

St. Lawrence County Environmental Management Council
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Draft

MEETING MINUTES

October 17, 2018

**2nd - 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:** Chair Joe Brant called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM.
2. **Roll Call, Determination of Quorum:** A quorum was not present.
Members present: Joseph Brant, *Chair*; Alex French; Lance Rudiger; Sue Rau; Pat Whalen, *Secretary*.
Members absent: Catherine Bennett; Jennifer Berbrich; Ryan Burkum; Larry Denesha, *BOL Liaison*; Richard Marshall; Don O'Shea, *Vice-Chair*; Tiernan Smith; Andrew Soutar; Bob Zimmerman.
Guest(s): Chester "Skip" Bisnett, General Manager, Casella Waste Systems, Potsdam.
Staff: John Tenbusch.
3. **Acceptance of Order of Business, Items for New Business, and Items for Unfinished Business:** No Action was taken as a quorum was not present.
4. **Approval of the June, July, and September EMC Meeting Minutes:** No Action was taken as a quorum was not present.
5. **Board of Legislators Report.** No report.
6. **Hearings, Comments from the Public.**

The invited speaker was Chester "Skip" Bisnett, General Manager, Casella Waste Systems, Potsdam. Mr. Bisnett had been recommended by Larry Legault, SLC Solid Waste Coordinator, as an expert on recycling.

Mr. Bisnett described how the recycling markets have collapsed in the last year. He provided pricing information for 2017 and 2018; this showed, for example that the price he could get for mixed paper in 2017 was \$60 - \$65 per ton, while in 2018 he must PAY \$5 per ton to get someone to take it. He did note that he is able to send some mixed paper to the APC paper mill in Norfolk.

Bisnett explained that, for years, Chinese and other Far East buyers had purchased American recyclables; as their economies have expanded and improved, they now generate enough recyclable materials in their own countries to support their recycling industries. As these Far East markets have matured, Bisnett reported that they have increasingly rejected American recyclable materials due to excessive contamination. Where a contamination rate of 4-5% had once been acceptable, now contamination rates have been set at less than 1%.

Bisnett stated that “zero-sort” recycling has had positive and negative impacts on recycling behavior and recycling markets. On the one hand, more material gets recycled; Bisnett reported that over the past 5 years, he has seen an increase of more than 4,000 tons of recycle material. On the other hand, zero-sort recycling has caused higher rates of contamination – this has contributed to increased rejection of recycle materials by Far East buyers.

Bisnett noted that new/additional markets for recycle materials will develop over time; in the meantime, he pays \$92 per ton to take trash to a landfill, and pays \$158 per ton for recycle materials.

He reported that St. Lawrence County is not big enough and doesn’t generate enough trash or recycle materials to achieve economies of scale. He stated that regional coordination is important. He agreed that there may be potential for local re-use of selected recycle materials.

In response to questions, Bisnett reported that he sends automobile tires to a burn facility in Hudson Falls. Oversize tires must be sent to a facility in Buffalo; transportation costs are high. Tires present problems for landfillers: they tend to “float” to the top of a landfill, even if they have been ground into small pieces. They are hard to recycle, since they include steel fibers, nylon and other fibers, and other materials.

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):** P. Whalen gave the Committee report; see attached.

c. **Environment + Economy Committee (E+E):** No meeting; no report.

d. **Invasive Species Committee (ISC):** J. Tenbusch gave the Committee report; see attached.

e. **Watershed Management Committee (WMC).** No meeting; no report.

9. **Report of the Staff:** Tenbusch reported that he and Megan Pistolese of SLELO-PRISM has presented a session on Emerald Ash Borers at the Local Government Conference, held October 9th. They also staffed an information table. A student volunteer had worn the EAB costume around the Conference site.

10. **Unfinished Business:** None.

11. **New Business:** Tenbusch reported that the regularly-scheduled EMC meeting for November would be held on Nov. 21st; this would be the day before Thanksgiving. Schedule constraints would make it difficult to move the EMC meeting to an earlier date in November.

After discussion, Chair Brant decided that there will be no EMC or Committee meetings in November. Instead, the next EMC meeting will be held on Wednesday December 12th. Committee meetings will be held during the week of Dec. 3-7.

There was some discussion about difficulty in achieving a quorum at EMC meetings. Tenbusch noted that there has been one recent resignation, and two other EMC members have indicated an intention to not serve another term. New EMC members might help with quorum issues.

- Tenbusch will survey EMC members to determine whether the current meeting schedule still works for them.

12. **Announcements:**

- Tenbusch reported that Dr. Richard Alley, professor of geoscience at Penn State University, will present on Finding the Good News on Energy and Environment”. This presentation will be held on October 18th at SUNY Potsdam.
- Tenbusch reported that NYS DEC Region 6 staff will hold a one-day conference on the topic of “Preparing for the Bad Bug – Emerald Ash Borer”. This conference will be held at the Adams Municipal Bldg. in Adams NY on Wednesday November 14th.

13. **Message to the Board of Legislators:** EMC members were asked to let their assigned BOL member know that the EMC will begin a program to promote reduction in the use of single-use plastics.

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

Respectfully submitted:

Patrick Whalen

Secretary

Minutes prepared by John Tenbusch.



St. Lawrence County Environmental Management Council Conservation of Resources Committee Meeting Wednesday October 10, 2018

Present: Pat Whalen, chair; Cat Bennett, Jennifer Berbrich. J. Tenbusch attended as staff.

The meeting began at 4:45 PM.

Item 1: Priority Projects.

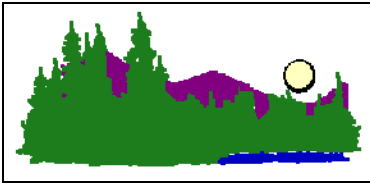
- *Survey regarding Conservation of Sport-Fishing resource.* Tenbusch reported that the survey (see attached Survey Form) had been conducted at the Bassmaster fishing tournament on August 25th and 26th by Tiernan Smith, Derrick Conway, Jennifer Berbrich, and himself. He noted that Rick Marshall had volunteered to help; Tenbusch had not seen his message until after the survey was completed.
 - **Over 100 surveys were completed.** Tenbusch had included a copy of the Excel spreadsheet with survey tabulations (compiled by Denise Henophy of the Planning Office) in the Committee packets for this meeting.
 - Tenbusch asked for volunteer(s) to begin analysis of the tabulations. Cat Bennet volunteered to do so. She will try to have a draft report ready for the next Committee meeting (in December?).
- *Project to Reduce Plastic Pollution.*
 - Tenbusch reported that the speaker for the October EMC meeting will be Chester W. “Skip” Bisnett, General Manager at Casella Waste Systems, Inc. in Potsdam. Mr. Bisnett will discuss current conditions in the recycling markets, how these circumstances impact St. Lawrence County, and what we might anticipate in the near future. **An article from June 2018 on the topic is attached.**
 - Tenbusch reported that Save The River has begun a program to eliminate single-use plastics. **A recent article on this topic is attached.**
 - Tenbusch reviewed the idea suggested at the last Committee meeting: to **invite restaurants and other businesses to “Go Green” and eliminate their use of single-use plastics** (cups, tableware, bags, etc.)
 - It might be possible to award a “Green Star”, or a range of stars (1 – 5 Green Stars) to those businesses.
 - Maybe the SLC Chamber of Commerce could help to promote this “Green Star” idea.
 - It may be possible to highlight stores that already do not use single-use plastics, or that use used bags, etc. (e.g., Aldi’s Nature’s Storehouse, etc.)
 - Tenbusch reported that another community-based environmental group (“Faith & Ecology in St. Lawrence County”) had heard about this Committee’s idea; that group was very enthusiastic about the idea, and expressed willingness to partner with the EMC to make such a project happen.

- There was discussion about the merits of starting this project by conducting a survey to find out what restaurants and other businesses already do; this might help the Committee to determine what single-use plastics could be targeted for elimination.
 - There was also discussion about looking for a partner restaurant/store; working with them to eliminate a significant source of single-use plastic; then launching the “Green Star” program using the partner restaurant/store as an example to follow.
 - There was discussion about the need to do research on how to promote elimination of single-use plastics. We will need to be able to direct partners toward feasible alternative materials or practices, rather than wait for/insist that they find solutions on their own.
- C. Bennet recalled that there had recently been a collection effort involving tires; she wondered how these might be recycled.
 - Tenbusch will check.
 - P. Whalen asked why not there could be a business/es in St. Lawrence County that would be able to use recycled materials and produce some useful product(s). This might become a priority for economic development efforts at the County, regional or statewide levels.
 - The EMC can push to make this happen.
- *Conservation of fur-bearing species.* No report.

Item 2: Other Possible Projects.

- Proposal that the Committee look into promoting composting at institutional levels (schools, etc.) and municipal levels. No progress was reported.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:25 PM.



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M / F
Age: _____

Survey of Opinions About the County's Fishing Resources

To be conducted at Bassmaster fishing tournament in Waddington NY during the period Aug. 23-26.

1. Where are you coming from? _____

If from St. Law. Co., what town? _____

2. How many people came with you today? _____

3. Do you fish in any waters (lakes, rivers, streams, ponds) in St. Lawrence County?

_____ Yes; _____ No.

4. If Yes, how many years have you been fishing in St. Lawrence County? _____ Years

If Yes, where have you gone fishing most often? _____

If Yes, do you find that you fish:

_____ More often than years ago; _____ Less often than years ago; _____ About the same

5. Since you began fishing in St. Lawrence County, how would you rate the quality of the following items:

- **Size of fish that you catch on the average fishing trip:**

_____ Bigger; _____ Smaller; _____ Same

- **The number of fish that you catch on the average fishing trip:**

_____ Bigger; _____ Smaller; _____ Same

- **What changes have you noticed in the types of fish you catch:**

More of this species of fish: _____

Fewer of this species of fish: _____

6. Since you began fishing in St. Lawrence County, how would you rate the quality of the water bodies that you fish in:

- **Generally cleaner:** _____ Yes; _____ No; _____ Same

- **More weeds:** _____ Yes; _____ No; _____ Same

- **Availability of services for fishing:** _____ Better; _____ Worse; _____ Same

7. What services would you like to have available when you go fishing?

Watertown Daily Times

St. Lawrence County struggles with higher recyclable costs as global market nose-dives

By SUSAN MENDE
SMENDE@OGD.COM

PUBLISHED: WEDNESDAY, JUNE 27, 2018 AT 12:30 AM
[PREV](#)

CANTON — Reflecting a national problem, St. Lawrence County's Solid Waste Department is facing a \$127,000 shortfall in its recycling budget because the global market for plastic, paper and other recyclables has plummeted over the past several months.

At their Monday night Finance Committee meeting, county legislators agreed to transfer \$127,000 from the county Highway Department's highway and street equipment account to cover the loss.

"This has become a very difficult year for us with recyclables," said Highway Superintendent Donald Chambers. "Hopefully, that will be enough for the year, but it's going to be tight. It depends on what the market does."

He said the county cost of disposing of recyclables has climbed to about \$30,000 a month, compared to between \$10,000 and \$11,000 that it used to pay.

"This is our problem. The costs have gone considerably up," he said.

To help cover the shortfall, Mr. Chambers said he decided against purchasing a new tractor that's included in this year's budget.

Chester W. "Skip" Bisnett of Casella Waste, explained the situation to county lawmakers. Casella Waste operates at recycling center in Parishville that lost \$24,000 in May because of the downturned market.

“China has basically shut its doors to the U.S.A. and anybody in the world that is recycling,” Mr. Bisnett said. “Basically, China was taking about one million tons a year, just from the United States. They shut the border off.”

He said contamination of the recyclables was one reason China closed off recyclables, but Mr. Bisnett said the bigger reason is that China no longer needs to import recyclables.

“They’ve become their own consumer. They are getting a robust economy. As their economy grows, they’re doing exactly what we’re doing. They just don’t need it,” he said. In January 2017, Mr. Bisnett said he was getting \$70 a ton for mixed paper and \$110 per ton for cardboard. Now, he’s paying \$5 per ton to dispose of mixed paper and receiving about \$70 for the cardboard.

“We’re trying to find homes for stuff that has no value,” he said. “Last month, I had to shut the county off from bringing material because I simply had no place to put it. We were bursting out the doors.”

Starting Monday, Casella started trucking recyclables to Waste Management, a facility in Liverpool.

He said the state Department of Environmental Conservation won’t allow the recyclables to be disposed of in the landfill with regular solid waste.

“Not that I want to put in a landfill. But there are materials that we’re collecting that make no sense to collect,” he said. “I don’t think we should not recycle, but I think if you have an interim reality you should adjust your thought process.”

Casella has a one-year contract to accept the county’s recyclables.

“If the county can find a way to save money, I have no expectation that they will bring me anything,” Mr. Bisnett said.

In May, he said the company lost \$24,000 from its recycling program.

As a result of the downturn, Mr. Bisnett said he’s increased his recycling tip fee to \$120 per ton.

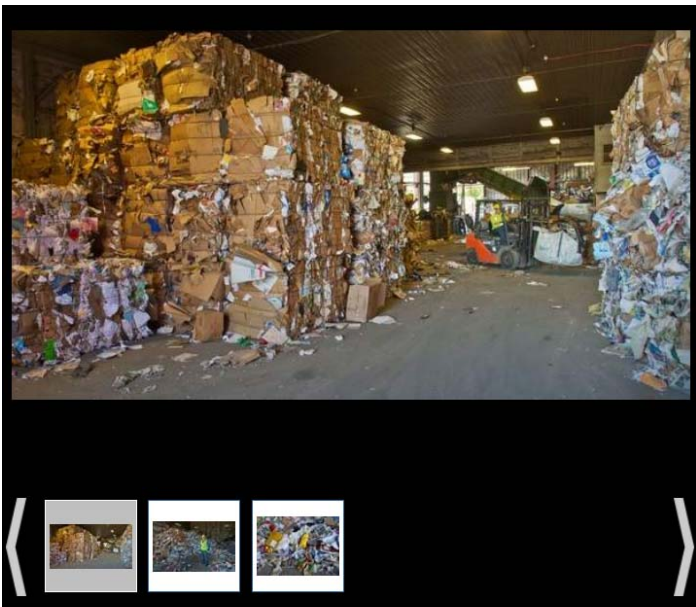
Mr. Chambers said the situation has been discussed with officials from the Development Authority of the North Country, which operates a landfill in Rodman, Jefferson County, where St. Lawrence County takes its mixed solid waste.

There have also been discussions with DANC, Jefferson and Lewis county officials about establishing a regional recycling facility in either Jefferson or Lewis County.

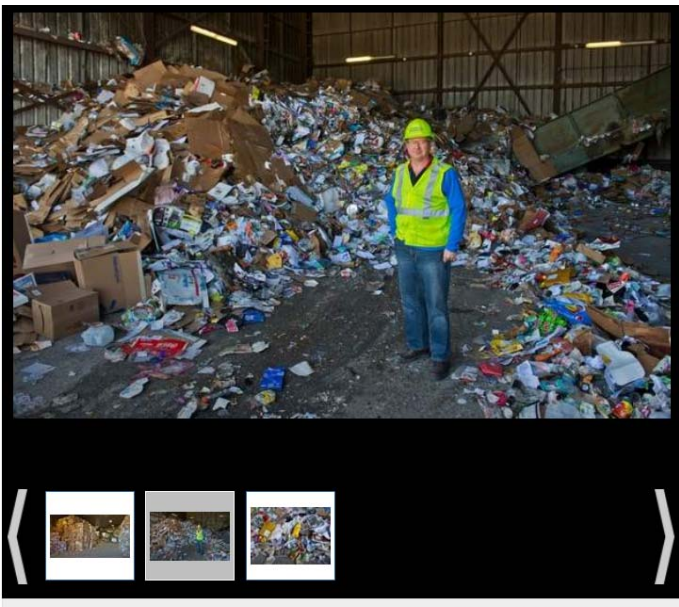
“It’s not just a St. Lawrence county or state issue. It’s a global issue and a pretty tough egg to crack,” he said.

County officials have reached out to officials in the Ontario cities of Cornwall and Brockville about taking recyclables, but they don’t appear to be interested, he said.

“Trying to get somebody to take our product at this time is very difficult,” Mr. Chambers said.



CHRISTOPHER LENNEY / WATERTOWN DAILY TIMES
Balls of paper to be recycled at Casella Waste Services on the West Parishville Road.



CHRISTOPHER LENNEY / WATERTOWN DAILY TIMES
Casella Waste Services General Manager Chester W. 'Skip' Bisnett stands in the zero sort recycling collection area.



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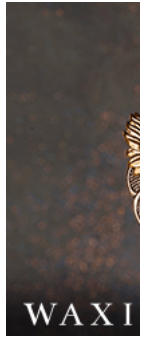


Save the River targets plastic bags

By [MARCUS WOLF](#)
MWOLF@WDT.NET
PUBLISHED: SUNDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2018 AT 12:30 AM

[PREV](#) **Item 1 of 3** [NEXT](#)

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- Correction
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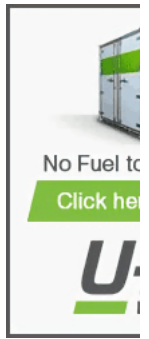
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SYDNEY SCHAEFER / WATERTOWN DAILY TIMES
Homes are seen along the St. Lawrence River from the Washington Island Causeway on Friday in Clayton.

CLAYTON — An environmental advocacy group wants river communities to join an international trend of bucking plastic bags and other plastic disposables.

In order to help rid the St. Lawrence River waterfront and its tributaries of single-use plastic bags, food containers, cups, straws and other waste, Save the River has launched its outreach effort, called Replace Single Use Plastics, to convince residents, entrepreneurs and officials in Clayton, Cape Vincent and Alexandria Bay to forego their use.



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- Clayton pursues sewer upgrades to prevent overflow into river

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- Clayton pursues sewer upgrades to prevent overflow into river

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The nonprofit kicked off its initiative in July and formed an ad hoc committee to prepare educational fliers and research existing regulations from U.S. and Canadian communities that banned or charged for plastic bags. The committee will also talk with local business owners and chambers of commerce about both ideas. The organization has been selling its blue reusable bags made of recycled materials at its office, 409 Riverside Drive, but Executive Director John M. Peach said other efforts are still in their formative stages.

"I think this has always been a concern of a lot of us who live on the river — the amount of single-use plastic bags and single-use plastics in general floating out into the river, threatening the wildlife, clogging the waterways," Mr. Peach said.

Plastic pollution has been an issue scholars and governments have tried to tackle for years as waste piles up in landfills and festers in oceans, lakes, rivers and streams.

Anything from 4 to 12 million metric tons of plastics were found in oceans in 2010, according to a [January report](#) from the state's plastic bag task force. All oceans are expected to have more plastic by weight than fish by 2050.

The Alliance for the Great Lakes claimed the lakes, which provide drinking water to about 40 million people, contain more than 22 million pounds of plastic pollution.

Entrepreneur Ronald G. Thomson, who owns several businesses in the village of Alexandria Bay, said his workers often pick up trash, including disposable plastics, in the parking lot of Uncle Sam's Boat Tours on James Street, but a prevailing gust can blow some of it into the St. Lawrence River. His restaurant, Riley's by the River, uses recyclable take-home containers and plastic bags to carry them, and his gift shop, Magical Swan, uses plastic bags.

"If they make it into the (St. Lawrence) River, that's really a problem," Mr. Thompson said.

Research collected from government agencies and advocacy groups have found that plastic waste entering waterways can harm wildlife and humans on a microscopic level.

Plastic can break down into pieces smaller than 5 millimeters in diameter, called microplastics, that fish and other aquatic fauna can ingest, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The state's plastic bag task force reported in its January analysis that microplastics can "absorb toxins and leach chemicals" that fish can ingest and humans can consume.

The Alliance for the Great Lakes stated researchers found that microplastics, which are also present in the Great Lakes, can enter drinking water and beer, adding that wastewater treatment facilities cannot filter them out all of the time.

"A few years ago, when the microplastic legislation started to heat up and Save the River pushed very hard on that to get rid of the microplastics in the toothpaste and the cosmetics, I think a lot of us — a lot of us thought 'well that's good the microplastics issue is over, in the river and the Great Lakes,'" Mr. Peach said. "And there's a lot of research now going on ... that say that's not true. The single-use plastic bags — the single-use plastics — are starting to break down and are getting into little bitty strips and those break down into microplastics. They're out there in sediment. They know the fish are picking them up. So it's a very real ongoing problem."

Several nations have adopted legislation to curtail the use of single-use plastic items and pollution from their improper disposal.

According to the state's task force, both Estonia and Germany instituted taxes and manufacturer requirements for single-use plastic bags. The effort in Germany, combined with voluntary charges from grocery stores, caused an annual decrease of 1 billion plastic bags. South Africa's 50-cent per plastic bag fee has caused a 90 percent reduction in plastic-bag use.

In the U.S., California became the first state to ban single-use plastic bag distribution at most stores, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. It also issued a fee on recycled paper bags, reusable plastic bags and compostable bags at various locations.

"California has been a first mover in it," said Clayton Town Supervisor David M. Storandt, Jr.

Hawaii has a de facto statewide ban on retailers using single-use plastic bags because its most populated counties prohibit them, according to the conference. Washington D.C. has issued a



fee on plastic bags. Several notable cities throughout the country have also enacted plastic bag bans, including Austin, Texas, Boston, Chicago, Seattle, San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Eleven communities in New York have also enacted bans, according to the task force, although all are located south of Albany.

Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo introduced a bill in April that would prohibit disposable plastic bags in the state, but it remains at the Senate committee level.

“First of all, we looked at New York state legislation, which looks to me like it’s a year off. If it gets passed even in January, it’s still a year off from implementation,” Mr. Peach said. “So we wanted to find how we could influence the river communities on both sides of the river (to take action), but starting right here in Clayton, Alexandria Bay and Cape Vincent.”

Save the River hopes to eventually convince municipal leaders to adopt laws that would ban single-use plastics in the Thousand Islands, Mr. Peach said, and would offer to help them draft laws.

“If we could make these communities numbers 12, 13 and 14, that would help the momentum to put in a ban of single-use plastics, single-use plastic bags in New York state,” Mr. Peach said.

Mr. Storandt and village of Clayton Mayor Norma M. Zimmer both said adopting a policy at the county or state level would be more effective than individual communities. Both also questioned how they would enforce the legislation or collect fees. Village of Alexandria Bay Mayor Steven E. Jarvis declined to comment.

“I’d be very interested in talking with municipalities that have already done it, because it seems a little intrusive,” said Alexandria Town Councilman Mr. Thompson. “It seems like it should be done at a broader scale.”

Before pushing legislation, however, Mr. Peach said he first wants to undertake the nonprofit’s educational approach and talk with local store owners about selling their reusable bags and displaying educational material.

While he recognizes that its effort of convincing local waterfront communities to forego single-use plastics will be an uphill battle because “we all use them,” Mr. Peach said he has already seen a few businesses move toward that goal themselves by selling reusable bags, removing a couple of plastic items from their inventory and offering paper bags.

“I don’t think Save the River can tackle it on its own, but I think Save the River, the water keepers, the other environmental organizations can take the lead on this,” he said. “We don’t have to wait for New York state legislation.

Mr. Thompson said he wants more information about the alternatives to plastic bags. Brian Willix, who owns the Big M Supermarket in Alexandria Bay, declined to comment.

John C. Struppler, who owns Clayton Shurfine Supermarket, had little to say other than he would be open to the idea of allowing the nonprofit’s fliers in his store.

“If it’s a good idea, we’ll move behind it,” he said.

Commenting rules:

- 1. Stick to the topic of the article/letter/editorial.
- 2. When responding to issues raised by other commenters, do not engage in personal attacks or name-calling.
- 3. Comments that include profanity/obscenities or are libelous in nature will be removed without warning.

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St. Lawrence County Environmental Management Council Invasive Species Committee Meeting Wednesday October 10th 2018

Meeting started at 1:00 PM.

Present: Don O'Shea. John Tenbusch attended as staff.

Item 1: Review Priority Projects.

Emerald Ash Borer. Tenbusch reviewed the report of the September EAB TF mtg, including:

- Positive findings of EABs were taken from traps placed in Hammond (at the same site as earlier EAB finding) and in Lisbon.
- An Ash Tree removal and replacement tree planting workshop will be held in Canton on October 13th.
- DEC staff are still working to put together a regional meeting on EAB. No date had been set. (**Note:** the date/time and place for this meeting will be November 14th from 8:30 AM until noon, at the Adams Municipal Building, 3 South Main Street, Adams. **See attached flier.**)
- D. O'Shea reported that the Ogdensburg Tree Commission had met on Sept. 21st; at that meeting, they decided to remove 4 mature ash trees from Groulx Park (at the corner of Champlain and Ford Sts. in the northeast part of the City). **See attached article** on the decision.
 - O'Shea reported that Ryan Burkum has volunteered to treat the remaining ash trees at no charge, beyond the cost of the pesticide materials. O'Shea expressed gratitude for Burkum's generous offer.
 - Tenbusch will try to coordinate a press event in conjunction with the felling/peeling of the ash trees in Groulx Park.
- Tenbusch reported that fifteen local officials had attended workshop on EAB held at the Local Government Conference at SUNY Potsdam on 10/9. Megan Pistolese of SLELO-PRISM and Tenbusch had presented. They also had an informational table in the corridor. A volunteer wore the EAB costume and roamed through the crowd.



Harmful Algae Blooms (HABs). No report.

Eurasian Watermilfoil.

- P. Whalen stated that he wants to see one of the local milfoil harvester machines in action.
 - Tenbusch will try to set up a demonstration next year.

The meeting ended at 1:35 PM.



**New York
ReLeaf**

Preparing for The Bad Bug -
Emerald Ash Borer
Wednesday November 14, 2018
Adams Municipal Building
3 South Main Street, Adams
8:30 am – 12:00 pm

AGENDA

8:30 to 8:45 Sign-In/Registration

8:45 to 9:15

Emerald Ash Borer an Introduction: Glen Roberts DEC Forester.
EAB biology. What to expect. Tree Liabilities.

9:15 to 10:15

“Contracts”: Eva Brown, Resource Conservation Specialist, from Onondaga County’s Soils and Water Conservation District.
Ash tree removal contracts, and people interactions.

10:15to 10:25 Break

10:25 to 11:25

“The Fear of the Bug” National Grid: John Payton Senior Supervisor.
National Grids Proactive plan to keep the lights on. Perspective, removal plans and concerns.

11:25 to 12:00

“Grants and Resources”: Mike Giocondo DEC Forester.
DEC Urban Forestry Grants, and other grants. Regional Partners.

Watertown Daily Times

Ogdenburg officials to cut four of seven ash trees at public park

By LARRY ROBINSON
LROBINSON@OGD.COM

PUBLISHED: SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2018 AT 12:30 AM

OGDENSBURG — The city's tree commission has determined that four of seven large ash trees at Groulx Park will have to be cut down, while the three remaining trees will be treated against the Emerald Ash Borer.

Ogdenburg city officials said in May they were considering the fate of the seven mature ash trees which provide shade and aesthetics at Groulx Park, also known as Veterans Park. The public space is nestled between Ford, Greene and Champlain streets and is the site of multiple military monuments.

In a report to City Council this week, Parks and Recreation Director Matthew J. Curatolo said that members of the Ogdenburg Tree Commission recently inspected the park to determine how many ash trees in the grove can be saved.

Since last year, the city has embarked on an aggressive campaign to cut down ash trees throughout the community to stem future damage from the encroaching Emerald Ash Borer, a destructive insect in the early stages of moving through the north country. The small green beetle burrows into and then kills the ash trees it encounters. The trees then become a public safety concern, according to experts, because their brittle nature when dead makes them prone to snapping off and toppling unexpectedly.

In making the decision to cull the stand of ash trees at Groulx Park, city officials solicited the advice of Ryan Burkum, owner of Burkum Tree Care, according to Mr. Curatolo. He said Mr. Burkum is a certified arborist and a member of the St. Lawrence County Emerald Ash Borer Task Force.

“Mr. Burkum told the commission that if they wanted to try and save several healthy ash trees at Groulx Park that he would donate his time to treat the trees and the city could pay for the treatment, which was estimated to be several hundred dollars,” Mr. Curatolo said. “The tree commission, along with Mr. Burkum, went to Groulx Park and inspected the seven trees. Four of them were found to be in declining health and are in need to be cut down. The other three were healthy and would be treated.”

The optimum time to treat the trees against the ash beetle will be in the spring when sap is flowing and the inoculant is most easily spread. The treatment is effective for two years, at which time it will need to be repeated, according to Mr. Curatolo.

Mr. Curatolo said the four trees to be culled have been added to the Department of Public Works list for removal this fall. He said discussions are also underway over replacing those trees that are cut.

“Tree commission members discussed planting new trees at Groulx Park in the spring as part of its Arbor Day ceremony,” Mr. Curatolo said. “They will discuss tree specifics and numbers at a later meeting.”

Groulx Park is used primarily as a location to honor U.S. veterans in Ogdensburg. Located along the Ford Street Extension, the space was dedicated on Nov. 11, 1933, and is named in memory of U.S. soldier Charles A. Groulx, who was killed in action in France during the waning days of World War I in 1918.

Today, the park is home to multiple military memorials.