

Meeting Minutes - 10/15/25

Meeting summary

Quick recap

The Water Quality Committee meeting introduced members representing various organizations focused on environmental protection and water quality issues, including Riverkeeper, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and local government representatives. The committee discussed plans for conducting comprehensive water testing in a rural town that relies on private wells, with potential state grant funding available for this initiative. The group explored strategies for stakeholder engagement, testing approaches, and community education, while addressing challenges specific to rural water quality management and infrastructure.

Next steps

- All committee members to brainstorm and email potential concerns residents might have about water testing and the committee's work.
- All committee members to identify areas/neighborhoods they could reach out to for stakeholder engagement.
- All committee members to draft a basic [email template](#) to send to neighbors for gathering concerns and questions.
- Tony to attend the Hudson River Watershed Alliance conference at the end of the month.
- Tony to attend the county briefing on road salt with scientists from Cary Institute.
- Tony to follow up with the Hudson River Resource Council contact about wastewater resources.
- Dennis to continue developing the stakeholder [spreadsheet](#) with committee input.
- Committee to develop a [FAQ](#) document addressing common concerns about the water testing initiative.
- Committee to consider creating two different stakeholder categories: one for scientific sampling and one for community buy-in.

Summary

Water Quality Committee Introduction Meeting

The Water Quality Committee meeting began with Julia introducing the purpose of the committee, which aims to protect and improve water quality in the town through a systematic process similar to

the DWSP2 program. The meeting included introductions from perspective and current committee members, including Dennis Wedlick, Diane Duffis, Carola Friedman, Bernadette Winby, and Tony Jones, who shared their backgrounds and interests in water quality issues. The group discussed the importance of water as a precious resource and expressed excitement about the engagement of residents in the process.

Rural Water Quality Committee Launch

The meeting introduced members of a committee focused on water quality and environmental protection, including Shannon Roback from Riverkeeper, who explained their mission to ensure safe water for the Hudson River and NYC drinking supply. Ifetayo Tyler, representing Cornell Cooperative Extension, discussed their work on clean energy and environmental resilience, while Eileen Guilfoyle shared her interest in water quality due to her background in cell biology and involvement with the National Resources Inventory. Tara Grogan, a senior planner with Dutchess County, highlighted her expertise in water and sewer infrastructure planning, and Martina Degnan expressed her interest in clean drinking water and grant writing. The group aims to serve as a model for other rural communities in New York State, addressing water quality issues and potential threats like nuclear waste disposal.

Rural Water Testing Grant Initiative

The meeting focused on discussing a water quality testing initiative in a rural town. Julia explained that the town, which relies on a private well system, is eligible for state grant funding to conduct comprehensive water testing, as it falls outside the state's regular community water source program. The committee aims to define the problem by determining if the town has safe, clean drinking water and to outline potential solutions, such as protecting the Wappinger's Creek watershed or addressing isolated contamination issues. They plan to conduct testing for various contaminants, including PFAS, and explore remediation options if problems are found, with the ultimate goal of establishing a long-term monitoring and education program for the community.

Environmental Grant and Remediation Planning

Julia discussed the committee's efforts to address environmental issues, particularly focusing on finding alternatives to road salt and documenting outreach efforts for potential grant applications. She emphasized the importance of building networks and leveraging expertise, comparing their process to a previous playground rebuilding project. Julia explained that Tayo and Cornell Cooperative will lead the grant process as the lead agency, with potential funding decisions expected in April or May. The committee aims to complete stakeholder lists by January and is considering

various remediation options, including addressing PFAS and microplastics in water, which aligns with the state's water quality priorities.

Rural Water Quality Challenges

Julia discussed the challenges faced by rural communities in New York State, particularly regarding water quality and infrastructure. She highlighted the lack of public water systems and the use of individual wells and septic systems, which are not well regulated or maintained. Julia proposed that the town could serve as a model for rural water quality projects, leveraging its connection to the Hudson River and the state's interest in addressing environmental issues. She suggested exploring solutions such as centralized water systems and addressing agricultural runoff, while emphasizing the need for state support and funding to prioritize these projects in rural areas.

Water Testing Budget and Proposals

The team discussed testing proposals and budget constraints for water quality testing, with Shannon noting that comprehensive chemical testing could exceed \$1,000 per well and cost up to \$500 for PFAS testing alone. Julia recalled that their grant budget of \$22,000 was allocated for testing 100 households for nitrates, phosphates, and coliform bacteria, with results expected in the second quarter of next year. The team acknowledged that if their current grant application is not approved, they will need to gather more information to support a potential resubmission, while simultaneously pursuing a three-year project with Cornell Cooperative if approved.

Water Quality Stakeholder Identification Project

The group discussed identifying stakeholders and categorizing them for a water quality project. Tony suggested dividing stakeholders by land use, while others proposed focusing on service providers to wells and septic systems. They agreed to create a matrix to assign different stakeholders to committee members for outreach. The team also discussed the importance of educating the community about water quality issues and the potential for misinformation. Upcoming events and contacts with local organizations were mentioned, including a conference and a briefing on road salt.

Stanford Water Quality Testing Strategy

The group discussed strategies for water quality testing in Stanford, focusing on how to represent private well owners and other stakeholders. They agreed to create a two-tiered approach: one for scientific sampling and another for community engagement. Shannon and Tony emphasized the importance of careful sample selection to ensure meaningful results, while Ifetayo suggested involving neighboring municipalities as stakeholders. The group also discussed the need to address community concerns about the project, with Eileen raising questions about data privacy and potential