

Carmans River Task Force

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

April, 9th 2008

Brookhaven Town Hall, Farmingville, New York

Chair: Adrienne Esposito

Members Present: Legislator Kate Browning, Johan McConnell (South Yaphank Civic), Marty Van Lith (Open Space Council), Councilwoman Kepert, Kevin McAllister, Adrienne Esposito (Citizens Campaign for the Environment), Audrey Kessler (for Robert Kessler), Theresa Goergen (SC Department of Health), George Costa (Trout Unlimited), Anthony Graves (TOB DEP), Fran Hurley (Yaphank Taxpayers and Civic Association), Deborah Lynn (Senator LaValle's representative), Steve Trusnovac (Resident), Chad Trusnovac (Resident), Karri Mollet (Assemblywoman Eddington representative), Tamara Sadoo (Suffolk County Department of Environment and Energy)

Members Absent: Assemblyman Alessi, Laura Bavaro (Nature Conservancy), John Stehleh (Resident), Suffolk County DPW representative

Guests Present: Kevin McAllister (Peconic Baykeepers), Kathy Schwager, Nick Karas, Dave Thompson, Matthew Atkinson, Mahlow Lantz, Robert Judd, Liz Krolik, Chart Guthrie (NYSDEC), Timothy Sinnott (NYSDEC), Kevin Jennings (NYSDEC), Tate Kunkle (Trout Unlimited), Josh Slaughter, Tara Bono

Meeting initiated by councilwoman Kepert at 6:40 PM

I. Introductions/ Updates

Updates – There are noted signs up and down the river, as well as drop boxes. The fish ladder is up and running. Anthony Graves introduces a \$5,000 to \$6,000 estimate for sediment sampling.

II. RPF Update

Tamara spoke about the progress of the RPF. The County is using the outline we created in the group with a few internal tweaking and additions. For the technical services aspect, we should be good to go in about two weeks. It will then go to the law department and we won't see it again until it's released for bidding. The law process could be about 2-2.5 months then we still have the bidding process, county approval, and contract proposal. The RPF document will be able to be viewed on the web as it is a public document. Tamara will be giving Adrienne bi-weekly updates on the progress.

III. Presentation by Author and Brook Trout expert Nick Karas

Karas educated the group on the significance of the brook trout in Carman's River. We learn that Daniel Webster caught a world record brook trout in the river in 1827. Karas explains that because of the changes that the river has gone through since, it is extremely unlikely that we will ever see a brook trout of that size in the River again. The brook trout are sensitive to temperature and will migrate up and down stream, sometimes three or four times a season looking for the perfect cold temperature. Karas admits that water quality is the first and largest issue and there is a lot that can be done. Brook trout are very different from other species of trout. Brook trout have the ability to adapt to changing environments but have been relegated to the worst parts of the river because of the take over by invasive species and because of the inability to live in harmony with other kinds of trout. Graves asked if there has been documentation of all the different trout, Karas responds by telling him that all strains in the North East have been documented with an exception of 2 or 3 trout. Trunsovec asks if the Brook Trout is a bottom dweller, Karas and Guthrie respond by saying that they prefer to live from the surface no further down than 20 feet and do most feeding on top, but will always favor colder water.

IV. Presentation by biologist Tim Sinnot

Tim Sinnot of the NYSDEC talks about the process of approving pesticides. He starts off by saying how New York has its own internal registration guide in addition to that of the EPA. Only a small amount of states do this and look at their own ecological risk. His presentation included information about the overview of the DEC, ecological risk assessment, 2,4-D, Sonar, Renovate, and the Invasive Species Grant Program.

The DEC has four major offices. The bureau of pest management is under the office of remediation of materials management. The bureau of habitat is the bridge between environmental quality and natural resource management. Sinnot is on the ecotoxicology and standards unit where he works on pesticides, risk, assessment, and environmental quality standards. He then went over the specifics on what defines a pest then about pesticides are regulated. A pesticide has to first go through the registration process, then it is decided if the product is a general use or a restricted use product. The label must be specific in the limitations and directions of use. Lastly, the proper application and use of the product must be enforced. If not properly applied, one could face possible jail time, or if a professional; loss of certification.

The risk assessment looks at a variety of different aspects. It first makes sure that the product is EPA registered, and run by the bureau of pest management. Then there are three components to look at; human health risks, groundwater contamination risks, and ecological risks. This means that a product that is allowed upstate may be prohibited on long island considering the groundwater contamination risks. The risk assessment is a serious process, there are a number of tests and screening processes involved and in all cases a worst-case scenario is implemented to ensure that all possibilities are looked at. The consumption rates of a few animals are analyzed and applied to the residual values and compared. To figure out risks on aquatic life is much harder, there needs to be analysis of both salt and freshwater species. They finish up the tests by looking at all of the possible outcomes and problems, if there are no problems, the product gets registered,

if there are serious problems, it gets denied. There is always the gray area, and restrictions can be applied to certain products. For example a pesticide that is good for land may not be for ponds, in which case an aerial application would be forbidden.

He then spoke about a few herbicides that are possibilities for Carmans River. One of the herbicides was 2,4-D, a chemical that mimics plant growth hormones. This is not to be confused with Agent Orange, which was a combination of 2,4-D and the now banned 245-T which caused controversy and human health issues. Sinnot explains that it's not as big of a problem as most conceive it to be. The lethal dose that would kill fish isn't even close to the application rate. The second herbicide he spoke about was SONAR, the active ingredient being fluridone. This chemical prevents synthesis of carotenes which protect chlorophyll and essentially starve the plant to death. This chemical requires a longer residence time than most, about 30 days. This chemical is not selective – it will wipe out most life in the system. The good news is that the invasive will not come back but the natives will come back the following season. This is primarily used on Eurasian water milfoil. The toxic rate for fish is about 6.5-14.3 ppm and it is only applied at about .06-.09 ppm. The last chemical he spoke about was Renovate; the active ingredient is Triclopyr. This chemical is a synthetic growth hormone, and in the past it has been mainly a terrestrial herbicide, but it has been recently learned that it works very well on broadleaf species including Eurasian Milfoil and it works very rapidly and doesn't wipe out the whole population, only broadleaf species.

Sinnot concluded his presentation with the Invasive Species Eradication Grant Program. It started in 2005 as a program for eradication of invasive species in New York. It is a program for eradication only, not for invasive species control. In the past it has provided a 50/50 match for the eradication process.

A few questions were asked including a concern that herbicides were not for use in rivers or streams, only in lakes. Sinnot responds that there are exceptions and that the granular slow-release formulas are efficient for streams. He was asked if he looked at alternatives besides herbicides and he replied that he only works with chemical treatments in his department.

V. Next Steps.

Tamara will keep Adrienne updated on the RPF process.

VI. Next Meeting.

The group will be notified by e-mail when something comes up for us to work on. Doodle.com was a recommendation for setting up a meeting time.