests from farmers and others who do NOT want herbicides applied to roadways near their property. These requests will be mapped, so that highway crews can avoid those properties. To the extent possible, the County will maintain these parts of roads with mechanical cutters.
  - c. **Environment + Economy Committee (E+E):** Rod Tozzi reported. See attached.
  - d. **Invasive Species Committee (ISC).** Donald O'Shea reported. See attached.
  - i. **Watershed Management Committee (WMC).** Brian Washburn reported. See attached.
9. **Report of the Staff:** Tenbusch and Zimmerman reported:
  - a. There have been staffing changes at the Planning Office.
    - 1) Keith has officially retired as Planning Director, but continues to work for the County as a contract employee.
    - 2) Another employee has missed considerable time from the office as they deal with medical issues.
    - 3) The result is that, at least temporarily, the Planning Office has significantly reduced capacity.
  - b. The recent **Household Hazardous Waste collection effort**, held September 14<sup>th</sup> at the Human Services Center in Canton, saw 240 cars bring hazardous materials to be disposed. A deputy Sheriff was present to accept old/unused pharmaceuticals; he reported receiving approx. 200 lbs. of same.

- c. There will be a meeting of the SLC Fish Advisory Board on Tuesday Sept. 24; the topic will be the consumption of contaminated fish. Tenbusch reported that he cannot attend this meeting. Tiernan Smith and Rod Tozzi volunteered to attend.
- d. Keith reported on the projects that have been recommended by the Resiliency & Economic Development Initiative (REDI) Regional Planning Team. See attached article from WDT.

**10. Unfinished Business:** None.

**11. New Business:** None.

**12. Announcements:**

- Emily Sheridan of NYS DEC announced that there will be a two-day meeting of the Great Lakes Initiative in November. Tentative dates are 11/4-5 or 11/13-14.

**13. Message to the Board of Legislators:** EMC members were asked to tell their assigned BOL members about the St. Lawrence County Right-of-Way Ash and Hazard Tree Assessment Project, conducted by Aaron Barrigar. Barrigar found over 14,000 hazard trees along County roads, including almost 12,000 ash trees that will be killed by Emerald Ash Borers. Barrigar estimated that total cost for removal of hazard trees along County roads would reach \$5.7 million; he recommended that the County adopt a seven-year program of tree removal; annual costs would be approx. \$822,000.

**14. Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned by consensus at 7:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

*Patrick Whalen*

Secretary

Minutes written by J. Tenbusch



# St. Lawrence County Environmental Management Council

## Conservation of Resources Committee Meeting

### Wednesday September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Purpose of the *Conservation of Resources Committee*.

- “Conservation” can mean “saving” or “effective/efficient/wise use”.
    - Thus, “conservation of resources” might include topic areas including solid waste management; household hazardous waste management; recycling; energy efficiency; wise use of natural resources of St Lawrence County
  - Conservation might also mean “preservation”, as in preservation of endangered/ rare/ significant flora (plants) or fauna (animals/creatures).
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**Present:** Pat Whalen, Chair. Catherine Bennett; Jennifer Berbrich. J. Tenbusch attended as staff.

The meeting began at 4:46 PM.

**Item 1: Memorial Tree to Honor Andy Soutar.** Pat Whalen reported that he and Paul Hetzler had planted a tree at Massena Central School to honor Andy Soutar. Whalen stated that a memorial plaque should be installed. Whalen has spoken with Mike’s Trophies; cost of a plaque should be approx. \$100. It may be possible to take up a collection at the next EMC meeting.

**Item 2: Discussion of Items on CRC “To Do” list.**

- Request by Luke Martin at EMC meeting, 6/19/2019 to ask County Highway workers to not spray Round-up herbicide near organic farms.
  - Cat Bennett reported that Martin had discussed the issue with Keith Zimmerman. Zimmerman is said to be working on a map to delineate potential “No Spray Zones”
  - Bennett also reported that Mr. Martin is working on a petition drive regarding this issue.
- There was discussion about showing the movie “Plastic Paradise”, now that the EMC has obtained a copy that is licensed for commercial showings.
  - It was agreed to find a site to show the movie in October.
  - The Committee agreed to try to have at least one showing each month.
- Regarding the Trashpresso concept; Bennett reported that she had spoken with representatives for Trashpresso. They asked her to put together a proposal letter that describes what we would like to see/do with a demonstration of the Trashpresso technology.
  - She will share a draft of her proposal with the Committee.
- Bennett reported that she had contacted an Irish inventor who has developed a process to remove microplastic particles from water. She will share additional information about this concept.
- Committee members re-affirmed their desire to create a program where local stores, restaurants, etc., might be recognized publicly when they take steps to reduce or eliminate single-use plastics

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 PM.



# St. Lawrence County Environmental Management Council Environment + Economy Committee Meeting Monday, September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019

## *Purpose of the Environment + Economy Committee.*

- To explore the relationship and interactions of the environmental resources of St. Lawrence County with the local and regional economy.
  - To reach out to individuals, business, and organizations involved in the use of natural resources in an economic capacity and to learn from these individuals and organizations about the challenges and opportunities in their endeavors.
  - To act as the interface between business, residents, and lawmakers of St. Lawrence County with regards to the role of natural resources in the economy, with an emphasis on sustainable use.
- 

**Meeting started** at 5:02 PM. **Present:** Rod Tozzi. Bob Washoe, guest. J. Tenbusch attended as staff.

## **Item 1: Priority Projects for E+EComm**

- Fish Ladder on Grasse River in Town of Madrid.
  - Bob Washoe had been invited to attend the meeting to talk about his proposal to construct a fish ladder around the dam on the Grasse River in Madrid.
    - o Washoe had spoken about this idea at a Canton Town Board meeting. A reporter was present, reported on the idea, and other media picked up the story.
    - o Washoe described potential benefits of a fish ladder: allowing salmon, sturgeon and other fish to access the Grasse River as far upstream as Pyrites.
    - o Washoe emphasized that any decision about establishing a fish ladder would be up to the Madrid Town Board.
  - After some general discussion, it was agreed that the EMC might host a meeting of interested persons, from Canton, from Madrid, from DEC, etc.

The meeting adjourned at 5:50 PM.



# St. Lawrence County Environmental Management Council Invasive Species Committee Meeting Monday September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019

## *Overview of the Invasive Species Committee.*

- The Committee decided that the variety of “invasive species” topics is so large, that it might be best for this committee to work on specific areas.
    - Emerald Ash Borer
    - Eurasian Watermilfoil
    - Wild Parsnip
    - Others
- 

Meeting started at 1:07 PM.

**Present:** Don O’Shea, Chair. Aaron Barrigar. John Tenbusch attended as staff.

**Item 1: Review Previous Activities.** Don O’Shea reported that the Indian Creek Nature Center held its Conservation Field Day in early June. They did not ask Don to participate; they did not ask the EMC to participate. O’Shea noted that the organizers for this year’s event were all new; it is possible that they were unaware of who had participated in previous years.

## **Item 2: Projects for 2019**

- ***Blue-Green Algae Blooms, aka Harmful Algae Blooms, aka Cyanotoxins***
  - John Tenbusch has invited Greg Boyer, of SUNY ESF, an expert on the topic of cyanotoxins, to speak to the EMC at their October meeting (10/16).
- ***Emerald Ash Borer***
  - Aaron Barrigar reported that he has completed his roadside survey of County roads.
    - o He will make a presentation to the EAB Task Force on Sept. 17, and to the EMC on Sept. 18.
  - Barrigar reported that he has found two new areas of infestation: in Raymondville near the first dam on the Raquette River; and in Brasher State Forest. This infestation in Brasher is especially problematic because of its proximity to black ash trees. These have cultural significance to Mohawks at Akwesasne.
- ***Septic Smart Week, September 16 – 20.***
  - O’Shea stated that he would like to see an emphasis on how nutrient loading impacts invasive species.
- **Wild Parsnip.** Tenbusch reported that he had provided an informational hand-out to Bill Dashnaw, who distributed the handout at the meeting.

The meeting ended at 1:30 PM.



# St. Lawrence County Environmental Management Council Watershed Management Committee Meeting Tuesday, September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019

## Overview of *Watershed Management Committee*.

- This Committee has worked on a number of watershed questions/issues, including:
    - Development / promotion of riparian buffers
      - “No Mow Zones” / “Trees for Tribs”
    - Work with U.S.A. Corps of Engineers to bring Sediment Transport Analysis and Regional Trainning to local colleges, high schools, etc.
    - Stenciling storm drains to read: “Don’t Dump – Drains to River”
- 

Meeting started at 4:03 PM.

Present: Joe Brant, Chair. Brian Washburn. J. Tenbusch attended as staff.

Brant reported that, since his responsibilities at home and at work have changed, he cannot continue as Chair of this committee. Brian Washburn agreed to serve as Committee Chair.

### **Item 1: Review Priority Projects.**

- Shoreline Resilience Planning Project. Tenbusch reported that the consultants had submitted their final draft of the Report. Several minor changes will be made to the report, then it will be posted to the County Website, and sent to shoreline communities.
- St. Lawrence River Watershed Revitalization Plan. No progress to report.

### **Item 2: Other Items From To-Do List.**

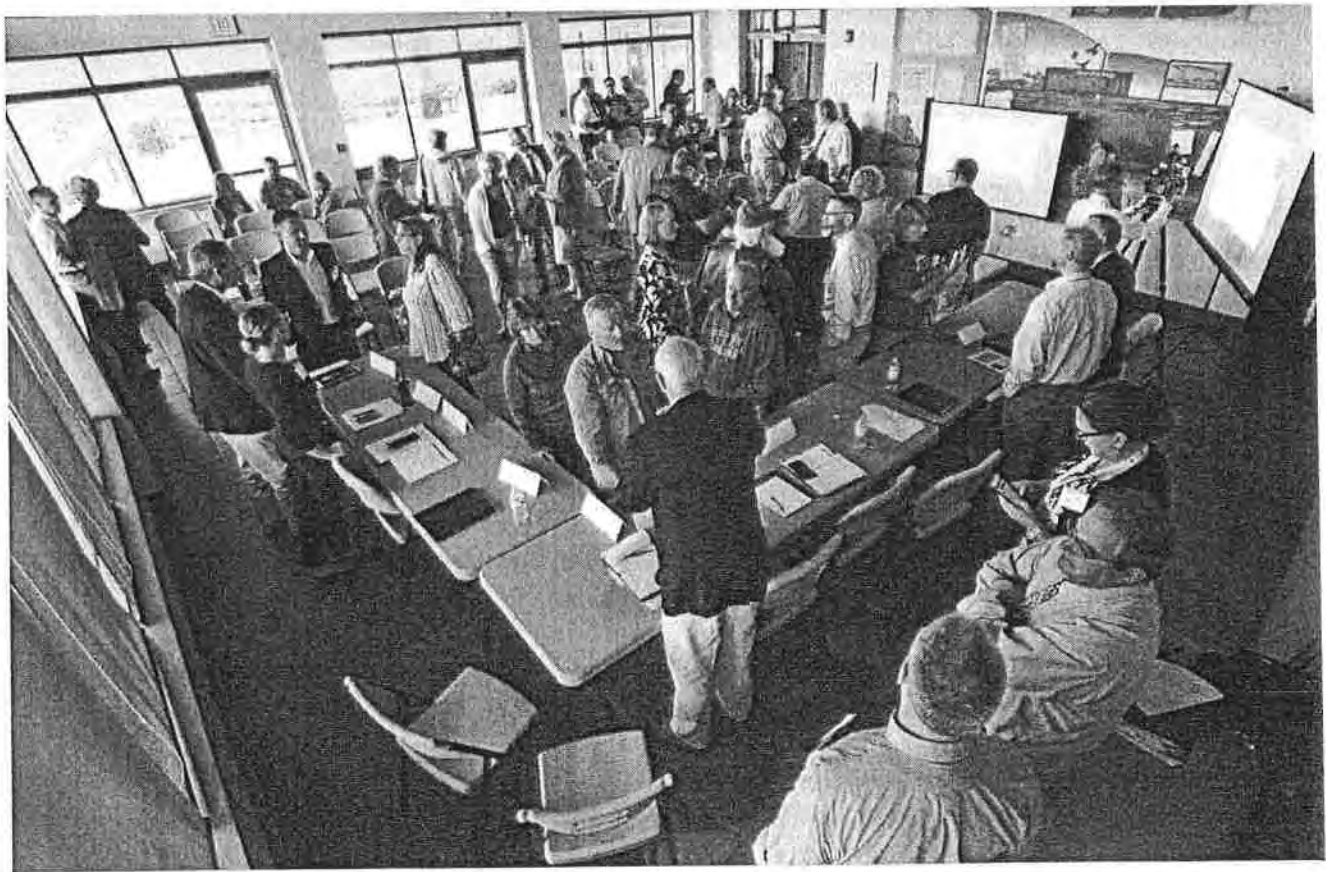
- Harmful Algal Blooms, aka cyanotoxins. Tenbusch reported that Dr. Greg Boyer will speak to the EMC at the October meeting (10/16).
- “Septic Smart Week”, September 16 – 20<sup>th</sup>.
  - After some discussion, it was agreed that the EMC would promote several informational handouts. Joe Brant will send several handouts to the Planning Office. Tenbusch will check the DEC Web site for additional information.
- Brant requested that Tenbusch contact Scott Schluetter, U.S. Fish & Wildlife, and invite him to speak at an upcoming EMC meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:35 PM.



# \$300 million in high water restoration projects revealed for Lake Ontario, St. Lawrence River communities

- By TOM GRASER  
tgraser@wdt.net
- Sep 13, 2019



More than 50 people attended a meeting of the REDI committee on Thursday, during which recommended projects for flood recovery and resiliency were revealed. Christopher Lenney/Watertown Daily Times

OGDENSBURG — The Lake Ontario Resiliency and Economic Development Initiative planning committee met here Sept. 12 with more than 50 members of the public packed into the Dobisky Visitors Center eager to hear what projects the commission will recommend to the full REDI commission for funding.

Christopher Calkins, senior vice president of Ramboll, the environmental consulting firm facilitating the process, explained how the committee has been evaluating projects.

The committee has been holding meetings throughout the eight counties along the Lake Ontario and St. Lawrence River shorelines affected by recent high water to solicit input from interested parties about the challenges facing their region, facilitate discussions on what assets are critical to their community's quality of life and to engage residents to understand solutions to protect critical assets.

Along the way, more than 500 projects were suggested for funding with a portion of the \$300 million set aside by the state for the program.

Mr. Calkins said that \$15 million will be available to each county for use in projects they deem necessary, \$160 million will go to regionally significant projects and \$20 million will go to homeowners affected by high water.

Homeowners will be able to apply for relief Oct. 1 and should register at [HCR.NY.Gov](http://HCR.NY.Gov).

"We feel pretty good about the recommendations to move forward and advance for consideration by the commission," Mr. Calkins said.

Marinas and waterfront businesses were top priorities, Mr. Calkins said.

"That's evidenced by the number of high quality projects that were brought forward," he said.

Other top priorities, he said, were water and sewer infrastructure and roads and bridges.

The recommended projects will be presented to the full commission the week of Sept. 16, and a finalized list will be produced about a month after that, Mr. Calkins said.

Mr. Calkins presented a list of recommended municipal projects but did not name individual marinas and waterfront businesses recommended.

He did say that there are 93 businesses listed in Jefferson County and 43 in St. Lawrence County. Those will not be made available to the public until after the commission has acted, he said.

Individual business owners were able to see if their properties were listed if they were at the meeting.

## Recommended projects:

### St. Lawrence County

- St. Lawrence County — 43 marinas and waterfront businesses, \$41,387,973
- Village of Waddington — Wastewater collection and treatment facilities, \$11,000,000
- Town of Morristown — North UMBERLAND Street bridge, \$2,100,00
- City of Ogdensburg — Fort de la Presentation's interpretive trail, \$1,295,000
- City of Ogdensburg — Maple City Trail at confluence of Oswegatchie and St. Lawrence rivers, \$2,000,000
- Town of Oswegatchie — North American Forest Group, Inc., \$201,066

### Jefferson County

- Jefferson County — 93 marinas and waterfront businesses, \$76,522,576
- Village of Cape Vincent — Real Street seawall, \$103,000
- Village of Clayton — Washington Island Bridge, \$1,6000,000
- Village of Clayton — Wastewater collecting and treatment plant, \$2,370,000
- Village of Sackets Harbor — Brown Shore Road, \$2,000,000
- Village of Sackets Harbor — Seawall near water treatment facility, \$160,000
- Village of Alexandria Bay — Water treatment facilities/water plant foundation, \$260,000
- Town of Henderson — Wastewater system, \$10,600,000
- Town of Lyme — County Road 125, Point Salubrious, \$498,660
- Village of Cape Vincent — East End Park seawall, docks, shoreline, drainage, and sidewalks, \$1,000,000
- Village of Cape Vincent — Point Street seawall, sidewalk and road, \$65,000
- Village of Clayton — The Riverwalk, \$3,750,000
- Town of Lyme — County Road 57, Point Peninsula (Isthmus Road), \$4,358,000
- Town of Brownville — County Road 59, Pillar Point, \$12,510,000
- Town of Cape Vincent — County Road 6, Tibbets Point, \$1,145,000
- Village of Cape Vincent — Market Street Sewer, \$705,000

[https://www.nny360.com/news/stlawrencecounty/million-in-high-water-restoration-projects-revealed-for-lake-ontario/article\\_98598367-a166-5112-89c9-17d9a7cba276.html](https://www.nny360.com/news/stlawrencecounty/million-in-high-water-restoration-projects-revealed-for-lake-ontario/article_98598367-a166-5112-89c9-17d9a7cba276.html)

