

**Ulster County Environmental Management Council
Monthly Meeting, Howard C. St. John room, SUNY Ulster
July 28, 2010 7:00pm**

Attendance:

Chair: Steve Noble

Municipal Representatives:

Virginia Starke, Hurley
Lillian Green, Rochester
Cindy Lanzetta, Marlborough
Gregg Swanzey, Kingston
Lynn McCormick, Woodstock

At-Large Members:

Julie Noble

Guests:

Amanda LaValle, Dept. of the Environment
Ethan Pierce, Marbletown

Call to Order and Welcome: Meeting was called to order at 7:06pm. Steve welcomed the guests.

Minutes: May 26th minutes were made available for review, to be voted on at a later time. Also, the notes from the CAC roundtable were available for review.

Special Presentation: Overview of the NYS DEC Programs and Budget: Steve presented a brief overview of the Annual DEC update for the group. The meeting was at the DEC offices in Albany on Monday, July 26th. There was great representation from Ulster at this event, which was free. Topics:

1) Stew, the DEC Deputy Commissioner, discussed the DEC budget and how 40% of their non-personnel services were cut since 2007; and the retirement option, if over 55, they can retire early and by September 200-300 fewer employees will work for the DEC and that those cuts will mean minimal staff; also the EPF is down to \$134 million from over \$300 million, so this will impact the Estuary Program, Farmland Protection, etc.; he discussed Marcellus Shale: the DEC is working on reviewing the Draft SEIS and seeing how the DEC can regulate the gas drilling in NY, and that there are really no staff to work on this; Virginia asked about why people are asking for a moratorium on drilling, which was discussed that perhaps it was a way for the legislature to delay the process, though the DEC is still moving forward;

2) Rob Davies: Division of Lands and Forests: spoke about invasive species including the Emerald Ash Borer, which was found last year in Cattaraugus County, and this year in Saugerties, NY, in Ulster County, they are going in and encouraging the Ash Borer to stay in one spot and not travel further, so are creating good conditions to keep it there: girdling the Green Ash trees, the borer lives there, digs under bark, DEC takes out tree in winter when borers are in diapause, unfortunately, the chances for spread are huge, so they are trying to slow the spread; they had available a sample kit for educational purposes with info about the borer, they did talk about really trying to promote not moving firewood, they are checking at campgrounds, people can move wood less than 50 miles with a source sheet from their website, no movement over 50 miles, info was passed around; talked about the Governor's Climate Action Committee to reduce carbon emissions by 80% by 2050, this plan will be submitted to the public by November for draft viewing; August 6th will be the America's Great Outdoor Initiative, which is a listening session by the federal government to see what the public wants the government to do about grassroots solutions to conserving lands and waters and getting people connected to the outdoors, it is from 9-12 at Marist College, Gregg mentioned that you can go the Dept of the Interior

website to make comments and to register, the night before there will be a youth event on the same initiative at Marist; Virginia mentioned a Cornell Cooperative Extension climate change survey that she got from the Human Dimensions Unit; Gregg also mentioned that they passed around an addendum to their Open Space Plan regarding climate change; Steve passed around a statement put out by the DEC about the economic benefits of open space preservation;

3) Wetlands and Water Division: Part 664 and 608 of State Environmental Conservation Law are being revised regarding mapping of wetlands but that the DEC does not have the monies to pay for public notices, so won't be able to officially amend the maps even if changes are made;

4) Environmental Permits: Pollution Prevention Institute: if there are communities looking to do outreach on point-source pollution there are RFPs available in September (see Pollution Prevention Institute) for \$5,000-15,000; a SEQRA handbook is now available that outlines how to do the process clearly and concisely, any DEC led project will now have to include climate change and greenhouse gas emissions where DEC is lead agency (ie the Williams Lake Project); Environmental Assessment Form: there is a draft of the new form that will be posted on the DEC for final public comment on Labor Day, for final approval, climate change, envi. justice, flooding, aesthetics were added to the form and a workbook will accompany this; Amanda mentioned the Environmental Notice Bulletin on the DEC website where public notices are posted weekly and regionally for projects that are in the review process and are archived; discussion ensued about the ramifications of so many people retiring and the potential loss of info

Department of the Environment: They have been working to implement their stimulus monies on installing a 30.3 kw solar array and internally lit LED fairground sign at the Ulster Fairgrounds, the panels are going up and the signs are up, materials on energy conservation will be available, see savingcentral.com; the Ulster County Fair starts August 3rd-8th,

- Amanda used email to FOIL the DEC for permit documents and got a great response electronically see Amanda for more information;
- UC Planning Dept is attempting to track leases for Marcellus shale drilling in the county, and it is not known for sure, but is doubtful that there are any leases yet, the most likely towns would be Wawarsing and Hardenburgh;
- Amanda attended a meeting with the NYS Dept of Correctional Services for potential community uses for their historically agricultural land, the meeting was to get local supervisors and community members from the Wawarsing area to give feedback, Amanda urged those with similar interests to work with the County on this;
- Amanda mentioned that perhaps we could have someone from CCE tour us around the xeriscape garden on the campus at one of our future meetings;

Website/Listserv Overview: www.ucenvironment.org is live now with info about Creek Week, the EMC, minutes will be posted on the site, town contact info will be there, will act as a clearinghouse, will be interactive with a blog, info will be archived, Steve and Amanda are managing it

CAC Networking Event: last month was the CAC networking event and the beginning of planning for the Creek Week event

Creek Week Watershed Awareness Event: September 9-19th, a time for water themed events, which will be jointly advertised and published by the UCEMC, centered around watershed awareness and education, this will also overlap with the Hudson River Valley Ramble, perhaps we can cross advertise; CACs, municipalities, organizations are encouraged to offer programs during this time, Steve emailed out the registration form and forms were available at the meeting;

- Steve met the folks from Dutchess County Watershed Awareness month (see Dutchesswam.org) who have a grant funded staff person that organizes it;
- the Ashokan Basin Stream Management Program is starting a Master Stream Stewards Program (like the Master Gardeners Program), who would go to a few trainings and would consult on proper best management techniques, invasive, stormwater, stream issues

New Business: the 2010 Conference on the Environment is being held Nov. 19-21st by the NYSAEMC and NYSACC, in West Point, this event is great for CACs and environmental professionals, total registration and lodging is about \$500 but there are also day options, ELLA (Westchester County environmental leaders) is also sponsoring this event, look for the NYSACCny.org for info;

- Amanda needs volunteers to help out with EMC related work at the UC Dept of the Envi, even for a few hours a week/month, basic office skills/work, if interested contact Amanda;
- August EMC Meeting: historically we have not held the August EMC meeting, but this year, since it is so close to Creek Week, there will still be a meeting, with Creek Week as the focus, Steve mentioned that perhaps EMC members should each try to attend some events and spread the word about the EMC and take pictures

Roundabout:

- Cindy: not much from Marlborough since the Chair is in the Gulf with the Oil Spill;
- Virginia: Hurley, the Open Space plan is almost through, she has a draft ready and the planning department is doing the maps for it, then it will go to the town board and will be out the public for review;
- Ethan: Marbletown is on summer break, will resume in September, has few new members;
- Julie: Kingston: Climate Smart Pledge Public Visioning Meeting On August 19th, cats legislation tabled for wording from Corporation Council, Climate Analyst grant funded position moving forward;
- Amanda: Katy Dunlop is leaving the Hudson River Watershed Alliance

Adjourned: Meeting adjourned at 8:30pm