

Broome County Environmental Management Council

Barbara J. Fiala, Broome County Executive • Stacy Merola, Director



Broome County Office Building • 44 Hawley Street • P.O. Box 1766 • Binghamton, New York 13902
(607) 778-2116 • Fax (607) 778-6051 • Website: www.gobroomecounty.com

Broome County Environmental Management Council (EMC) NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE (NRC) Minutes from September 18, 2008 Conference Room A, BC Health Department, 225 Front St, Binghamton, NY

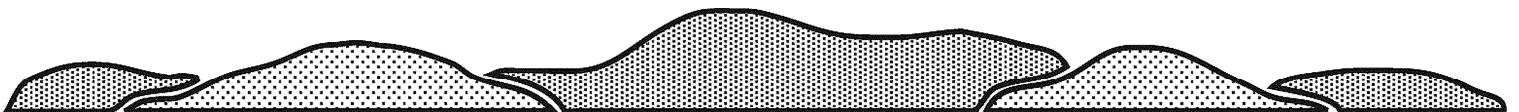
Present: Karen Ciatyk, Mary Cronk, Erin Heard, Bill Heaviside, Julia Hoover, Andre LaClair, Stacy Merola, and Cindy Westerman.

Karen called the meeting to order at **4:07pm**.

1. Minutes from July were not yet available for adoption.

2. Announcements/Privilege of the Floor/Member Items of Interest

- NYSDEC updated and posted goose management resources on their website: www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7003.html that reflects the federal rules adopted in late 2006. A suggestion was made that BC Parks post similar signage that Karen observed in state parks – note location of nests and report them to park manager.
- Stacy will participate in a year-long effort with the BC Health Dept and other agents to update Broome's Community Health Assessment (5-yr plan). A community-wide strategic planning framework called Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships will be used to guide the assessment to create a Community Health Improvement Plan. They will be looking at a range of data: demographics, socio-economic conditions, health resource availability, quality of life factors, behavioral risk factors, environmental health indicators, social and mental health, maternity and childcare health issues, death, illness, and injury; sentinel events, and infectious diseases. They plan to do focus group sessions with groups like the EMC in the near future.
- Discussed the new BeBCReady website (www.BeBCReady.org); shared poster of the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and Activation System. Reviewed the Planning Assumptions, the Four Phases of Emergency Management, and ratings of Potential Hazards (water supply contamination rates highest; HazMat in transition rates second highest).
- Julia attended a Sept 9 meeting at the BC Council of Churches about Emergency Preparedness to surmise anything that can be used for natural gas drilling emergency scenarios – incident response procedures. She noted that the Health Dept was there in force. She felt there were people missing, namely the first responders – police and fire officials. On Sept 25 there will be a table top drill from 12-4 pm., at the BC Council of Churches on Otsenigo St. Discussion ensued.
- Cornell Cooperative Extension will hold a Forestry Field Day Sat, Sept 27 from 8:30 am to 12:30 pm at Gaius Park, east of the Village of Greene, for landowners seeking information to help them manage their woodlands.
- Circulated information about Ithaca's CarShare Program and the Sustainable Transportation Conference (Podcar City: Ithaca) that was held Sept 14-16.
- Circulated the September 2008 newsletter from the NYS Assembly Committee on Environmental Conservation that highlights various legislative initiatives including, tenant notification, wetlands protections, and plastic bag reuse and recycling act, among others. Visit <http://assembly.state.ny.us/comm/EnCon/20080829/>.
- Last meeting, Bill reported that he noticed NYSDEC removing growth from levees. Stacy shared a June 2008 Vegetation Policy Statement from the Army Corp of Engineers that explains the rationale. ACOE is requiring that trees, bushes and other undesirable vegetation located on, or in close proximity of levee systems and flood walls on easements or fee lands be removed in an effort to maintain the Flood Damage Reduction System's ability to protect communities about flooding. ACOE explains that if soils are saturated, trees are more likely to topple and pull up a large portion of the levee embankment or floodwall infrastructure creating instability in



the levee system. Also, ACOE says that undesirable vegetation hides the system's conditions during inspections and hinders project maintenance. Discussion ensued.

- Erin will attend the Ahwaga Canoe and Kayak Club meeting Sept 22 at 7pm at the United Methodist Church on NY Route 26 to discuss the Upper Susquehanna Coalition's Headwaters River Trails Initiative.

3. Natural Gas Drilling

- The NYSDEC is expected to release their draft Scope for the draft Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement (dSGEIS) in October. Scoping helps narrow the focus of an EIS to substantive issues. Dates for Scoping meetings are not yet posted. However, DEC posted the original GEIS document (www.dec.ny.gov/energy/45912.html) to prepare for Scoping the dSGEIS. From DEC's website:
"The Generic Environmental Impact Statement on the Oil, Gas and Solution Mining Regulatory Program, or GEIS, was prepared to review in a comprehensive manner the Department of Environmental Conservation's program for regulating the oil, gas, underground gas storage and solution mining wells of any depth, and brine disposal, stratigraphic and geothermal wells deeper than 500 feet. The GEIS was prepared according to the State's Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), Article 8 of the Environmental Conservation Law, requiring government agencies to analyze the environmental, social and economic impacts of their actions. This document consists of a three-volume draft, released in 1988, and a final volume, released in 1992".
- The County created a Natural Gas Drilling information page www.gobroomecounty.com/gasresources. Stacy will invite the County Attorney, Joseph Sluzar to address EMC about his travels to Texas and observations of natural gas drilling. Mr Sluzar gave his presentation to the Legislature's Committee of the Whole at 3pm today. His presentation is on the aforementioned gas drilling info page along with two letters written to municipalities in July and August that describe the County's coordinated actions with respect to natural gas drilling. Lengthy discussion ensued.
- The Otsego County, NY Planning Dept. posted good information for local governments wishing to exert jurisdiction over local roads and retain their rights under the Real Property Tax Law: www.otsegocounty.com/depts/pln/NaturalGasLeasing.htm.
- Stacy attended the Public Education Forum sponsored by Assemblywoman Lupardo's office and the NYS Attorney General Office that was held Tues, Sept 16 at BCC. The event was well attended. Brochures from the forum were circulated; extras will be left in the County Building's brochure displays. More discussion ensued.

4. Open Space Plan

Andre asked members for feedback about the recommendations sections that he drafted in July. Lengthy discussion and debate ensued about various open space topics. Andre asked if the existing sections could be burned to a disk (not in PDF) for use by members. Stacy will email Bill's completed section (Section IV-E Recommendations for Distinctive Character) to members and piece together existing sections to burn to a disk for each member's use.

5. New York Regional Interconnect (NYRI) - Mary provided an update about the New York Regional Interconnect (NYRI) high-voltage power line and upcoming Public Service Commission public hearings. The closest locations to Binghamton will be Hancock and Norwich, NY. Mary will post info on her Google news group list serve. The PSC accepted the application as complete; there will be a one-year review period. She noted that there is talk of burying the line in the lower portion of the Delaware River watershed.

6. Next Meeting: Thursday, November 20, Conf Rm A, BC Health Dept, 225 Front St., Binghamton, NY.

The meeting **adjourned at 6:15 pm**

Stacy Merola, Recorder