

Chemung County Water Quality Strategy Committee
February 18, 2009 meeting
Big Flats Community Center
MINUTES

ATTENDANCE: Joy Brewer (DEC); Roger Burlew (Erin), Jennifer Fais (STCRPDB); Diane Fiorentino (Stormwater Coalition), Richard Gunderman (County Legislator); Dick Kankus, ; Paul Kingsbury (T. Elmira), Dennis Rathbun (Environmental Health), Scott Rodabaugh (NYSDEC), Gene Stow (Farm Bureau), Janet Thigpen (STC), Jennifer Trimber (EMC), John Trimber (MRB Group)

1. Call to order and Communications – Diane Fiorentino called the meeting to order at 9:00 am since Mark Watts was in Tompkins County. There were no communications.
2. Approval of the January 21, 2009 minutes and agenda – Minutes of the meeting were approved on a motion by Dick Gunderman, seconded by Gene Stow.
3. Member Reports:

Jennifer Trimber said that the Schuyler/Steuben/Chemung County EMC's were co-hosting the NYS Association of EMC's Conference in November. She also said that on February 25 at 9:00 am Carla Canjar would be making a presentation on landfill issues at the sewer district office.

Paul Kingsbury reported for the Stormwater Coalition Board. He said that the Board bought a vehicle for Coalition staff use. The board meets monthly. The office is almost ready. He said that four people took the engineer Civil Service test and the Board is waiting for the results from Civil Service.

Joy Brewer said that she was providing assistance on the flood insurance program since there was a shortage of flood staff in Albany. She is especially trying to help new code enforcement officers understand the flood insurance program.

Janet Thigpen reported that the STC Regional Leadership Conference is April 9. She said that there would be two stormwater-related presentations: one was on stream processes and the second is on stormwater management, "What Best Management Practices Work Where." The EmRiver Model would be set up all day. She encouraged everyone to get their planning board members to go to the training. It was asked whether CEO's would get credit. Janet will look into that.

She reported on river gauge funding. She noted that the COE cut river gauge funding from its budget and there was temporary funding for most of the gauges until October 1, 2009. Newtown Creek no longer has a gauge. Janet has her resolutions ready. She noted that since the 1800's river gauge funding has been a cooperative effort with 50% of funding from the federal government, and 50% from others. The National Stream Information Program (NSIP) was to provide most of the funding; however, it only provides 5%. She will meet with Eric Massa to see if he can restore federal funding.

Jennifer Fais reported that the Stimulus Bill provides \$4 billion for wastewater treatment which is \$420 million for NYS. It also provides \$2 billion for drinking water which equates to \$83 million for NYS. 50% must be for loan forgiveness grants, 20% must be for green infrastructure projects. Projects must proceed to construction within twelve months. We were pleased that the total funding for wastewater is more than the last four federal annual appropriations combined. In addition, for the first time in almost 20 years, grants are allowed under the State Revolving Fund (SRF) for wastewater

infrastructure. The review was received from Sandy Allen, Director of the Clean and Safe Water Infrastructure Funding Initiative with DEC.

Jennifer also described to the group the Community Conservation Assistance Tools. She said that this included an environmental health check list and assistance guide, a watershed restoration and protection strategy approach to update county water quality strategies, an assessment tool for identifying and prioritizing natural resource concerns within a watershed, and a watershed report card. She said that this new effort spearheaded by the NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee would be rolled out at the March training for the Association of Soil and Water Conservation District staff. Janet Thigpen is going to attend. Diane Fiorentino said that she had the information about the training if anyone wanted to attend.

Jennifer also described the new Green Initiative effort. A number of communities, organizations, and businesses in the Corning area were working together on “saving green and going green”. Their first effort would be to work with the City of Corning as they put on the April 25 Earth Day Community Fair. She explained that energy, food production and local gardens would be the focus.

Diane Fiorentino said that the Ag Plastics workshop was attended by 30 people and it was a great success. It was sponsored by the New England Waste Management Organization. She was pleased that Chemung County has an ag. plastic baler so can be of assistance. During the workshop they did an inventory on needs. The new system will entail taking the baler to farms with a lot of ag. plastics and establishing a drop-off location for small quantities.

She also talked about the storm drain markers and passed one around to show people. She said that she is working with the stormwater tech to find high pedestrian traffic areas so that the drain markers will also function as an educational tool. One suggestion is near the Riverside School at Brand Park. She is hoping to use after-school programs, civic organizations, and others to do the public outreach and go with a highway staff to install these storm drains. Other suggestions are to locate them at community centers and libraries. She would like to unveil the project in April. Dick Gunderman noted that the markers are plain and suggested, perhaps, that they could be spray-painted fluorescent colors so that they caught attention better.

Diane also said that on February 27 and 28 there was a Green Living Expo at the Chemung County First Arena and that a number of not-for-profits would be represented there. The Soil and Water Conservation District, Stormwater Coalition, and the Water Quality Committee could all share 40 feet of space. She will be taking the EmRiver display and rain barrels. She would love to have volunteers. The program runs from noon until 8 on both Friday and Saturday. Setup on Friday at 9:00 am. They are also going to showcase the “Stream Guide.” Dick Gunderman volunteered to help set up. Others will look at their schedules to help volunteer.

Diane also noted that Tire Day was tentatively set for May 16.

Gene Stow was concerned about erosion/sediment control along the gas line installation on his property. The line runs down the hill with the potential of dumping sediment-loaded water on Bowman Hill.

Scott Rodabaugh said that he had talked with Mark Watts and Joe Yarosz from DEC and they understood that the work was done properly. Gene did not understand why the gas well people were exempt from erosion and sediment control requirement unlike regular contractors. Scott explained that the Federal Energy Act was passed giving lots of exemptions for oil and gas exploration. However, he said that no one is exempt from meeting the water quality standards and it is in their best interest to

install best management practices. Gene was still concerned that the site was not being managed properly. Scott will follow up.

Roger Burlew agreed with Gene Stow and said that the Bowman Hill site will be a problem if it isn't already. He expanded on the Tire Day event saying that he will have from 5 to 10 trucks, one from each community at the Ashland site. May 16 is not firm because it is also the day of Ashland's spring clean-up. They still need to go to Waterloo to take the large tires. Also, all trucks making this trip must have documents of insurance and that takes a month lead time to put in place.

He again raised the concern with the double standard on erosion sediment control. Could the Rural Stormwater Coalition and the Water Quality Committee raise this issue with the central office? Why not let the state be stricter than the federal standards? Scott Rodabaugh said that erosion / sediment control pieces were applied to the Millennium project. Again he will follow up.

Roger asked for assistance on helping talk with county and local legislators to come to an agreement on road crossings standards for pipelines. He was very concerned that gas companies will cut through dirt and gravel roads. In their town, he requires boring under paved roads. It would help the gas companies if it was consistent across the county. He has been working on this issue for two years. Janet offered STC's assistance to help with some recommended language so that the legislators can move forward.

Roger also had a suggestion of a location of a drain marker. He suggested Speer Park.

Dick Kankus had offered to bring a piece of Marcellus Shale back with him from a trip north. Snow cover prevented this. He said that a DEC report was just issued on the status of hazardous waste clean-up at the McNerny Farm. It is has been under study a long time. Three acres, containing zinc, arsenic and chromium, will be dug out and the area capped. Seeley Creek will also be rip-rapped.

4. New Business:

Natural Resources Inventory – Jennifer Trimber, EMC, and John Trimber made a presentation on the new Chemung County Natural Resources Inventory.

Summer Intern Opportunity – Janet Thigpen, STCRP&D spoke briefly about the Summer Intern Opportunity. She explained that, because STC and Chemung County Water Quality received an Environmental Achievement Award from DEC, DEC will pay for \$12 per hour for a full time intern through the summer if we can come up with a good pollution prevention project. The locality needs to provide a \$1200 stipend as an extra bonus. Please call Janet or Diane Fiorentino if you have ideas. Ideas must be submitted by March 2.

5. Old Business:

Closed Loop System Presentation – Because of the lateness of the time, the Closed Loop System Presentation was delayed until a future meeting.

Marcellus Shale Scoping Documents were not discussed.

6. Next Meeting: the next meeting will be March 18, 2009.

7. Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 10:10 am.

Respectfully submitted, Jennifer Fais