



St. Lawrence County Environmental Management Council

48 Court Street

Phone: 315-379-2292

Canton, NY 13617-1169 Email: Planning@stlawco.gov

www.Stlawco.gov/Departments/Planning/AdvisoryBoards/EnvironmentalManagementCouncil

Meeting Minutes Wednesday, September, 2025 6:00 p.m.

The Ranger School

257 Ranger School Road, Wanakena, NY 13695

I. Call to Order: Chair called the meeting to order 6:04 p.m.

A. Land Acknowledgment Chair read a land acknowledgement provided by Tony David, Director of the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe Environment Division, and used with his permission: “As we meet today, let us first give thanks and acknowledge that the land upon which we are gathered is part of the traditional indigenous territories, including the Rotinoshionni (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.”

B. Roll Call and Introductions 8 of the 11 members present. **Quorum was obtained**

1. Members Present: L. Bage, *Secretary*; R. Graham; E. Harriman; S. Rau; N. Terminelli, *BOL Liaison*; A. Pearson (joined 6:07 p.m.); B. Washburn, *Chair*; N. Woodworth, *Vice Chair*.
2. Members Absent: M. Iversen; L. Rudiger; M. Weaver.
3. St. Lawrence County: J. Pfothner, *Director Planning*; S. Joseph, *Planner II*.
4. DEC: Randall Young *Regional Director for Region 6*

C. Acceptance of Order of Business (Woodworth/Rau) (passed unanimously)

D. Approval of Minutes (July 16, 2025) (Bage/Woodworth) (passed unanimously)

E. Public Comments:

1. Concerns on an unauthorized boat launch in Wanakena on Cranberry Lake with no steward. 10-15 trailers motorized boats enter a day and concerns about aquatic invasive species (AIS) introduction. Wanakena is located at the head waters of the lake where Oswegatchie River enters into Cranberry Lake. DEC investigated this issue and the launch is on a town right of way that touches the water. Concerns if they close that access point they will just end up going to another unauthorized point like the town beach. Discussion of building an parking area to address parking along roadway. Concerns that people are not using boat wash and will introduce AIS. The closest boat washing area 3 miles away. Official boat launch and steward at Cranberry Lake (hamlet). Are there mechanisms to enforce boat washing? Boaters are to have a certificate (can be self-issued) stating that they have cleaned their boat before launching into Adirondack waters. The stewards can ask to see and law enforcement on the water can ask to see it. The boat washing stations are located on major arteries through the Adirondacks rather than at the boat launches themselves. The DEC looked into establishing an official boat launch with proper water depth, proper substrate, not a wetland, and have room for parking. The DEC could not find an available parcel that met those criteria. Attempts to discourage use with large rocks didn't last as someone removed the rocks. Chair suggested for the creation of a Cranberry Lake Association and participate in, Citizens Statewide Lake Assessment Program, (CSLAP), a collaborative project between New York State Federation of Lake Associations and the DEC, with a volunteer lake monitoring program <https://nysfola.org/what-is-cslap/> This citizen science program of data collection allows for baseline conditions and monitoring for change. Then to establish a lake management plan.
2. Concerns about wild parsnips and Japanese knotweed. Discussion on Japanese knotweed mapping. Discussion on communicating to highway departments regarding management to prevent spread of invasive species. There is a highway department association that could be an avenue for communication. County manages 573 miles of road. Challenges with labor and cost.
3. Offer by a Ranger School student for labor or help with projects.

II. Reports

A. **Report of Board of Legislators:**

1. **Nuclear energy:** BOL passed a resolution in support of Governor's proposal for new nuclear power plant to be located in Upstate NY.
2. **Deer River:** Large public comment on residents along the Deer River in Lawrence regarding ongoing sewage fungus issue.
3. **Muti-use Trail (MUT):** Members of the public expressed dissatisfaction regarding elements of the MUT. Concerns about the Clarkson study steering committee not including home owners or non-ATV people, nor soil and water conservation district SWCD or DEC.
4. **Invasive Management Plan:** Request from the BOL that in the management plan include a list of resources of who a group or concerned citizen contact for support in managing invasive species and available grants.

B. **Report of DEC:**

1. **Deer River:** Towns were made aware of forms to fill out if concerned citizens noticed presence they could report to the DEC. DEC has been monitoring the River weekly and the contamination is less than it was last year, and so improvement is happening. September 12 received response to draft consent order regarding violations of Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD) and ammonia, with DEC council evaluating that response. Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe asked for additional consultation because the Deer River flows into the Saint Regis River. North Country Dairy is evaluating with the Town of Lawrence and State elected officials of a combined waste water treatment with North Lawrence. The extent of the sewage fungus is not spreading and remaining close to the outfall. Questions on low water levels. The SPDES permit discharge amounts are designed with 7q10, the lowest anticipated water level assumption. It is derived from seven day average lowest water flow that occurs once every ten years.
2. **Sustainable Development SLC:** Patrick Fosters, the DEC Deputy Commissioner for Sustainable Development, met with SLC IDA and toured SLC on potential development sites with brownfields and old industrial sites.
3. **Water chestnut:** Volunteers removed 1500 pounds of water chestnut from Tibbits Creek near Ogdensburg.
4. **Alcoa permitting:** Continuing to work on revised Title 5 permit for Alcoa to address the sulfur dioxide emissions that are causing the nonattainment area around Massena for national air quality standard.
5. Question regarding effectiveness of herbicide on Water Chestnut. The status of the application in the Oswegatchie River is not known, but the herbicide is effective. The chemical is "clearcast" EPA number 241-37-67690
6. Question regarding Black Lake sewer district. This is a Town of Morristown project and DEC is not involved at this point. This is unconnected to TDML plan. The Town determined the water quality protection through this proposal independently. The applied for an engineering grant through the DEC, but that is pending approval. Discussion on costs for sewer district. There are often significant financial support with grants for these types of projects.
7. Question regarding PFAS values in inactive landfill testing. There is a large range of values. There is a requested for actual values. Data should be available through a FOIA request.

C. **Report of Staff:**

1. **Ag tour:** The office prepared a tour of agricultural locations in the County to bring to light issues that are affecting area farmers.
2. **CDBG Home Rehab:** Submitted grant application for continuation of home rehab program.
3. **Septic Program:** Home owners with septic systems along eligible water ways including numerous in the Wanakena area, can receive funds half the cost to repair septic up to \$10K. Question on water testing to determine failing system. Nothing with this program, but personal well testing can be sent to various labs and SWCD can serve as drop of point second Monday of the month. Town of Webb passed a local law where the code enforcer will periodically inspect waste water systems along lake to insure they are functioning properly.

III. Unfinished Business:

A. **Wetland PSA:**

1. Chair gave historical overview on wetland PSA. DEC gave feedback and suggested edits on PSA. Discussion and further edits to the PSA will occur next meeting.

B. Inactive Landfill Initiative / PFAS

1. Legislation from 2017. First DEC report 2021 most recent 2025. First steps were identifying where these landfills located. Over 2,000 inactive landfill across NYS. SLC had upper 50s to low 60s depending on report. These landfills can be sources of pfas chemicals contaminating ground water. Under Clean Water Drinking Act all municipalities with public drinking water have to start testing for PFAS. There is no requirement for personal well water, and so Graham's report looking at groundwater contamination. The threshold for water contamination exceeds 10 parts per trillion (ppt). The DEC testing these areas and if determine in exceedance of 10 ppt in ground water than they test adjacent wells. Most sites have not been tested, but there is a schedule planned for testing. Graham reviewed maps on the progress of testing. Discussion on the complexity of sampling water for PFAS testing. A contractor who specializes in PFAS testing takes the sample, and if found to be in exceedance the DEC contacts local residents and offers to test their water, also done by trained professional. These are very sensitive tests, these chemicals are everywhere so easy to contaminate, and testing for thresholds in part per trillion with the analogy of an eye dropper amount in a swimming pool.
2. Discussion of waste disposal of fire extinguishers and boat flares.

C. Invasive Species Management plan:

1. Staff asked to review invasive species that are actually present in the County, as many that are tier 3 are not found in our County and should be prioritized.
2. Working spreadsheet: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1cHA23GGI4AG-HOC-SUPRgX7ABtNcU8qX/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=113216999194892503532&rtopof=true&sd=true> .
3. Staff proposing a citizen monitoring program for specific species in connection with forest health. Hemlock Woolly Adlegid, Beech Leaf Disease, Ash tree survivors.
4. Discussion on invasive species management plan. Discussion on becoming a designated partner with a PRISM. Discussion on aquatic invasive species and monitoring for them.

IV. New Business: none

V. Announcements: none

VI. Adjourn: (Woodworth/Bage) 8:15 p.m.

VII. Zoom Meeting Chat:

18:10:41 From SLC Planning Office : sound ok?
18:11:03 From Erica Harriman : Yes, the sound is good for me
18:11:11 From SLC Planning Office : thank you
18:11:24 From Legislator Nicole A. Terminelli : Great!
18:55:28 From Adam Pearson : 7 Q 10 = Lowest 7-day average flow that occurs (on average) once every 10 years.