

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

**MEETING MINUTES**

**October 16, 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:** **There was NOT a quorum.**  
Members present: Don O'Shea, *Vice Chair*; Sue Rau; Tiernan Smith; Nicole Terminelli, *BOL Liaison*; Rod Tozzi; Brian Washburn; Pat Whalen, *Secretary*.  
Members absent: ; Joseph Brant, *Chair*; David Barnes; Aaron Barrigar; Catherine Bennett; Jennifer Berbrich; Ryan Burkum; Erica Leonard; Richard Marshall; Lance Rudiger.  
Guest(s): Dr. Greg Boyer, SUNY ESF, Syracuse. Staff: John Tenbusch.
3. **Acceptance of Order of Business:** The Order of Business was accepted by consensus.

**Note:** The scheduled speaker was late, due to traffic issues coming from Syracuse. It was agreed by consensus that regular EMC business would proceed until the speaker arrived.

4. **Report by the Representative of the Board of Legislators:**  
Nicole Terminelli reported that she and Tiernan Smith had attended the meeting called by the St. Lawrence County Fisheries Board on September 24<sup>th</sup>. This meeting was called to discuss the sale of contaminated fish from the St. Lawrence River as well as the Lower Grasse River in local restaurants.
  - Terminelli and Smith reported that the meeting showed a consensus in believing that this is becoming a bigger problem.
  - Terminelli reported that the NYS Department of Health cannot police all sales of fish caught locally.
  - Brian Washburn reported that, at the recent meeting of the EMC Watershed Management Committee, Joe Brant, who works for the NYS Department of Health, stated that all locally-caught fish were required by law to be processed at one facility.
    - Terminelli and Smith stated that an estimated 1,000,000 lbs. of fish caught in the St. Lawrence River are sold each month. The problem is significant.

## 5. Hearings, Comments from the Public.

The speaker was Dr. Greg Boyer, Professor of Chemistry at SUNY College of Environmental Sciences and Forestry (ESF), and acting director for the Great Lakes Research Consortium.

Dr. Boyer spoke about cyanobacteria. He clarified that cyanobacteria are NOT algae; algae are plants, while bacteria (including cyanobacteria) are neither plants nor animals.

(Note: They are related; “Both green algae and cyanobacteria have evolved from algae.”

<http://www.differencebetween.net/science/biology-science/difference-between-cyanobacteria-and-green-algae/> )

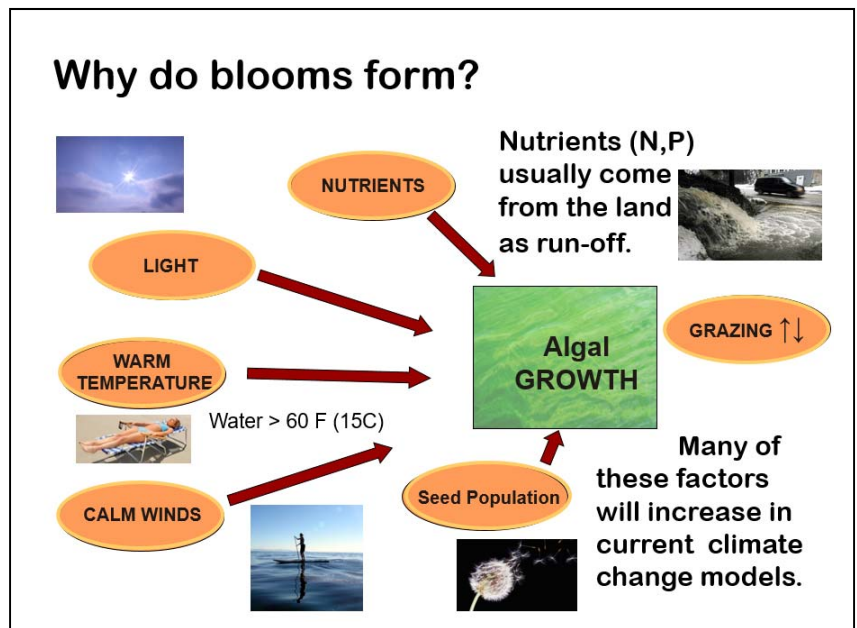
Dr. Boyer stated that cyanobacteria are “evolutionarily perfect”; they have had three billion years to develop. For simple, one-celled creatures, cyanobacteria are capable of producing complex chemicals; some are harvested for anti-cancer or anti-inflammatory properties, while others are neuro-toxic.

Cyanobacteria cannot move about on their own; they are pushed by winds and waves, sometimes collecting in great numbers along shorelines or boat docks. When they collect, they can cause problems for people who get them on skin: skin rashes, breathing issues, or worse. Pets, especially dogs, who play in the water can be covered with cyanobacteria from head to foot; in trying to lick themselves clean, dogs can receive a lethal dose of neuro-toxins.

Cyanobacteria bloom when the combination of sunlight, warm water, calm winds, and nutrients is optimal. There is little that we can do about sun, wind or water temperature, but we can work to reduce the nutrient levels in waters that are prone to cyanotoxic blooms, e.g., Black Lake. To reduce nutrient levels, we need to reduce runoff from agricultural operations, and improve septic systems/wastewater treatment processes, in areas susceptible to cyanotoxic blooms.

Climate change is predicted to provide more/longer conditions each year that promote development of cyanobacteria; therefore, we can expect that cyanotoxic blooms will become more frequent in the future.

Some simple measures can help to reduce the build-up of cyanobacteria in any one locations; for example, the type of "bubblers" that are often used near docks in winter to prevent ice from accumulating may be installed for the summer. Blowing air sideways into the water right at the surface may reduce the amount of cyanobacteria at that particular location.



Dr. Boyer reported that ESF is partnering with Clarkson University to establish a Center of Excellence in Healthy Water Solutions (see <https://www.clarkson.edu/news/clarkson-university-esf-partner-new-center-excellence-healthy-water-solutions> ).

6. **Approval of the Minutes of the September 2019 EMC meeting:** *Due to a lack of quorum, the Minutes were not approved.*
7. **Reports by EMC Members on Conversations with County Legislators:** None
8. **Report of the Committees:**
  - a. **Executive Committee:** No meeting; no report.
  - b. **Conservation of Resources Committee (CRC):** Pat Whalen reported. See attached.
  - c. **Environment + Economy Committee (E+E):** Rod Tozzi reported. See attached.
  - d. **Invasive Species Committee (ISC).** Donald O’Shea reported. See attached.
  - e. **Watershed Management Committee (WMC).** Brian Washburn reported. See attached.
9. **Report of the Staff:** Tenbusch reported that there were two workshops with environmental themes presented at the Local Government Conference in Potsdam on October 15<sup>th</sup>; they included:
  - A workshop on Emerald Ash Borers and other invasive species in the region.
    - Tenbusch presented the report on “Right-of-Way Ash and Hazard Trees Assessment Project”, that Aaron Barrigar had presented at last month’s EMC meeting.
    - Megan Pistolese and Robert Smith of SLELO PRISM presented on “Enhancing Resiliency in the Urban Forest” and “Invasives on the Horizon: HWA, SLF, ALB basic ID & Impacts”
10. **Unfinished Business:** None.
11. **New Business:** None.
12. **Announcements:** None.
13. **Message to the Board of Legislators:** EMC members were asked to tell their assigned BOL members about cyanotoxins and Harmful Algal Blooms. There does not seem to be a “fix” for this problem, unless we can significantly reduce nutrient loads in local bodies of water that are prone to be affected by HABs. But, research is being done, including at Clarkson University’s Center of Excellence in Healthy Water Solutions.
14. **Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned by consensus at 8:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

*Patrick Whalen*

Secretary

Minutes written by J. Tenbusch



# St. Lawrence County Environmental Management Council Conservation of Resources Committee Meeting Wednesday October 9<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. J. Tenbusch attended as staff.

The meeting began at 4:49 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. Whalen reported that he has gotten a suitable inscription from Sue Rau, Andy’s wife.

**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.
  - Keith Zimmerman had reported at the recent EMC meeting that he was going to build a GIS-enabled map that would include information about any/all those persons who request that pesticides and herbicides NOT be used near their properties.
    - There will be a way to sign up to be put on this map.
  - Bennett also reported that she is looking for organic or other alternatives to spraying herbicides.
- There was discussion about showing the movie “Plastic Paradise”, now that the EMC has obtained a copy that is licensed for commercial showings.
  - The Committee will look for a site in Ogdensburg to hold the movie, aiming for a date during 10/21-25.
  - The Committee agreed to try to have at least one showing each month.
- Cat Bennett referenced an earlier discussion at an EMC meeting, where an opinion had been expressed that EMC members were not courteous to a member of the public who was making comments during the “Comments From the Public” portion of the EMC meeting.
  - After some discussion, the Committee proposed that the EMC adopt this policy”  
“When a member of the public is speaking during the ‘Comments From the Public’  
portion of an EMC meeting, we will allow him/her at least \_\_\_\_\_ minutes to speak  
without interruption before we begin to ask questions/make comments.

- The Committee also recommended that the Chair of the meeting might ask the speaker if s/he is willing to take questions during his/her comments.
- The Committee agreed to include “Issues re: Climate Crisis” as a permanent part of its Purpose.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:35 PM.



# St. Lawrence County Environmental Management Council Environment + Economy Committee Meeting Monday, October 7<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.
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**Meeting started** at 5:02 PM. **Present:** Ryan Burkum, Chair; Rod Tozzi. J. Tenbusch attended as staff.

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

- Fish Ladder on Grasse River in Town of Madrid. John Tenbusch reviewed the phone call with Bob Washo that had taken place at last month's E+EC mtg.
  - 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.
  - Washoe described potential benefits of a fish ladder: allowing salmon, sturgeon and other fish to access the Grasse River as far upstream as Pyrites.
  - Washoe emphasized that any decision about establishing a fish ladder would be up to the Madrid Town Board.
- Ryan Burkum suggested that the towns upstream from the dam in Madrid should be polled about their wishes in this matter. These include the Towns of Canton, Lisbon, Madrid and Potsdam.
  - Tenbusch will make a point of speaking with Town Supervisors from Canton and Madrid before the end of October.
- The Committee would like to invite Pat Curran from Curran Renewable Energy to speak at the November EMC meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 5:35 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
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Meeting started at 1:03 PM.

**Present:** Don O’Shea, Chair. Sue Rau; Pat Whalen. John Tenbusch attended as staff.

## **Item 1: Review Previous Activities.**

- Pat Whalen reported that a tree has been planted at Massena Central School in memory of Andy Soutar, past EMC member who died in October 2018.
  - Whalen noted that the tree is a Serviceberry. See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amelanchier>
  - Whalen and Rau had worked out a suitable inscription for a memorial plaque; Whalen will get it produced. Estimated cost is under \$100.
  - The EMC will try to get the plaque installed before mid-November.



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

- ***Blue-Green Algae Blooms, aka Harmful Algae Blooms, aka Cyanotoxins***
  - Greg Boyer, of SUNY ESF, an expert on the topic of cyanotoxins, will speak to the EMC at their October meeting
- ***Emerald Ash Borer***
  - John Tenbusch reported on Aaron Barrigar’s presentation regarding the “St. Lawrence County Right-of-Way Ash and Hazard Tree Assessment Project”. See attached.
    - O’Shea reported that Barrigar has found two new areas of probable infestation: in Raymondville near the first dam on the Raquette River; and in Brasher State Forest.

The meeting ended at 1:30 PM.





# St. Lawrence County Environmental Management Council Watershed Management Committee Meeting Tuesday, October 8<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”
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Meeting started at 4:02 PM.

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

### Item 1: Review Priority Projects.

- St. Lawrence River Watershed Revitalization Plan. John Tenbusch reported that the consultants for this project have published a “Community Outreach Plan” (see attached).
  - Washburn reported that this “Plan” consisted primarily of lists of “Partners” and “Stakeholders”. He noted that there were several organizations/groups of organizations that he thought should be included in a list of “Stakeholders”, including dam operators; municipal water and waste-water treatment facilities; SUNY ESF.
  - Tenbusch reported that the next general meeting of the “Community Outreach Plan” Stakeholders group will be on November 4<sup>th</sup>. He and Washburn plan to attend.

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

- Review SLC Fisheries Board meeting report (9/24/19). This meeting was on the topic of sale of possibly-contaminated fish to local restaurants. Sixteen people attended this meeting, including two members of the EMC: Nicole Terminelli (BOL), and Tiernan Smith.
  - The Committee will ask them to report on the Fisheries Board meeting.
  - The Committee will also invite Bob Flavin, Chair of the Fisheries Board and former member of the EMC, to attend the next meeting of the Committee to discuss the topic further.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:35 PM.