

# **Carmens River Task Force**

## **MEETING MINUTES**

March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2008

Brookhaven Town Hall, Farmingville, New York

Chair: Adrienne Esposito

Members Present: Theresa Goergen (SC Dept. of Health), Deborah Lynn (Senator P. LaValle Representantive), Johan McConnell (South Yaphank Civic), Robert Kessler (resident), George Costa (Trout Unlimited), Marty Van Lith (Open Space Council), Josh Slaughter ( Legislator Kate Browning Representative), John Stehle (Resident), Chad Trusnovac (Resident), Fran Hurley (Yaphank Taxpayers and Civic Association), Laura Bavaro (The Nature Conservancy), Samantha Homan (Assemblyman Alessi representative), Karri Mollet (Assemblywoman Eddington representative), Councilwoman Kepert, Anthony Graves (Town of Brookhaven), Steve Trusnovic (Resident)

Members Absent: Tamara Sadoo (SC Dept. of Environment and Energy)

### Guests Present:

Liz Krolik (TOB), Tara Bono (CCE), Bob Ossenfort (Coalition to save Yaphank Lakes) Helen Kalbach (Yaphank Historical Society), Kayann Donaldson (Yaphank Historical Society), Lucielle Stroud (Yaphank Historical Society), Julia hickey (Coalition to save Yaphank Lakes), Audrey Kessler (Coalition to save Yaphank Lakes), Ben Trusnovac (Lakes), Kevin Jennings (NYSDEC), Den Lewis (NYSDEC), Chart Guthrie (NYSDEC Fisheries), Karen Mouzakes (Yaphank Historical Society), Kathy Schwager (TNC), Chris Doyle (Allied Biological), Peggy Judd (Coalition to save Yaphank Lakes), Robert Judd (Coalition to Save Yaphank Lakes)

Esposito initiated the meeting at 6:35 PM

- I. Introductions
- II. Presentation by Yaphank Historical Society

Karen Mouzakes of the Yaphank Historical Society presented a slideshow of the history of Yaphank. The title of the slideshow was “Yaphank, A History in Pictures” and started in the 1800’s and led up to 1974. There were many views of the lakes and it was noted that there was a lot more vegetation around the lakes and recreation within the lakes. Summer boating and fishing was promoted by residents that rented out boats and temporary summer residences. The upper lake was also known as Willow Lake and the

lower lake was known as Lily Lake, both named after the dominant vegetation on the lakes. Swimming off the upper dam in the 1950's appeared different; the water looked much shallower than it is today. In the last picture of the slide show taken in 1974 it was noted that the water was much clearer than the present.

### III. Presentation by Chris Doyle by Allied Biological

Chris Doyle of Allied Biological, a lake management consulting and wetlands restoration company of New Jersey came to speak about possibilities for the Yaphank Lakes and previous experiences combating aquatic plant species. He started out noting that he has done limited research on the two lakes and has not yet visited the lakes, as Allied has not been hired. He stresses that every lake is different and therefore require different treatments, so he can't make a straightforward suggestion because there is no perfect solution. A suggestion was to combine techniques to produce the best possible outcome.

He also stresses that whatever the task force decides to do, post management is most important. Looking at the plant and animal impact after treatment is crucial. He informed the group that there is a program called \*\*\*\*"SEASLAP"\*\*\*\* that is run by the state of New York and offers a certification program to anybody willing to volunteer their time to collect water samples to start a database. He notes that we don't want to get rid of all of the plants, because that will cause more problems. He informs us that what is going on is a natural process, lakes become swamps on their own but with the impacts of human activity, "human eutrophication" is occurring and speeding up the swamp process. Doyle informs us of another grant; the New York State Invasive Species Grant – (as he knows it) which is not available for this year, but should be available for next year.

He explains more about his company and what they do. Their main service is applying herbicides and algaecides but also do water quality programs, mapping, and consulting. They don't own a harvester themselves but if that was the final decision of their client, they could easily go through another company to acquire one. Their experience with these native plants is extensive. Bear Lake New Jersey, a closed lake which had both Variable Leaf Milfoil (VLM) and Cabomba, was treated with sonar (fluradone) one time with a high dose, and Allied hasn't had to do anything since 2005. In 2007, only a little bit of the invasive species were left. He does acknowledge that this is a rare case, and that variable leaf milfoil is very difficult to get rid of. As for doses, a high dose is considered around 20ppm. For Cabomba treated with sonar, between 10 and 20 ppm is necessary. Sonar needs a long contact time, and because the Yaphank lakes are part of a fast moving river system, it will be hard to keep the contact time that long. Suggestions are the granular form of sonar because it is slower releasing. Because Sonar is mostly only effective on Cabomba, two different herbicides were recommended for the lakes. One applied to the lower lake the first year, and another (preferably Sonar) applied to the upper lake the second year. Something that we need to think about is 'what's going to move into Variable Milfoil's spot? Will it be Cabomba or a desired native plant?'

He then spoke about his experience with Donahues Pond; a similar high flow system on Long Island. The process was started in 2004. In 2005 they conducted studies,

they then did a pilot test which was unsuccessful, and in 2007 they did a full, high dose treatment of Sonar. A question from a guest was “will sonar affect groundwater?” the response by a few different members was that Sonar does break down, and it would be unusual if it was found in groundwater if it isn’t found in the river sediments. Doyle then went back to his experience with Donahue’s pond, explaining that when he first got there, it was too thick to get around in a rowboat. Early in the year there was about 80% of the pond that was moderate, medium, or dense in vegetation. After the treatment, a post treatment visit occurred in September where 75% of the pond was sparse, trace, or had no Cabomba. It is considered a success for now, but they won’t know for sure until this year. Donahue’s pond was different from the Yaphank Lakes because it was already a stressed system, meaning there were hardly any native plants left except for the common bladderwort. The bladderwort came back and moved into where Cabomba used to be.

There was a question whether it would be a good idea to reintroduce natives or let them come back by themselves. Doyle responded that it would be better to let them just come back by themselves and let nature take its course because reintroduction doesn’t always work and could have reverse results. He tells us that the worst cases he’s seen are those systems with intense harvesting programs and machines because the primary mode of reinfestation of these plants is when break up occurs. Another question for Doyle was “does Sonar affect fish?” The response was debatable by many members. It is known that Sonar does not bio accumulate in fish. There was a concern by George Costa that there haven’t been any definite studies whether or not it does affect the fish, and if it does have a negative affect on marine life, it is not desired. Adrienne Esposito points out that whatever process we decide on, something will absolutely be negatively affected, there is no perfect solution. It is mentioned by one member that whatever we do might have a negative impact, but it will still be better than doing nothing.

A hypothetical plan was outlined by Doyle. The plan suggested that we try to get rid of the Variable Leaf Milfoil the first year in the lower lake, note the results, and then look into treating Cabomba in the upper lake in year two. We should then look at how much is left and consider a suction option, or responsible and proper harvesting option. He notes that whatever we decide, we must be flexible because it is hard to predict the results. A possibility for post treatment is benthic barriers – although they’re dangerous, they can be productive when strategically placed. It was suggested by a member that we look into a ten year maintenance permit with the DEC and Doyle agreed. He said that was a good option because if something isn’t productive, we are going to need to look at other options. He suggested a 3-5 year program to start, but knows that there’s always variables and we might have to go back to the drawing board. He reinforces the idea that monitoring is the most important component and we need to be proactive.

A question was asked concerning Treatment for Variable Leaf Milfoil; the member asked which chemical would be optimal treating it. Doyle responds that 24D is the most accepted and used the most nationally. He acknowledged that it is not the safest product, and if not accepted by the group, there is the alternative of using Renovate (Triclopyr) which is made by SYPRO. This substance was just approved in New York State and they are about to release a granular form of the product. This product is different than sonar

because it requires a 2-5 day contact time, which is desirable because it most likely won't affect nearby wells. There was a concern by a member that the river outflow is a 1-2 day residence time (as estimated by engineers) so there definitely wouldn't be time for 45 day contact time, and possibly not even 2-5 day contact time. Doyle responded to the concern that the concentrations will be closely monitored and more substance can always be added to keep the concentration high.

Another question for Doyle was whether there has ever been a crash of an invasive species on its own without outside treatments. Doyle responded that this was an extremely unlikely occurrence, but has occurred with the Eurasian Milfoil, but the actual cause is unknown. A member notes that in the peconic, Cabomba retreated one year, but reappeared the next year. There was a suggestion of using a curtain in many different ways. A curtain could be used to confine the chemicals, it could be used to contain harvesting pieces, or to section off and treat parts of the river at a time. There are also permeable curtains, used for harvesting so that pieces don't float and settle elsewhere.

#### IV. Feasibility Study and RFP Process – Request for Proposal – handout

Adrienne reviews the Suffolk County RFP Process Outline with the group. The process could take 7-10 months. We are currently on step two of sixteen, but are making good progress and are ahead of ourselves. Tamara is writing the draft to be submitted to the law department and will have a draft or a final copy by our next meeting.

#### V. TAC Report

Theresa Goergen briefed us on the TAC meeting earlier that day. She tells us that there is good news; we have a shorter timeline that we originally thought because we don't necessarily have to enter into an EIS. The DEC recommended that we do a walk through and document any patches to note any concentrations that could cause re-infestation. This will help us keep track of our progress. They also want to see a downstream survey. We will need to look at the threshold and have an 5 to 10 year management plan. Overall it was a very productive meeting, and there were no surprises.

#### VI. Other Business

Biologist Tim Sinnott will be invited as a speaker for our next meeting. Sinnott is an expert on the different possible chemicals and their affect on the ecosystem. Nick Karas, brook trout expert might also be available to speak at the next meeting.

#### VII. Next steps

Our next meeting that was originally scheduled for March 26<sup>th</sup> will be moved to either Thursday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, or Wednesday, April 9<sup>th</sup> to accommodate our guest speakers.

#### VIII. Additional Speakers

George Costa presented the development of the fish ladder that was recently installed. A picture board was displayed of the progress. The project started several years ago with a grant from NOAH and others. The current cost of the project is \$42,000. The assembly of the ladder was completed on Monday, and there was a report of fish actually going up the ladder on Thursday.

- Meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM