



Lake Erie Watershed Protection Alliance

Cattaraugus, Chautauqua and Erie Counties

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LEWPA Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday, November 20, 2025 at 1:00 pm, Online Only

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

Others in attendance: Cole Beale (Coordinator), Carol Markham, Jeanne Beiter, Joann Panasiewicz, Kim Peck (Senator Gallivan's Office), Kristin Fitzgerald, Davie McCoy, Wendy Paterson, Stephany Tatarevich, Dave Johnson.

1. **Call to order** by Chair Cassie Pinkoski at 1:08 PM
2. **Welcome and introductions**
3. **Approval of August 28, 2025 minutes** – Motion to approve by M. Gaston, was seconded by T. Paar, carried.
4. **Financial report by Treasurer** – M. Gaston reported that the account had \$97,732.16 at the last meeting and all is for Watershed Coordinator position. Three months of interest payments earned \$99.64 in total. \$97,831.8 remains in the account. A motion to approve the report by B. Lawrence, seconded by C. Maxwell, carried.
5. **LEWPA Coordinator position update** – C. Beale, the new LEWPA coordinator, introduced himself.
6. **Executive Committee vote for terms through 2027** – A motion was made by D. McCoy to continue current officers - C. Pinkoski to continue as Chair with T. Paar as Vice Chair, M. Gaston as Treasurer, and B. Lawrence as Secretary. Motion was seconded by C. Maxwell and was carried.
7. **NYS EPF funding**
 - a. Year 2.3 - C. Beale reported that year 2.3 desk audits of all projects are complete and final reports to be consolidated and sent to DEC. SWCD can initiate their close out.
 - b. Year 2.4 - C. Pinkoski reported four projects underway in Chautauqua County for BMP installation. Three complete, one in progress. T. Paar reported in Cattaraugus County a site survey was completed today for Mansfield Creek. Two sites were chosen for BMPs; however, they may downsize to one site and expand the available resources for that site as it is much bigger than expected. Trout Unlimited has made verbal commitment to providing buffer materials. M. Gaston reported many projects ongoing; recurrent Lake Erie hydroseeding program and riparian buffer program, and projects like Erie-Catt Rail Trail.
 - c. Year 2.5 – C. Pinkoski reported planning of stormwater management and rain garden planting at Chautauqua County fairgrounds. Planning to continue existing programs of boat ramp stewards, hydroseeding, and invasive management. M. Gaston reported for Erie County existing hydroseeding programs, and riparian buffer work will continue. A streambank restoration project in Boston is designed and ready for bid. In Hamburg, a bioretention system is being designed. T. Paar reported Cattaraugus County is planning stabilization on unnamed stream near village of Cattaraugus with work to be

performed by town. Planning a new program to support county municipalities in stabilization through rock line ditching.

- d. Year 3.1 - C. Beale reported the RFP for Erie County is on erie.gov/LEWPA. K. Fitzgerald says this will be a new contract year, and while LEWPA has no cost extension, DEC is eager for a new contract to get started in the new year and to close out year 2.5 quickly. Conversation ensues about how to catch up, work dependent on the individual counties could allow us to get to new contract easily. J. Panasiewicz suggests watershed wide program instead of independent county projects.

8. US EPA project updates

- a. Dunkirk project - C. Pinkoski reported project is complete and close out is ongoing.
- b. Muddy Creek - M. Gaston reported the wetland delineation in Town of Evans being worked and looking to construction in 2026.
- c. Cattaraugus Creek - M. Gaston reported that 1,900 linear feet of stream bank stabilization to be completed across two sites. Site one accounted for 1,300 linear feet and has been hydroseeded but needs planting.

9. NYS Ag. & Markets funding Ecosystem Based Management Funding

- a. C. Pinkoski reported that work for Chautauqua County is done. M. Gaston reported Erie County has completed two farm management plans, one streambank stabilization, and two designs are almost ready for bidding that will go to construction in 2026. T. Paar noted he can add two streambank stabilizations in Cattaraugus County that could replace projects that were dropped if needed.

10. Watershed Management Plan Update

- a. C. Beale reported that Stream Visual Assessment Protocol (SVAP) data analysis is complete and final reports are available online. M. Gaston to finalize last SVAP invoice to submit to Erie County for DOS.
- b. C. Beale plans to reestablish Watershed Advisory Committee meetings in the new year to push through the final stretch of WMP writing.

11. County Representative update reports:

- a. Cattaraugus County - No other updates.
- b. Chautauqua County - C. Pinkoski reported the US Army Corps of Engineers has dredged at Barcelona Harbor and working on designs to prevent further sedimentation. Looking for funds for construction in probably 2027. The County is still waiting on Cattaraugus Creek breakwater to move forward as there are concerns with shifting rock and walkway. D. McCoy reported LEMC meeting was this past Monday. County wrapping up occupancy tax projects. Five projects lined up for next year with two in the Lake Erie watershed. Opening next round for occupancy tax projects in January with due date in April.
- c. Erie County - M. Gaston reported the year's construction in Erie County is wrapping up and next year will be a big construction season. Looking to coordinate in spring with contractors for summer 2026. B. Lawrence reported on an initial meeting around salt with County Highway Division for best practices and uses. USEPA habitat project with Tift Nature Preserve is moving ahead. USDA tree grant is still moving forward and making good progress. Erie County is waiting on grant notices and decisions from CFA and awaiting WMP no-cost extension execution from DOS.

12. NYSDEC update

- a. K. Fitzgerald reported on the recent GLAA fall meeting in Niagara Falls for the Lake Erie working group.
- b. Subbasin Priority Output Tracker (SPOT), check Lake Erie maps for data and info on GLAA happenings in watershed. Currently in beta testing. NOAA Coastal States Organization (CSO) looking for projects in coming 5-year plans.

- c. S. Tatarevich reported Smokes Creek project through NOAA Coastal States Organization ongoing for restoration of floodplain, wetland, and historic stream channel and storage.

13. Announcements and open discussion

- a. J. Beiter reported Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper has recently held an outreach event Wright Park Beach, and has upcoming events for Scajaquada Creek project with USACE, and Hyde Park.
- b. BNW is looking to schedule outreach event for West Seneca floodplain project.

14. Adjourn

- a. Motion to adjourn at 2:25 PM by M. Gaston, second by B. Lawrence, and was carried.
- b. Next meeting is February 26, 2026 at 1pm.