

WQCC Virtual Board Meeting Notes for March 7, 2024

DRAFT

Attendance: John Abbatangelo, Tolly Beck, Eugene Bondar, Matt Ceplo, James Elling, Michael Kezner, Stan Pasco, Brianna Rosamilia, Larry Vail, Jennifer Zunino-Smith, Ifetayo Tyler

1. Call to Order: Matt Ceplo, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

2. Speaker: Matt introduced the speaker, Stan Pasco. Stan represents Rockland County for the NYS Fish and Wildlife Board and the NYS Conservation Council. He is the County coordinator and Master Instructor for the Hunter Ed. program for the NYSDEC and President of the United Sportsmen Association of Rockland. Stan will be presenting on public access to our fishing resources, the problems of getting access and the Quality of our streams as they pertain to a healthy fish population. Stan will also talk about the adverse impact deer are having on our water quality and habitat loss caused by over browsing.

Program Summary:

NYS will be reducing the number of trout released into streams this spring as they have not been able to get permission from some of the landowners to allow public access on their property for the purposes of fishing. Permits for requests for public fishing rights (PFR) must now be on file to accommodate public fishing on privately owned land. It is important to provide this permit in the future to make sure trout will be stocked in more streams.

Deer in many areas of Rockland are contributing to a decrease in water quality. Deer browsing has become so severe that the understory in wooded areas has been completely destroyed. The understory serves as a filter for phosphorus and other pollutants like invasive species seeds in deer droppings. Without this filter, runoff does not slow down and become absorbed in the soil but directly runs into streams and rivers. The greater the runoff, the more that water quality is adversely affected. In the absence of natural understory plants, invasive species are allowed to take over, contributing to a greater presence of invasive seeds in deer droppings and additional decreases in water quality. There has also been a decline in or disappearance of small species as deer have eaten all of their needed food sources. Currently there is no deer control, such as hunting in Rockland County.

The program was followed by an active question and answer session.

3. Old Business: There was none.

4. New Business: John Abbatangelo said there will be a Tri-State Engineering Expo at White Plains High School on April 14th. The emphasis is on getting youth interested in STEM and careers in engineering.

Larry Vail said there would be a Sparkill Watershed Report presented at a public meeting at Orangetown Town Hall the week of March 25th.

5. Next Meeting: The next WQCC meeting will be April 4th at 10:00 am.

6. Adjournment: Matt adjourned the meeting at 11:30 am.