

The Cortland – Onondaga Federation of Kettle Lake Associations, Inc.
Meeting Minutes
July 6, 2009 – 7:00PM
Tully Town Hall, Tully, NY

Facilitator: Anne Saltman, Senior Planner, Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board
Guest Speaker: Dr. Lars Rudstam, Director, Cornell University Biological Field Station

Participants (from Sign –in):

Song Lake Property Owners' Association

Marjie Grillo, Tony George, Tarki Heath, Howard Wells, Doug Lane,

Crooked Lake Homeowners' Association

Donna Kraft, Tom Cappa, Dave Zimet, Alex Kulichik, Donna Johnson Brown, Kathie Hurn, Linda Massey, Millie D'Antonio

Tully Lake Property Owners' Association

Tom Fox, Dan Johnston

Little York Lake Improvement Society

Karen Emmett Lang, Bill Waelden, Kris Waelden, Paul Stepien, Ruth Leurch,

New York State Federation of Lake Associations: George C. Kelly, Jim

Cunningham, Nancy Craft

Cortland County Soil and Water: Pat Reidy

Meeting opened at 7:05

1. Welcome and Introductions

Anne welcomed all and reviewed the agenda for the evening.

All those in attendance gave a brief introduction; name and association.

2. Anne introduced our Guest Speaker Dr Lars Rudstam.

Currently, Dr. Rudstam is a professor at Cornell University and the newly appointed Director of the Cornell Biological Field Station in Bridgeport on Oneida Lake. He holds a PH.D from the University of Stockholm (1988) and received both his BS and MS from the University of Wisconsin-Madison (1978 and 1983, respectively). Lars joined the Cornell University Department of Natural Resources in 1992. He now conducts research in Fisheries and Aquatic Science. He is particularly interested in Questions relating aquatic ecosystem dynamics to fish populations. His current research examines: effects of exotic invaders on aquatic ecosystems, dynamics of interacting fish populations, Long term dynamics of Oneida Lake fish and fisheries. He will present information on various aspects of lake ecology with examples of changes we might anticipate for our lakes in the future.

Understanding Our Lakes

Dr. Rudstam explained that he was new to the Tully Kettle Lakes, but hoped to become more familiar. He began with a brief description of the program at the Cornell Biological Field Station, starting with recognition of John Forney and Ed Mills, both now emeritus professors. The station addresses issue on Oneida Lake as well as several of the Great Lakes.

It is a 53 year old field station with 6 graduate and 9 undergraduate interns currently in the program. Oneida Lake is shallow, but has a larger area than Seneca or Cayuga lakes. One of the highest annual uses of the lake is for anglers seeking walleye and yellow perch. The walleye spawning run is impressive , but the fishery is lower than in past years. (Picture of Scriba Creek: walleye hatchery, north of Oneida Lake.)

Description of the Oneida Lake food web

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As lake associations you may be most interested in what happens in the lowest trophic levels to maintain the fisheries.

Expected ecological change from Climate change, a decrease in phosphorus loading leading to a decrease in productivity, and increased water clarity from zebra mussels, also, ongoing introduction of invasive species.

Climate change

Oneida Lake has had significant increases in temperature. Measures over June, July and August since 1968, show an increase over these months of nearly 2 degrees F.

Concerns for cold water fisheries:

Burbot (a freshwater cod) for example: spring levels of liver oil are high with the fish losing reserves through the summer. This species is declining and will disappear, as did the cisco (a whitefish species), which is now gone.

Ice duration is another concern: Oneida has shown a decline of nearly 3 weeks since the 1970's. The ice is set later and it breaks up in the middle of the winter decreasing the total ice days. By the end of the this century, we predict ice will set much later with duration down to one month or less; several years without ice at all.

Warmer waters will increase other fish species. For example, the Gizzard shad is becoming more abundant. This fish is common in southern reservoirs where it can make up over 50% of the total fish biomass. Not a bad fish to have as prey for other fish but not good eating for humans. Also increasing are small mouth bass and white perch. White perch is the second most abundant fish with a prediction that it will become more abundant than the yellow perch.

Invasive species

Zebra mussel: 20,000 per meter sq. - Causes increased water clarity with more submerged, rooted plants, found down to a depth of 6m, 2 meters deeper than in the past. This will change the lake from being dominated by fish using the open water, to being dominated by fish using the vegetated zone.. Pan fish will likely be more abundant; and walleye and yellow perch may decline.

Productivity

Current Total Phosphorus is 20 to 30 mg/l; Oneida's is considered mesotrophic.

Good management on the lake has decreased phosphorus and algal blooms, but may also decrease the fish production. Zooplankton, as a major source of food for fish, has not decreased although the mussels are filtering the smaller algae. If the phosphorus declines below 10 mg/l, there will probably be a further decline in the fisheries. The difficulty is getting a balance between the phosphorus and plant needs.

Quagga mussels; can settle on soft and hard material, so they can push down the algae levels more, and can live on less algae. They tend to overtake the zebra mussel populations.

Other Invasives: there will be more. It is difficult to predict what the effects will be. Some plants may produce significant problems.

Lars asked the group if there were any water chestnut in the lakes. The group responded that none were currently found in our lakes. Water chestnut forms a mat, and decreases animal life.

European frogbit: quite abundant in some areas of Oneida Lake. It creates areas of low oxygen.

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Star grass; Is present in Oneida, but they are not certain of the effects.

Rudd: a red fish from Europe is also present, but does not appear to have a very strong effect.

Loosestrife; Quite invasive. It was being controlled by the introduction of the beetle, but now seems not to be successful. May have to do with spraying for mosquito control.

Round goby; eat zebra mussel and are eaten by bass; may not be that bad in its effect.

Sturgeon; put in 1995 to reintroduce a species that was present in Oneida Lake historically. Growth rate is higher than in any other lake because they feed on zebra mussels too. These are big fish. One from the Niagara River was 75 year – 210 pounds and 7'6".

Predictions:

Coldwater fish will be gone

Gizzard shad, bass and white perch will increase

As the plant growth on the near-shore and benthic areas increase in productivity there will also be an increase in the panfish, bass., pike and gar

Gobids will become abundant

There will be 7 foot sturgeon in Oneida Lake in 50 years

Not certain about levels of walleye and yellow perch

Climate temperature changes: climate similar to Georgia in 50 years

Decreases in phosphorus loading, uncertain effects by likely will cause declines in fish production

Increased water clarity – yes; quagga mussels will persist

New invasive: speculations and surprises are to be expected

Water chestnut and frogbit may be controllable though vigilant handpulling.

Lars asked if any of these are presenting problems here.

Participant Question: In Rochester the lake is infested with Gobi – hard to catch other fish– bottom fish – concern that they multiply very quickly.

Lars' Response: The Gobi is a way to get use the energy in the zebra mussel. Bass in the great lakes are not that unhappy with Gobi as the bass are very big

Participant Question: What was his view of the overstocking of walleye to eat the bluegill to protect the midges that the pan fish eat?

Lars' Response: He questions if that will work and would choose bass over walleye to eat the blue gill.

Participant Question: Will the decrease in yellow perch affect the walleye?

Lars' Response: He feels that there will be more cannibalism in the spring of the larger walleye eating their own young.

Participant Question: loosestrife – Tully area loosestrife has disappeared. Does he have any idea why this might occur?

Lars' Response: Difficult to say. Have they introduced the loosestrife beetle? The beetles were released in Cicero and it worked for a while.

Participant Question: Stocking program of walleye in LYL has not been successful. Does he have any recommendations?

Lars' Response: It could be the bass that are feeding on them. Walleyes from the hatchery are small and not very smart. He recommends that if you have bass, perhaps you should be happy with bass.

Participant Question: LYL has a public launch, trout are stocked by DEC: Is it bad for the lake to have too many anglers?

Lars' Response: Probably not a good thing.

Participant Question: LYL also has a dam. Would that have any impact on the trout?

Lars' Response: Probably not.

Participant Question: Is VHS still a problem?

Lars' Response: VHS not confirmed in Oneida Lake – in 2008 it was not a big problem and so far, not this year. But it may come back.

3. Lake Share – Crooked Lake

Anne introduced Tom Cappa, Vice President of Crooked Lake Assoc.

Tom began by recognizing Donna Kraft and Dave Zimet for their work in getting the association back up and running. He reviewed the revitalization of the association with a current budget and dues collected in the fall. Tom feels strongly that participation with this group will continue and grow.

Crooked Lake has 70 parcels: \$18Million dollar value – 70 to 85 depth, water diffuses both north and south. No major outlet or inlet. The small tributary, past Song Mountain Ski Resort, is a concern. The DEC septic discharge plan was inadequate; alerted by friends at Song Lake. The association is still not happy with the plan, but it is better than it was. Water testing began last week with CSLAP program; fish analysis to start next week. E.Milfoil control is a concern. Ruled out mechanized harvesting, looking into chemical control. Fascinated by grass carp and would like to consider. The association is in a learning curve. Donna added that she is encouraged to see the momentum of the association. DEC is looking into the grass carp option.

Discussion on grass carp continued with a participant mentioning the Melody Lake initiative: *Adopt A Fish Program* at \$10.00/fish.

10 to 15 fish per vegetative acre is the recommended number according to *Diet for a Small Lake*. Dave mentioned that Song Lake has grass carp; they do a good job, but maybe too good. Another participant suggested that they don't eat the milfoil. Tarki related what she learned at the NYSFOLA conference; it was found that the carp will eat the milfoil after time as it is one of the first plants to emerge in the spring, so the carp seem to develop a taste for it. Tony added that Song Lake purchased 2,500 in 1996. They are expensive, with a life expectancy of 3 to 5 years.

8:00

4. Name, Mission Statement and By-Laws

Anne introduced the section on updates for name and bylaws. The Temporary Executive Committee met in June. Members of the committee include Karen Lang, Tarki Heath, Tom Fox, Tom McLyman, Marjie Grillo and Tom Cappa, although, Tom Cappa was not able to attend the meeting.

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Anne asked for an agreement on the new name: Cortland-Onondaga Federation of Lake Associations, Inc. Karen Lang explained how the temporary executive committee came to the name; to be consistent with the other FOLAS (as a federation instead of a coalition), to respect both county locations (Cortland and Onondaga) and to acknowledge the geologic significance and connection of the kettle lakes.

Although a discussion started, Tom Fox stated that this is the name filed in Albany. Anne then asked if anyone objected to the name. There were no objections so the name was adopted.

Anne began to review the By-laws. Participants all had hard copies and followed as Anne reviewed all articles of the by laws. Lots of discussion as noted on by laws notes. Changes are attached.

Mission statement: no discussion.

Resolution to participate – Anne noted that all but one association had submitted the signed resolution. She added that this resolution only helps to strengthen commitments.

There was a suggestion to contact Dennis Daley. He has stated that the Green Lake Association was inactive but still has a treasury.

5. Incorporation Process and Membership Dues

Tom Fox noted that Song and Crooked need to get their checks to him. He has opened an account in his name which will be transferred to COFOKLA when 501c3 status is obtained with EIN. Certificate of incorporation was filed today. Conflict of interest policy – Tom will send it on to the associations to review-

Application for exemption will be filed by Tom. Tarki will copy and review.

6. Anne asked if there were any notices from other associations.

Tarki mentioned the blogspot for Song Lake at songlakewatershed.blogspot.com and Crooked Lake also has a blog at

7. Next Step ... Where Do We Go From Here?

Anne suggested that Tarki send around an email with suggested times for our next meeting date and location. Evening – Mondays – Select a date – August 14th?

Anne suggested that we agree to confirm the bylaws at the next meeting.

It was agreed that we should also hold a September annual event. The temporary committee will meet and discuss.

Submitted by Tarki Heath