



Lake Erie Watershed Protection Alliance

Cattaraugus, Chautauqua and Erie Counties

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LEWPA Board Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, May 24, 2022 at 1:00 p.m.

Webex

Voting Board Members present: Cattaraugus: Megan Boberg (Chair); Chautauqua: Cassandra Pinkoski (Secretary), Dave McCoy; Erie: Mark Gaston (Treasurer), Mary Hosler, and Bonnie Lawrence.

Others in attendance: Joanna Panasiewicz (Coordinator), Veronica Medina, Carol Markham, Kelly Friel, Jeanne Beiter, Joyce Telaak, Stephany Tatarevich, Ryan Elliott, and Kim Peck.

1. **Call to order** by Chair. Megan Boberg called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m.
2. **Welcome** and introductions around the room.
3. **Approval of the February 22, 2022 meeting minutes** – A motion to approve the minutes as emailed was made by M. Gaston, was seconded by M. Hosler, and was carried.
4. **Financial report** by Treasurer – Mark Gaston reported that the account had \$25,726.07 at the last report. LEWPA vouchered from NYSDEC for the 75% advance for 2.1 project work totaling \$187,500 and sent checks for \$52,987.50 to each county. Also paid \$100 for Cattaraugus Farmer Neighbor Dinner table from outreach fund. There were three interest payments totaling \$1.50 and the balance is now \$54,165.07. A motion to approve the Treasurer's Report as read was made by M. Hosler, was seconded by B. Lawrence, and was carried.
5. **Outreach**
 - a. Farmer Neighbor Dinner – LEWPA tabled on Cattaraugus LEWPA projects and septic system maintenance at the West Valley Fire Hall in Cattaraugus County on April 13, 2022. There were approximately 360 people in attendance.
 - b. Municipal Training Videos – The Watershed 101 video went out in the March EnviroNews newsletter to the public and stakeholders. The WNY Earth Day Challenge took place from March 21 through April 30. LEWPA submitted the Watershed 101 video and had good participation. Other partner projects were mentioned as well. The LEWPA municipal training webpage was added to the Erie County Local Government Training webpage in May. Emails with the LEWPA training webpage will be sent shortly to lists of officials in all three counties. The Upper Susquehanna Coalition YouTube training page is already linked for a highway video, but you can see others as well.
 - c. M. Gaston tabled for LEWPA at Evans Environmental Day as well. M. Hosler mentioned there will be six beach cleanups for small pieces of plastics in Evans this summer. They are working on how to reuse or recycle those.

- d. J. Panasiewicz also mentioned the Septic Smart for Lake Erie program for septic maintenance outreach throughout the Watershed. M. Hosler mentioned that the Master Plan on Lake Erie Beach suggested focusing on outreach in the area for failing septic.

6. EPF funding

- a. Contract update – Contract 2.0 is signed and executed as of March dated July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2026.
- b. Work Plan edits for year 2.1 – Upfront funding for year 2.1 projects was secured from NYSDEC before the black-out period. Erie County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) distributed funds to the counties. These projects need to be under way quickly because we can only have two contract years open at a time, so these must be completed to start 2.3 projects. Since plans were made almost 2 years ago, prices have gone up. Cattaraugus issued an amendment to take out one project and reallocate funds to existing projects to account for increasing rock prices. Erie County was approached by a partner who would be unable to complete the Euglena project this year and will likely resubmit for year 2.3 funding.
- c. Work Plans for year 2.2 –Chautauqua County reported that there will be a Walnut Creek streambank stabilization near Forestville HS. Boat stewards will continue along with hydroseeding. Engineering reports will be completed for Cedar beach resiliency and stormwater collection at Point Gratiot. Cattaraugus County pulled out the Persia project and Ellicottville ditch stabilization. Instead, they will have hydroseeding, South Hill Road S. Branch stabilization, and Waterman Brook trout stream stabilization, as well as county project labeling. Erie County will have hydroseeding, installing riparian buffers, Crump Brook stabilization, a Lake Erie shoreline protection project, Eighteenmile Creek golf course restoration project, Love Road Preserve invasive species project, and Alexander Preserve restoration project.
- d. RFP for year 2.3 - Erie County will release a request for proposals this summer as usual. Other counties are starting to look at potential projects to begin next year as well.

- 7. **EPA beach green infrastructure project update** – M. Gaston reported that the project should wrap up in June. Debris clearing will be completed soon. Point Gratiot and Lake Erie Beach each have two areas ponding water which will be replaced with soil and stone. Erie County Soil & Water will complete plantings then.

New Chautauqua County EPA projects – NYSDEC proposed Wright Park Beach and Main Street Beach for EPA funding. C. Pinkoski is currently working on the narrative and project plan for EPA. A storm drain will be redirected to a constructed wetland and water will be treated in a floodplain in Wright Park. Project includes right-sizing a culvert on Hyde Creek.

8. Watershed Management Plan Update

- a. Stream Assessments – 18 sub-watersheds are getting Stream Visual Assessment Protocol (SVAP). Five were completed by Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper in Phase 2. Three were completed last year. The goal this year is to complete the 10 left.
- b. WNY Wildway – There is a draft map out now for the WNY Wildway showing areas where habitat connectivity is most important including connections to Lake Erie and Lake Ontario. This

will be incorporated into the Watershed Management Plan <https://www.wnyc.org/western-new-york-wildway>

- c. Bacteria sampling results – J. Panasiewicz highlighted the results from the report that intern Adam Hopper worked on for the past semester. Crooked Brook and Eighteenmile Creek are focus areas. She will share that report once it is finalized.
- d. Public meeting will be held lunchtime, probably late in June to discuss what US Geological Survey has been working on and where we are in the process and how to give feedback. We are hoping for an initial draft report from them including monitoring and modeling information in June.

9. County Representative update reports

- a. Cattaraugus County – M. Boberg reported that they are submitting for two agriculture and non-point source (Ag & non-point) grants. They are waiting for the second hydroseeding grant from NYSDEC Water Quality Improvement Program (WQIP) to be executed.
- b. Chautauqua County – C. Pinkoski reported that they are planting at Hidden Harbor on Cattaraugus Creek and working on shoreline stabilization projects, as well as finishing the Smith Mills dam project. They submitted a water irrigation management project and construction of two agriculture chemical facilities. She is also looking at helping to fund breakwater improvements in the City of Dunkirk and she is looking at how to add habitat possibly.
 - i. *Lake Erie Management Commission* – D. McCoy reported on education and outreach. They are partnering with Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy on local radio broadcasts on WKBX. The PSA in April was to capture the storm. May will be about less lawn. Dunkirk harbor dredging starting August through October, 2022. Ear mark funding not available yet for breakwater repair and dredging of harbors.
- c. Erie County – M. Gaston reported that tree and shrub sale is over with 700 orders and 45,000 trees. Two Ag & non-point applications were submitted. Two climate resilient farming grants were submitted. One includes a series of small and large farms with manure storage that they will either retrofit a manure incorporation bar to equipment or for hired applications, there would be a cost share for upgrade on contract. This will be a pilot to see which works out better for farmers. Stream projects are moving forward. Looking to hire a water quality technician shortly and some applicants may be seasonal interns. One intern is hired for SVAP already.
 - i. B. Lawrence reported that WNY Earth Day Challenge is WNY effort and other counties and partners would be great next year. Will start planning again in January. Paint cans and new paint care law is in effect and there is a flyer that will be shared. Erie County will be helping to fund pump outs and repairs for septic systems for low-income residents.
 - ii. M. Hosler reported that they are waiting for Sturgeon Point permits to reconstruct higher, wider, and more sloped marina wall. Hoping to bid out project in June for August construction. Study underway for cost analysis for marina and sediment/wave study and adding sewer study to expand sewers to area. Also looking at upland redevelopment. This year, Erie County Legislature paid for dredging but Evans needs a plan to develop area to pay for ongoing maintenance of marina. They can only put sand at Lake Erie Beach Park and Evans Town Park. Want to potentially put at Bennett and Wendt and other private areas. Need a larger littoral drift study along both counties on Lake Erie possibly. C.

Pinkoski has call with Healthy Port Futures on sediment littoral drift study for Dunkirk and Barcelona and can ask about cost for larger study. Finally, M. Hosler working with Erie County DPW on a county road culvert upstream of Muddy Creek is undersized and FEMA suggested to apply for it to be changed even though it isn't old.

10. NYSDEC update

- a. Great Lakes Conference – R. Elliott reported that NYS Sea Grant is planning a Lake Erie Conference. Potential topic suggestions from the group include coastal resiliency, solar farm planning watershed impacts, littoral drift throughout the system, and lake level impacts.
- b. Annual priorities – Same as last year. J. Panasiewicz read through them including:
 - Resilient NY flood studies
 - water quality project planning & implementation for “shovel ready” water quality and green infrastructure projects that may compete for federal (GLRI) and [state](#) implementation funds.
 - Continue to work with DEC’s Great Lakes Program to “package” and propose eligible projects for federal GLRI funding, consistent with the [GLRI Action Plan III](#). Apply for competitive GLRI funding for those projects where we are requesting non-competitive grants.
 - Lake Erie beach health. Consider collaborating with NYS Parks.
 - Implementation projects that align with water quality priorities of the Great Lakes Action Agenda and supporting watershed plans under development (Lake Erie 9EP, Cattaraugus Creek IWAP, source water protection plans, etc.)
 - Streambank stabilization projects should use nature-based approaches and riparian buffers where feasible (or justify why a nature-based approach is not feasible). https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/administration_pdf/crranaturalmeasuresgndc.pdf to achieve water quality improvements that maximize public and ecosystem benefits. All nature-based shoreline projects (occurring on private and public properties) should be promoted as demonstration opportunities and include information on related education and outreach activities in the work plan.
- c. 2023 Focus Area 3 EPA project discussion - suggestions are due by June 10th. The Muddy Creek study is complete and the preferred project applied to other funds so take off list for now. Hamburg beach Joanna will follow up with Supervisor Hoak, but not likely. Big Sister Creek not likely without additional study. Need to look for other areas and other projects. C. Pinkoski will send additional information to Jim Lehen for Chautauqua fairgrounds to repackage that project. Crooked Brook stormwater management on Vineyard Drive has engineered wetlands to trap sediment. J. Panasiewicz to send bacteria report to Jim to see if that rises to top of list.

11. Announcements and Open Discussion – discussion on living shoreline vs. hard stabilization and getting NYSDEC permits and other divisions to align. Hamburg Steel wind stabilization appears to be only rock, but requiring others to use natural shorelines.

M. Gaston reported that Hamburg is doing a feasibility study for a marina. Lauren from Ocean and Great Lakes funding and Victor DiGiacomo have agriculture funding that may come our way. Looking at possibly \$300,000 for agricultural BMPs for erosion and sediment control in Lake Erie watershed and 4 R

program is \$200,000 for nutrient management planning for Cattaraugus Creek watershed. Cattaraugus SWCD to see which farms might be interested in comprehensive nutrient management plan in 2023.

- 12. Adjourn.** Next meeting is scheduled for August 23rd. M. Hosler to see if Suncliff or Graycliff is an option. A motion to adjourn was made 3:34 p.m. by M. Gaston, was seconded by B. Lawrence, and was carried.

Minutes recorded by J. Panasiewicz and submitted by Secretary C. Pinkoski.