

**Suffolk County Vector Control and Wetlands Management Long-Term Plan and
Generic Environmental Impact Statement
Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)**

January 20, 2004 Meeting Summary

Agenda Items 1: Introductions

The meeting opened as everyone present introduced themselves and their organizations.

Agenda Items 2: Review of November 17, 2003 Meeting Summary

Bob McAlevy made some minor additions to the minutes from the November 17th CAC meeting. The minutes were then approved as amended.

Agenda Items 3: Update from Suffolk County Department of Health Services

Mara Hogan announced that the Office of Ecology has invited Public Health to give a presentation at an upcoming meeting of the CAC. Public Health is preparing a presentation covering their WNV monitoring program and the various data requests that have been voiced by CAC members over the past year. CAC members would like to have this presentation given at their next meeting in February or as soon as possible. The presentation will most likely occur in the spring, after the flu season. It was also suggested that the Vector Control website might be a good venue for notifying the public of WNV incidences in Suffolk County. Robert McAlevy brought up a discussion on the possibility of SCDHS to inform the public about dead bird counts and locations, and to diagnose cases and outcomes on a weekly basis.

The revised budget for the CAC work plan, as submitted to the County Attorney, was distributed to the CAC. SCDHS is waiting for guidance from the County Attorney's office on the mechanism that will be used to move the funds to Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Agenda Item 4: Consultant's Update

Dave Tonjes reported that the literature review and review of current and past Suffolk County vector control activities are ongoing. He requested that any members who have information or articles of use to these tasks to please forward them to him. Members of the CAC expressed interest in inviting Dr. Susan Teitelbaum, who is reviewing the links between breast cancer and pesticides and impacts to children and at-risk communities, as a speaker in March, pending approval from the county for sub-consultants to speak at CAC meetings. Tonjes will look into this possibility.

The monitoring program, which will measure impacts of upcoming VC activities this summer, is being developed and implemented. The program website is still under

construction. Tonjes urged the CAC to submit any content they would like to see on the website. Debbie O’Kane will set up an outreach subcommittee meeting to work on website content.

Tonjes reported that the County is not likely to seek a permit for construction at Wertheim Wildlife Refuge this spring. John Black questioned the necessity of obtaining a DEC permit on federal land. The CAC expressed concern that there might not be information available from OMWM projects in Suffolk County to guide the EIS and Long-term Management Plan.

Bob McAlevy and Henry Dam submitted some articles and reports to Tonjes for the literature review. McAlevy suggested that the program investigate the use of copepods for controlling mosquito larvae. Tonjes answered that one of the main aims of OMWM is to restore populations of the natural predators of mosquitoes into the salt marshes.

Agenda Item 5: Other Business

A) Response from Dr. Mermelstein re: TAC representation

Amie Hamlin distributed the letter from Commissioner Mermelstein written in response to the CAC’s request that the Steering Committee reconsider the removal of Kevin McCallister as the CAC representative to the TAC. The Steering Committee is currently undergoing a change in membership and will consider the CAC’s request at their next meeting. Henry Dam presented a position paper he wrote concerning CAC representation on the TAC (see attached).

Some members expressed concern over the attendance record of McAllister at CAC meetings and clarified that Adrienne Esposito is the current representative to the TAC. Upon review of attendance, McAllister has not missed three consecutive meetings, but other members have, and the bylaws need to be reviewed to determine what action should be taken.

B) Salt Marsh Mosquitoes

Bob McAlevy revisited the discussion the CAC had at November’s meeting on the incidence of WNV in salt marsh mosquitoes in Suffolk County. He would like Dominick Ninivaggi (DPW) to clarify whether a salt marsh mosquito captured in Suffolk County has ever tested positive for WNV.

Dominic’s response is that WNV positive salt marsh mosquitoes (Ochlerotatus sollicitans, Oc. taeniorhynchus, Oc. cantator) have not been found in Suffolk County at this time. They have been found in Nassau (Oc. sollicitans, our primary species). There is nothing special about finding the virus in a particular species in this county. If a virus has been found in a species elsewhere, that is sufficient evidence to conclude that that species could become positive here. There is nothing special or unique about salt marsh mosquitoes in Suffolk County that would make them incapable of acquiring the virus. As

a matter of fact, the positive Oc. sollicitans collected in Nassau could easily have acquired the virus in Suffolk, and/or could easily have flown to Suffolk to bite. Although salt marsh mosquitoes are probably not the primary vectors of WNV in Suffolk County, it must be remembered that considerable control efforts are directed at these species. If their numbers were not suppressed, the situation could be much different. It should also be remembered that relatively few salt marsh specimens are tested.

Additionally, salt marsh mosquitoes are known vectors of EEE, and EEE was found in Suffolk County once again in 2003. WNV is one reason for controlling salt marsh mosquitoes, but it is by no means the only one.

C) Data on Pesticide Poisoning of Birds

Debbie O’Kane distributed a letter that Sean Mahar wrote on behalf of the CAC to NYSDEC Commissioner Erin Crotty. The letter requests that the Commissioner reconsider the recent cut backs to Ward Stone’s laboratory which tests for WNV and pesticide poisoning in birds. This letter will be sent to State legislators too.

John Newhall expressed the need to have a laboratory in Suffolk County performing the same sort of tests. Even before the cutbacks, it took too long to receive the results from the state of WNV screening in dead birds. William Doyle from Legislator O’Leary’s office suggested that the CAC bring up this issue with the County Executive and the Presiding Officer.

D) Conflict of Interest Policy

Bob McAlevy suggested that a conflict of interest policy (COI) be developed for the program, modeled after the Peconic Estuary Program COI. Mara Hogan announced that the TAC is currently developing a COI and will be presenting it to the Steering Committee at their next meeting. She suggested that the CAC wait until this policy is approved, and either use the same one or perhaps modify it to better meet their needs if necessary. Discussion of this topic was tabled until the TAC has finalized their COI policy.

Agenda Item 6. Set Date and Agenda for Next Meeting

The next CAC meeting is set for Tuesday, February 17th. In case of inclement weather, the meeting will be rescheduled for the following Monday, February 23rd. Members can call the North Fork Environmental Council at 298-8880 for verification.

Suffolk County Vector Control and Wetlands Management Long-Term Plan Citizens Advisory Committee

January 20, 2003 Attendance

voting member	affiliation	phone #	email
Rita Biss	Lake Panamoka Civic Association	929-6325	
John Black	GSI	589-6908	
Henry Dam	SASSI		Hdam@optonline.net
Ed Davis	GSBAS		
Laurie Farber	LI Sierra Club		Larus2407@aol.com
Amie Hamlin	Independent	286-1343	longislandnature@aol.com
Craig Kessler	Ducks Unlimited	751-5850	ckessler@ducks.org
Robert McAlevy	RCPA	728-3189	
John Newhall	Eastern Fire Island Civic Association	472-9227	
Debra O'Kane	North Fork Environmental Council	298-8880	debnfec@optonline.com
Jan Schaefer	Mastic Beach Property Owners Association	281-3627	
Diane Teta	Independent	286-4866	

non-voting member	affiliation	phone #	email
Gerald Ludwig	Mastic Beach Property Owners Association	395-5709	
William Doyle	Legislator Peter O'Leary's office		william.doyle@suffolkcountyny.us
Maria Ammirati	Legislator Peter O'Leary's office		maria.ammirati@suffolkcountyny.us
David Tonjes	Cashin Associates	348-7600	dtonjes@ca-pc.com
Philip Deblasi	SCDHS-Ecology	852-2077	philip.deblasi@suffolkcountyny.us
Mara Hogan	SCDHS-Ecology	852-2077	mara.hogan@co.suffolk.ny.us
Mary Dempsey	SCDPW	852-4270	mary.dempsey@suffolkcountyny.gov

Position paper submitted by Henry Dam

Re: Vector Control Vote

11-25-03

At the meeting before the last there was a lot of discussion about the CAC having a voting member on the TAC. I ask to what purpose? Those that are sitting on the CAC for the most part are not academically nor technically trained technicians in the field of vector controlled biologies. If we were we wouldn't be sitting on the CAC.

For the CAC to vote on the TAC is putting the cart before the horse. Why? Because we will be voting against the trained or educated TAC that is charged with the responsibility to protect the health of the general public.

As I understand it, we as the CAC explore and investigate alternate means to control or keep in check mosquito populations. By natural predation or non toxic means. Said suggestions being based upon our observations and experiences in the field as related to other observation of related flora and fauna. That can and is affected by the present means of chemical and mechanical actions.

I have been led to believe that the CAC observations are not valid because the majority of the group are not trained observers and do not have the technical expertise to make valid acceptable observations. But it should be noted that as such we as the CAC can produce unbiased and unfettered observations that may have a bearing on the TAC action but only if the TAC is willing to accept the information!

The CAC has only tentative power to suggest our opinions to the steering committee, hence to the TAC, who in turn review our input and send it back to the CAC through the steering committee. And we vote on said information whether to accept or reject the TAC action on said information, which in what ever form it is for our acceptance. Our vote on any subject would be difficult since there would have to be a hundred per cent agreement, which could be difficult since we have such diversities of agendas, which has become evident at our meetings.

It has been said we are the watchdog that keeps an eye on vector control. But as such we have no teeth, or do we? I say we do. It is in the power to influence public opinion through education. The CAC represents a lot of votes. Each member represents organizations that constitute a great number of votes. Our influence on politicians can be considerable. This can be ascertained by the power of organizations such as Audubon, League of Women voters, etc. Yes we do have teeth but present they are hidden, to be used when needed.

I am sure that there is a chain of command present that involves the steering committee which answers eventually to the county legislature that has control over future funding and the control of any projects that come out of the TAC, that are or may be based on the CAC recommendations.

Henry Dam