



Lake Erie Watershed Protection Alliance

Cattaraugus, Chautauqua and Erie Counties

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LEWPA Board Meeting Agenda

Thursday, August 28, 2025 at 1:00 pm

Voting Board Members present: Cattaraugus: Connor Maxwell, Tyler Paar; Chautauqua: Cassie Pinkoski (Chair), Dave McCoy, Rebecca Wurster; Erie: Bonnie Lawrence (Secretary), Mark Gaston (Treasurer).

Others in attendance: Joanna Panasiewicz (Coordinator), Sandra Notaro, Stephany Tatarevich, Erin Kane, Kyra Umrigar, Carol Markham, Lisa Vanstrom, Dave Romano.

Agenda

1. **Call to order** by Chair Cassie Pinkoski at 1:01 PM
2. **Welcome and introductions** – online
3. **Approval of May 22, 2025 minutes** – A motion was made by M. Gaston to approve the minutes, was seconded by R. Wurster, and was carried.
4. **Financial report by Treasurer** – M. Gaston reported that the account had \$110,253.37 at the last meeting. \$100,000 is for the Watershed Coordinator position. The remaining is administrative funds. Three rounds of interest earned \$128.79 in total. Payment to Erie SWCD implementation account for \$12,650 from admin funds to cover Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper project. \$97,732.16 remains in the account. A motion to approve the Treasurer's report as read was made by B. Lawrence, was seconded by C. Pinkoski, and was carried.
5. **LEWPA Coordinator position update** – B. Lawrence reported that Cole Beale is scheduled to start in September. He has great experience including 9E Plan experience and great recommendations.
6. **Vice-chair vote through end of 2025 to replace Jake Kelly.** Tyler Paar with Jacqueline Barber as his alternate were officially appointed as the LEWPA Cattaraugus SWCD members at the end of May. We need a vice-chair in place until the Executive Committee term expires December 31, 2025. Will need to vote for the next executive committee at the November meeting for a 2-year term, January 2026 – December 2027. A motion to elect Tyler Paar as Vice-chair was made by J. Panasiewicz with second by M. Gaston, and was carried.
7. **NYS EPF funding**
 - a. Year 2.3 – M. Gaston reported that projects are completed and Erie needs to close out. C. Pinkoski reported that projects are completed and Chautauqua County needs to close out. T. Paar reported that projects are underway and hoping to complete next week.
 - b. Year 2.4 – M. Gaston reported that 2.4 projects are underway. Easement issues have delayed the Rail/Trail project and designs are being finalized on streambank projects. C. Pinkoski reported some projects are completed and some projects are underway. Waiting for wetland permitting on a project. T. Paar is also waiting on wetland delineation permitting on projects. Trout Unlimited may partner with a Cattaraugus County project. They used the stream table in a demonstration at the annual highway picnic.

- c. Year 2.5 – J. Panasiewicz reported we are waiting for DEC comments/approval on work plans. T. Paar is working through wetland permits on proposed projects now in anticipation of approval.

8. US EPA project updates

- a. Dunkirk project – C. Pinkoski reported project is closed out. Chris Dere at EPA retired. Curtis Simoneau is new EPA project manager. M. Gaston reported that he vouchered EPA and the final check to Chautauqua County should go out after September SWCD Board meeting. May need new MWBE reporting for the project.
- b. Muddy Creek project – B. Smith sent in a report that they are waiting for the permit process with DEC. Blanding turtle assessment and wetland delineation were needed and will impact the project budget.
- c. Cattaraugus Creek project – M. Gaston said work is underway on one of two sites. Shared a drone photo of work underway.
- d. Discussion on ECSWCD admin needs and future projects – M. Gaston reported that as more projects go in, additional admin funding may need to come to Erie SWCD for audit and admin costs. LEWPA should keep asking for additional EPF funding to hire Coordinator full time to assist with EPA project admin and EPF projects.

- 9. **NYS Ag. & Markets funding Ecosystem Based Management Funding** – M. Gaston reported that all three counties have projects planned. A no-cost extension will be requested to allow Erie and Cattaraugus counties to complete their projects including streambank diversion for cattle crossing and low till cover cropping. C. Pinkoski reported that 3 projects have been completed in Chautauqua County.

10. Watershed Management Plan Update

- a. Stream Visual Assessment Protocol (SVAP) – All stream assessments and desktop analysis have been completed and data has been visualized. Final sheets were completed today. Joanna will work on getting them online shortly. Because of issues with Google Drive and SharePoint, will combine all the files for each sub-watershed and link PDFs on the Watershed plan webpage. www.erie.gov/wmp

11. County Representative update reports:

- a. Cattaraugus County – T. Paar reported that they are working on cover cropping this fall and continuing plantings. New agriculture technician started earlier in August.
- b. Chautauqua County – C. Pinkoski reported that agricultural waste handling sites are working through permitting due to archeological issues. Two handicapped accessible lifts in the County are being installed at Dunkirk and Barcelona Harbors. A consideration for year 3.1 would be funding a buoy off the coast of Dunkirk to maintain continuity of data: <https://seagull.glos.org/map?coords=-79.7181960%2C42.4908884%2C9.7&platform=BSU1> The Great Lakes Center at Buffalo State University has operated and maintained a weather/data buoy 6 nautical miles NNW of Dunkirk NY in the Eastern Basin of Lake Erie for the last decade. It provides real time wave and weather conditions, as well as water quality and temperature profiles. The request is for \$11,600 (6% admin Indirect rate). DEC was not aware of plans for picking up lost federal monitoring programs but will double check.
- c. Erie County – M. Gaston reported that streambank construction projects and AEM projects are underway. Climate resilient farming projects have been caught up in wetland permitting issues. Many projects are

being pushed to next year. They assisted Erie County DEP Division of Sewerage Management with a project encasing an exposed pipe on Eighteenmile Creek, as well as assisting on installing a dry hydrant. There were five low head dams in West Seneca on Buffalo River that create unsafe conditions. The lawsuit is over and M. Gaston is pushing to make area safer. Asking USDA for help and Kennedy's and Langwothy's offices for assistance. He may be going to Buffalo News on this because the federal officials are not offering any technical assistance and won't look at plans for dam removal even if other funds are found. Their approval is needed to move any project forward. E. Kane to look into at DEC.

12. **NYSDEC update** – K. Fitzgerald sent a report that DEC is working through 2.5 work plan comments from other internal programs.

- The Catt Creek IWAP has been posted for comments through 9/5.
<https://dec.ny.gov/nature/waterbodies/lakes-rivers/great-lakes/glac-iwap>
- Coastal 9/4 forum for engineering and design for FA4 Habitat restoration projects.
<https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fevents.teams.microsoft.com%2Fevent%2F6ca00c5e-11b9-441d-b8e8-0a1f5aeda9e3%4012b5c3c7-5c89-4455-a31e-59f2af7f44c9&data=05%7C02%7Cerin.kane%40dec.ny.gov%7C84b33a2816f04e34f68908dde1a8b75e%7Cf46cb8ea79004d108ceb80e8c1c81ee7%7C0%7C0%7C638914836925322038%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMtIsIkFOIjoiTWpbcCIIsldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=kW0EBCTGCRUIac%2BYpz3ncTBhEiEDhfwr%2Btsf6FGEUg%3D&reserved=0>
- Fall Lake Erie working group meeting aimed to be last week in October. One in-person for Lake Erie updates and one virtual for all statewide updates.
- S. Tatarevich reported that Smoke Creek has no habitat projects underway from the recommendations report. There is a Coastal States Association project in planning stages with floodplain and wetland restoration working on designs for historic stream channel and storage.

13. **Announcements and open discussion**

- a. NY Sea Grant Natural and Nature Based Solutions Symposium wrap up is on September 16th.
- b. Great Lakes Regional Learning Exchange is September 24th in Rochester. Free. The Learning Exchange will be more geared to those seeking federal funding and support in project management than specific climate resiliency science.
- c. Dunkirk Wright Park Beach public meeting by Waterkeeper was well attended.
- d. WNY Land Conservancy has an invasive species workshop today in Clarence Public Library at 7 PM. Federal funding for acquisition of property along Lake Ontario. WNY Wildway work is continuing and other land acquisitions are underway.
- e. Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy has fall yard care PSA going out soon. Hemlock trees treated and Japanese knotweed next at Chautauqua Creek preserve. Working on educational signs for Wright Park

14. **Adjourn** – A motion to adjourn was made by M. Gaston at 2:18 pm, was seconded by T. Paar, and was carried. The next meeting is November 20, 2025, due to the Thanksgiving holiday.