



## **MINUTES OF THE PARK ECOLOGY COMMITTEE MEETING**

**May 16, 2019**

The Committee meeting convened at approximately 1:30 p.m.

### **Park Ecology Committee Members Present:**

John Ernst, Chair, Dan Wilt, Bradley Austin (ESD), Karyn Richards (DEC), Art Lussi

### **Other Members and Designees Present:**

Art Lussi, Presiding Chair, Dr. Chad Dawson, Lynn Mahoney (DOS), William Thomas

### **Local Government Review Board:**

Gerald Delaney, Executive Director

### **Agency Staff Present:**

Terry Martino, Christopher Cooper, Kathy Regan, Mary O'Dell, Kelly McKean, Emily Tyner, Keith McKeever, Rick Weber, and Annemarie Peer

### **Approval of March 2019 Draft Minutes**

The March draft minutes were approved, as corrected, on a motion by Dan Wilt and seconded by Brad Austin.

### **RASS Program Report (Kathy Regan)**

Kathy Regan began by reporting that Kelly McKean has begun work as the Agency's new Biologist 1 (Ecology), and that interviews have begun for a new engineer. She also pointed out that field season has begun and that staff are extremely busy.

Ms. Regan informed the board that the Agency has been approached by New York State Department of Transportation (DOT) to review a proposed program for wetland banking. Wetland banking had been discussed in previous years, but never implemented. The Agency and DOT are drafting a MOU.

## **Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program (AIPP) Update (Brendan Quirion, Erin Vennie-Vollrath, and Zachary Simek)**

Mr. Quirion began the presentation by announcing the 20th anniversary of protecting the Adirondacks from Invasive Species. Mr. Quirion reviewed the definition of invasive species and discussed threats such as environmental, economic, and human health impacts

Mr. Quirion mentioned APIPP's partners including The Nature Conservancy (TNC), New York State Department of Transportation (DOT), New York State Department of Conservation (DEC), New York State Adirondack Park Agency (APA), among many other agencies, organizations and groups.

Mr. Quirion reviewed a pathway/predictive analysis for aquatic and terrestrial invasive species, forest pests and pathogens. He also gave examples of spread prevention and vector management and discussed enforcement and legislation.

Mr. Simek continued the presentation by discussing upcoming APIPP projects. This included specific terrestrial invasive species projects, developing a certified clean fill program, spread prevention for land based recreation, native species restoration, and remote sensing.

Ms. Vennie-Vollrath concluded the presentation by discussing APIPP's aquatic species component and projects. She reviewed AIS management at boat launches, boat wash stations, regional AIS risk mapping, the new Adirondack Welcome Center boat wash station on the Northway, the Citizen Science project, lake vulnerability assessments, and the lake management tracker pilot study programs.

## **Citizen Science Program for Aquatic Invasives (Leigh Walrath, APA)**

Mr. Walrath began his presentation by saying this program was formed when the Adirondack Lakes Alliance and the Loon Lake Park District Association asked "How do we know if we are making progress?" Data collected previously did not provide enough information to answer that question.

As a result, a survey was designed which rapidly assesses invasive and native plant distribution and (qualitative) abundance. The program was designed to be used by volunteers with a minimum of equipment. The data collected is uploaded to APIPP's GIS system and shared with the Lake Association, APA, and iMap.

Mr. Walrath reviewed the specifics of collecting data for the survey and the results of the 2018 Loon Lake survey.

## Adirondack Watershed Institute (AWI) Update (Dr. Eric Holmlund, Paul Smiths College)

Dr. Holmlund gave a presentation on the progress of the program from 2015 to 2018. He began by discussing the Adirondack Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Spread Prevention Program and thanked their key partners including, DEC, APIPP, Towns, Villages, and non-profit partners.

AWI has a five-year contract funded by DEC. They manage 72 boat launches, 27 decontamination stations, and are looking forward to working at the new boat wash station at the Adirondack Welcome Center on The Northway between exits 17 and 18.

Dr. Holmlund reviewed statistics for the program during the four-year time: roughly 600,000 people have been educated, 300,000 boats inspected, 7,500 boats decontaminated, and 11,000 AIS removed from boats.

Dr. Holmlund's presentation focused on five points:

- **Impact.** 4-year program outcomes indicate high levels of public engagement and increasing impact in terms of AIS interceptions and decontaminations
- **Understanding AIS transport risk.** Individual sites and watercraft vary greatly across different metrics of transport risk, indicating customized approaches.
- **Adaptive management.** AWI and DEC staff determine program strategy and resource allocation based on analysis of traffic and AIS transport data in order to maximize region-wide impact
- **Increasing public compliance.** Most motorized watercraft owners are adopting AIS spread prevention measures to varying degrees
- **Messaging and Partnerships.** Broadly targeted messaging is needed to increase visitor awareness of and compliance with AIS spread prevention regulations

Dr. Holmlund summarized by stating the Adirondack AIS program has had a very strong debut over the last four years, based on 15 preceding years of AWI experience. AWI has worked through various initial challenges and are fine tuning both their message and the inner workings of a complex program.

After a brief question and answer session, Mr. Quirion, Mr. Simek, Ms. Vennie-Vollrath, and Dr. Holmlund were presented with a certificate of appreciation from Presiding Chair Lussi, Mr. Ernst, Ms. Martino, and Ms. Regan

### Old Business

None

### New Business

None

The meeting adjourned at 3:35 p.m.

