

St. Lawrence County Environmental Management Council
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MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday October 19, 2022 at 6:00 PM
2nd-Floor Conference Room, Public Safety Complex and Zoom
49½ Court Street, Canton, NY

1. **Call to Order.** In the absence of the Chair, Vice Chair Sue Rau opened the meeting at 6:05 pm.

2. **Land Acknowledgement**

Chair Pro-Tem Rau read a Land Acknowledgement, provided by Tony David, SRMT Environment Division, and used with permission:

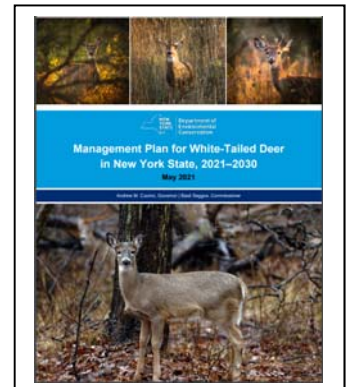
“As we meet today, let us first give thanks and acknowledge that the land upon which we are gathered is part of traditional indigenous territories, including the Rotinonshionni (Low-dee-no-SHOO-nee), the People of the Longhouse, also known as the Iroquois Confederacy; and the Kanienkehaka (Ga-nyun-geh-HA-gah), the People of the Land of Flint, also known as the Mohawk Nation.”

3. **Comments from the Public / Speaker:** The speaker was Steve Heerkens, Wildlife Biologist with NYS DEC. Mr. Heerkens spoke about deer management considerations in New York.

Heerkens began by speaking about Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD), which is widespread across the northeast part of the country, but has not been observed in NYS since 2005. DEC samples deer for CWD each year. He reported that CWD is a form of spongy encephalopathy; prions can be shed by infected deer, get into soil and plants, and be consumed by other deer. It is always fatal to deer; there is no treatment for it.

Heerkens reported on changes to deer management regulations for this year; these were made to improve chance that hunters will successfully harvest a deer during the season. He referred to the NYS Deer Management Plan, which was updated in May 2021 for the period 2021 – 2030. It is available on the DEC Web site: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7211.html#DeerPlan>

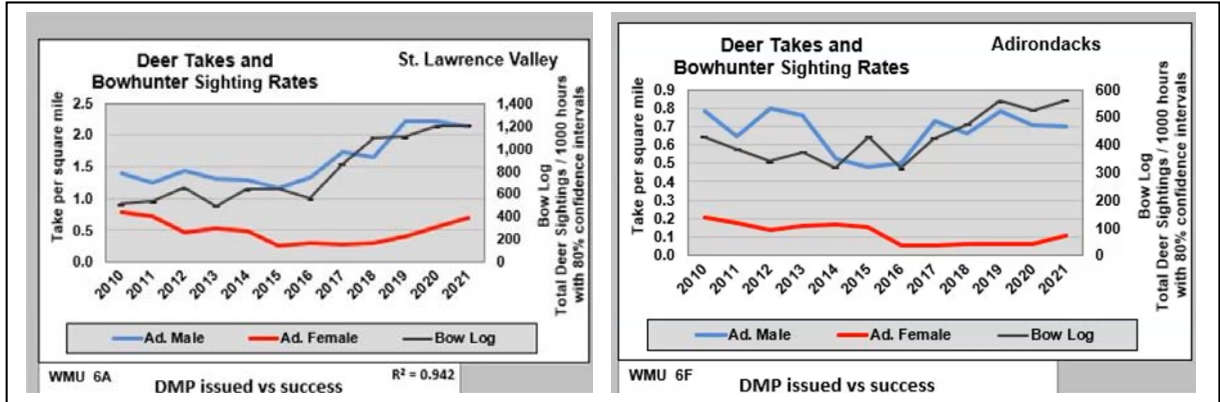
Sue Rau asked if the prions from CWD get taken up in plants, can other animals, e.g., cows, get infected? Heerkens reported that CWD has not yet jumped the “species barrier”; however, other types of spongy encephalopathy affect cows (e.g., Mad Cow disease).



EMC: Everybody Must Care!

Rick Marshall asked about deer populations in the state. Heerkens reported that deer populations have been stable in the St. Lawrence Valley; deer herds peaked in St. Lawrence County around 1999-2001.

More recently, Heerkens reported that hunters are taking 2.5 bucks per sq. mile in the St. Lawrence Valley. When one get into the Adirondacks, the buck take nose-dives, to less than 1 buck per sq. mile. See charts, below.



Marshall asked if fewer people are hunting. Heerkens noted that, statewide, approx. 550,000 licenses have been granted; this number has remained relatively stable, with a small bump in number during COVID.

In response to questions about deer impinging on residential areas, Steve reported on Community Deer Management. See <https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/104961.html>

Asked about donation of deer for distribution to low-income persons, Heerkens stated that if the County is interested in exploring a donation program, to contact Feeding New York State to get additional information. See <https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/8351.html>

Asked what the EMC could do to assist with deer management, Steve noted that deer herds in the St. Lawrence Valley are doing well. He noted that the County could develop its own deer meat donation program, if there is a need and interest. He finished by suggesting that promoting deer hunting is good for herd management.

The Council thanked Mr. Heerkens for his presentation. There was a 5 minute break.

4. Roll Call, Determination of Quorum

Members present: Sue Rau, Vice Chair; Herb Bullock; Sean Cunningham; Richard Marshall; Lance Rudiger; Tiernan Smith; Nicole Terminelli, BOL Liaison; Brian Washburn. **A QUORUM WAS NOT OBTAINED.**

Members absent: Catherine Bennett, Chair; Dustin Bowman, Secretary; Joe Brant; Lucas Hanss; William Stephens III; Rod Tozzi. ***There are two vacancies.***

Guests: Steven Heerkens, Wildlife Biologist with NYS DEC.

Staff: John Tenbusch.

5. **Acceptance of Order of Business, Items for New Business, Items for Unfinished Business.**
Accepted by consensus.
6. **Approval of the Minutes of the September 2022 EMC Meeting.** Due to lack of quorum, Minutes from the September EMC meeting could not be approved.
7. **Report by the Representative of the Board of Legislators (Nicole Terminelli).**
 - The BOL approved a local law to allow for remote attendance at meetings.
 - At the BOL Operations Committee meeting held 10/17, there was a first announcement of the re-appointments of Herb Bullock, Sue Rau, and Lance Rudiger for another 2-year term on the EMC. A second announcement will take place on 11/14; then the BOL will vote at their meeting on 12/5.
 - At the recent County Planning Board meeting, a proposed 5-MW solar project on Nickerson Rd. was opposed, since the proposed site included prime farm land.
 - Joseph Lightfoot (BOL, District 3) had sent a letter to Randall Young (DEC Regional Director, Region 6) to ask questions about water quality on Black Lake. Mr. Young replied; Lightfoot asked that Young's letter be distributed to EMC members. **See attached.**
 - Nicole had reported to the BOL that many of their advisory boards and committees do not post minutes of their meetings on the County Web site.
8. **Report of the Committees.** *Due to staffing constraints, Standing Committees have been suspended. The EMC will operate as a committee-of-the-whole.*
9. **Report of the Staff.** John Tenbusch reported:
 - The Emerald Ash Borer Task Force will meet next at 9 AM on Friday, 10/21.
 - The Planning Office has recently received extensions on two housing grants.
 - John attended a virtual meeting on 9/18 of Talking Wing, the group that is promoting the Rights of Nature.
 - Earlier on 10/19 John had attended the bi-annual meetings of the Raquette River and the West Branch St. Regis River Advisory Councils. There are no current requests to fund projects.
 - There is also no progress to establish the long-awaited Oswegatchie River Advisory Council. At this morning's meetings, it was stated that the ORAC development project was stuck at DEC headquarters in Albany.
 - Lance Rudiger asked about reports of the development of large-scale solar farms in the County.
 - ***Tenbusch will arrange for Jason Pfothenhauer to make a presentation on solar projects at a future EMC meeting.***
10. **Unfinished Business.**
 - Draft Resolution asking BOL to consider action on policies, plans, etc., that were prepared by advisory boards at the BOL's request.
 - John had sent a copy of a draft Resolution that had been revised based on comments made at last month's EMC meeting. **See attached.**

- Several EMC members felt that it was important for the EMC to vote whether to submit the draft Resolution.
 - o Tiernan Smith suggested that, if those in attendance tonight were unanimous in consenting to have the draft Resolution forwarded to the BOL, that the Resolution be forwarded.
 - o Lance Rudiger suggested that the draft Resolution be submitted to all EMC members by email, with a defined time to comment, and then to hold a vote electronically. If a majority approves, then the Resolution will be sent on to the BOL.
 - o *After considerable discussion, by consensus those present agreed to Rudiger's suggestion.*
- Appointment of an Ad Hoc Committee to revise EMC Bylaws.
 - *Sue Rau, Tiernan Smith, and Brian Washburn agreed to serve as an Ad Hoc Committee to review the EMC Bylaws, and to propose updates.*

11. **New Business.** None.

12. **Announcements.** None.

- Brian announced that SLELO PRISM will hold a meeting next week to discuss the emergence of a new invasive species, the Elm Zigzag Sawfly (*Aproceros Leucopoda*), which will put added stress on native elm trees already heavily impacted by Dutch Elm Disease.

13. **Adjournment.** The meeting adjourned at 8:03 pm by consensus.

Respectfully submitted,



Dustin Bowman, Secretary

Minutes prepared by John Tenbusch

Tenbusch, John

From: Lightfoot, Joseph (Hon.)
Sent: Monday, October 17, 2022 11:05 AM
To: Sheridan, William (Hon.); Terminelli, Nicole (Hon.); Michelle Gallagher; Tenbusch, John
Subject: Fwd: Black Lake Water Quality

Good morning

FYI, Please see the attached response that I received from DEC Regional Director Randall Young in response to some discussion items we recently had. I would appreciate your sharing this with members of your groups and associations.

Joe L.

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Young, Randall C (DEC)" <randall.young@dec.ny.gov>
Date: October 14, 2022 at 1:27:51 PM EDT
To: "Lightfoot, Joseph (Hon.)" <JLightfoot@stlawco.org>
Subject: Black Lake Water Quality

Joe,

I looked into your questions about Black Lake. The water quality in Black Lake is impaired due to excess phosphorus. This nutrient contributes to the growth of aquatic plants and documented harmful algae blooms (HABs).

To address the impairment, DEC is developing a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for the watershed, including the Indian River, pursuant to section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act. A TMDL is the maximum amount of a pollutant that may enter a waterbody while allowing that waterbody to meet and continue to meet water quality standards. Once developed, a TMDL determines a pollutant reduction target and allocates load reductions necessary among the sources of the pollutant. This will include an evaluation of phosphorus sources upstream and along the lake itself.

Staff from DEC's Division of Water have been working with the St. Lawrence County Soil and Water Conservation Districts for data collection and met with the St. Lawrence Environmental Management Council and the Indian River Lakes Conservancy. I do not have a specific timeline for completion of the TMDL; but the process is well underway, and there will be an opportunity for public comment before the TMDL is finalized. I've also heard that the Town of Oswegatchie, the Black Lake Association and the Black Lake Chamber of Commerce are working together to collect data and develop a management plan with a particular focus on invasive species, including aquatic plants.

I hope this is helpful.

Randy

Randall C. Young
Regional Director, Region Six
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

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(he/him/his)

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Operations Committee: 11-14-22

RESOLUTION NO. _____

**REQUESTING THE BOARD OF LEGISLATORS TO CONSIDER ADOPTING
RECOMMENDATIONS FROM ADVISORY BOARDS**

By Ms. Curran, Chair, Operations Committee
Co-Sponsored by Ms. Terminelli, District 14

WHEREAS, the St. Lawrence County Board of Legislators has established a number of advisory boards, committees, and councils, and

WHEREAS, a list of these advisory boards, committees, and councils may be found at <https://stlawco.org/Departments/BoardofLegislators/BoardsCommitteesCouncils/ListOfAdvisoryBoards> , and

WHEREAS, from time to time the Board of Legislators asks its advisory boards, committees, and councils to develop policies or to make recommendations,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that, when the Board of Legislators has asked an advisory board, committee, or council to develop a policy or recommendation, the Board of Legislators will consider acting on the policies and recommendations made by its advisory boards, committees, and councils, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED when the Board of Legislators decides to not act on a policy or recommendation made by its advisory boards, committees, and councils, the Board will provide a reason, in writing, to the Chair of that advisory board, committee, or council.