



Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy

This issue of *Clearwaters* is dedicated to the Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy. The Chesapeake Bay is the largest estuary in the United States. The watershed covers 64,000 square miles and includes a population of more than 16 million people within the states of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia.

The New York portion includes the watersheds of the Chemung and Susquehanna River Basins over an area of 6,250 square miles. The Susquehanna River begins at the outlet of Otsego Lake in Cooperstown, NY.

The water quality in the Bay has been impacted by the discharge of sediments and nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus). As a result, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) has partnered with the Upper Susquehanna Coalition to help reduce the load of nutrients and sediments from New York State.

In this edition, a wide range of topics, from the overall importance of the Chesapeake Bay to the perspectives of the EPA, NYSDEC, municipalities and a private farm, are included. Nutrient removal strategies are reviewed as well as nutrient trade programs used in other states. These articles will provide you with a better understanding of how the Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy will affect New York State.

Opportunities and Needs in 2009

As we enter 2009, we also face one of the most challenging times in our recent history. The current state of the economy and resulting challenges are felt globally and affect everyone in our business either directly or indirectly. The NYWEA is impacted by municipal and regulatory travel and meeting restrictions, and higher general expenses. Although we have not yet experienced it, these conditions may lead to lower meeting attendance and participation in the Association. Although solutions to many of our economic challenges may be beyond our control, NYWEA identified some significant opportunities and needs which we hope to address during the coming year.

One of the most significant of these opportunities before us is the economic stimulus plan. President Obama just signed the House and Senate approved \$787 billion stimulus program. This program translates into an estimated \$437 million to the New York State Revolving Fund Program for construction of wastewater infrastructure. Although this amount falls significantly short of the estimated \$36 billion needed, these monies will go a long way to stimulate the economy through the construction of projects that will improve our wastewater infrastructure and enhance water quality in New York State.

Legislative Involvement: NYWEA is taking an active role in regulatory and legislative involvement. Two new ventures include participation in the Clean Water Collaborative and the Legislative and Regulatory Dialogue. The Clean Water Collaborative was formed by Governor Patterson in July 2008 to address failing infrastructure in

New York State. The NYWEA was selected to participate as a member of this committee. Our participation on the Clean Water Collaborative gives us a tremendous opportunity to provide a voice for our membership to our state regulators and legislators on our aging infrastructure. Through our recent participation, NYWEA has been able to provide direct input regarding the implementation of the economic stimulus program in New York State.

The Regulatory and Legislative Dialogue, scheduled in February of each year, is a roundtable discussion with state legislators and regulators on overall environmental and regulatory issues. This forum also provides NYWEA the opportunity to be the voice of our members. The primary topic of the Legislative and Regulatory Dialog held on February 24, 2009 included the challenges of infrastructure funding through the stimulus plan.

Public and Member Education: One of the needs identified by NYWEA for 2009 is associated with continuing our public outreach program. NYWEA has been co-sponsoring elected officials training with the NYSDEC. We would like to work with NYSDEC to expand the elected officials training and incorporate additional topics such as asset management. This topic is critically important for municipalities to be fiscally self-sufficient and provide continued service for their infrastructures.

We are also looking to revitalize and promote the Water Environment Federation's (WEF) *Water is Life and Infrastructure Makes It Happen™* program. The WEF has public education and training materials, which can be made available to local schools in order to educate students about the importance of water quality and wastewater infrastructure, as well as promote the field of environmental engineering and studies to students.

One of NYWEA's strategic initiatives is member education and low-cost training. NYWEA is currently working with NYSDEC to develop a broader role in our participation in wastewater treatment plant operator recertification. Up until very recently, NYSDEC has been responsible for the majority of the recertification training required by wastewater treatment plant operators for operator certification. However, due to state budgetary cutbacks, staff reductions (retirement) and changing priorities, NYSDEC will not be able to continue to provide these services in the future. This is an opportunity for NYWEA to assist in providing the recertification required by operators. The NYWEA will be working with NYSDEC to develop both short-term and long-term plans for addressing this need.

Another opportunity for expanding low-cost member education and training is through webcasts. Webcasting is becoming more popular as a means of providing education and training. WEF utilizes webcasting more for specialty conferences. NYWEA also will be investigating the potential for the use of webcasting in the future.

Although we recognize this is an ambitious list of opportunities and needs, I believe with the collective help of our dedicated and passionate members, we can successfully meet our challenges through the implementation of these and other programs in the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bruce Mumm". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Bruce Mumm, PE