

Broome County Environmental Management Council

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



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Broome County Environmental Management Council (EMC) Notes from the meeting held Thursday, February 1, 2007 Chenango Town Hall, Community Room, 1529 NYS Rte 12, Chenango Bridge, NY

Present:

Members-at-Large: André LaClair, Mary Cronk, and Bill Heavyside

Student Reps: Melanie Feltmate (BU)

CAC Reps: Cindy Westerman (Vestal)

Special Reps: Chip McElwee (BCSWCD)

Legislative Reps: Ron Keibel (nominee)

Staff/Intern: Stacy Merola, Beth Egitto and Christina Prete

Associate Members: Terry Woodnorth

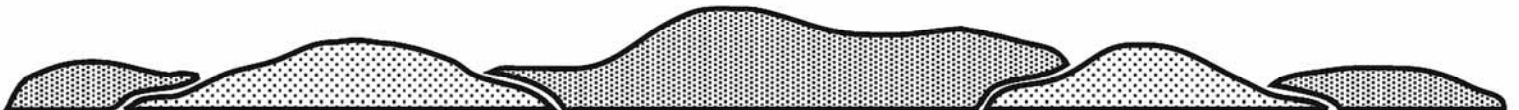
Visitors: Chris Burger, Ken Holmes, Alexandria Spencer, Kevin Bowman, Amanda Bowman, Jack Davis, Erin Heard (USC), Sarah Barnes, Melissa Yearick (USC), Josephine Chu, Richard Materese and Ray Nolan

Absent with Excuse: Kevin Mathers, Bob Denz, and Doug Garner

1. Following introductions, André **convened** the meeting at **7:09 pm**. Minutes from January were approved on a motion by André, seconded by Bill, with the following amendments: the heading date “December 7, 2006” was changed to “January 4, 2007”, and “Broome County Public Library, 185 Court Street, Binghamton, New York” was also changed to “United Way Board Room, Jensen Road, Vestal, New York.” Absent with Excuse should list Doug Garner.

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

- Stacy introduced Christina Prete, intern from Binghamton University who will be helping until mid May.
- Entry forms and posters for the Joyce K.L. Smith Environmental Photography Show and Competition are available and will be given to sponsors by Sunday, February 4. The photo submission deadline is Wednesday, March 7. Guidelines are available on the County website: www.gobroomecounty.com. Binghamton University student Josephine Chu will obtain permission to put up posters at BU this week.
- EMC members were asked to volunteer for the 2007 Earth Fest April 28 at the BCC Ice Center. EMC also needs volunteers for the Photo show Opening Reception, Book Recycling Fair and Riverbank Cleanup. A sign-up sheet was circulated.
- The Press & Sun-Bulletin Sunday newspaper featured a “How to Guide” for household hazardous waste recycling. BC Solid Waste Management placed the ad with a survey that can be completed and returned for a chance to win a blanket made of recycled plastic bottles. So far, there have been 25 responses.
- Chris Burger’s Winter Gathering: is February 17 at 5:30 pm. Cross-country skinning in the afternoon (at 1pm), snacks, drinks and a warm fire. Directions were shared.
- The Broome County Soil and Water Conservation District is having their annual Arbor Green Tree & Shrub Sale. Orders will be accepted until April 6.
- Andre announced that Christy Whitman, former NJ Governor and head of the EPA, will give a speech, “Politics, Policy and Environmental Protection” at the Cornell Ornithology Lab in Ithaca April 23.
- Chris Burger reported that a Tour of Eco Homes in Tompkins County, sponsored by Sustainable Tompkins County, was a hit. Discussion ensued about having a similar tour in Broome County. It was recommended that such a tour held after the Earth Fest. Volunteers are needed spread the word and to help identify people who may live in an eco-friendly house that are willing to open their doors to visitors. Chris offered his home for a tour stop.



- Chip McElwee distributed Chemung County Soil and Water Conservation District's guidebook about stream processes and erosion.

3. Special Presentation: Upper Susquehanna Coalition (USC) Wetlands Program

The USC is a network of natural resource professionals who develop strategies, resources, programs, and projects to protect the headwaters of the Susquehanna River and the Chesapeake Bay. Melissa Yearick, USC Wetlands Specialist outlined their Wetlands Program and several recent projects. The overall goal of the Program is to develop a wide array of wetlands that meet specific criteria of various funding programs, while attempting to integrate designs into plans that maximize local benefits.

Broome County has almost two thousand acres of protected wetlands, only about 8% of all protected wetlands in New York State. Melissa summarized the many benefits of preserving, enhancing and constructing wetlands. Wetlands capture sediment and nutrients in runoff and help reduce runoff velocities, which can lessen flood and stream bank erosion impacts, a common problem in the Upper Susquehanna River Basin. The USC determines project watersheds using field work and GIS to find potential sites, meets with landowners to exchange ideas, then partners with other organizations and writes grants to preserve, create or enhance wetlands. The USC Wetlands Program is grant funded by state and federal agencies.

There are currently six grants that the USC is working on, and one congressional project:

- EPA 5-Star Wetlands Restoration Grant: Restore ten-acre wetland complex and outdoor classrooms. The USC recently partnered with Chemung County BOCES to restore a filled wetland in Horseheads, NY.
- EPA Ephemeral Wetland Program Development Grant: Create vernal pools mapping database to better understand how these small isolated wetlands function on the landscape. Construct educational wetlands - work with schools to develop outdoor classrooms. Goal - find at least 10 vernal pools in each of the 11-digit Hydrologic Unit watersheds across the Upper Susquehanna Watershed.
- EPA- Targeted Watershed Initiative Grant: Restore 30 acres of wetlands or buffers on agricultural land throughout the watershed.
- Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) - Tributary Strategy Funding: Create a database of protected and restored wetlands in our watershed for CBP purposes.
- DEC- Vernal Pool Grant: Develop headwater wetland complexes in Chemung and Susquehanna River basins Create 100 vernal pools throughout the targeted watersheds preferably in open forest.
- DEC- Wetland Restoration for Water Quality Improvement

Ms Yearick also summarized the benefits of vernal or woodland pools. These are seasonally flooded (ephemeral) wetlands that are rain fed, fill with water in late fall and remain wet until mid-summer before drying up. These extremely small wetlands are usually secluded from stream systems, can be manmade or natural, are generally absent of fish, but are filled with many obligate and facultative amphibians species like spring peeper, wood frog, spotted and Jefferson salamanders, among many others. Broome County is a good area for these pools because our soils are loamy, which is ideal when building a pool.

Vernal pool data collection sheets were distributed with information about the "Big Night", the evening of the annual amphibian migration. A sign up sheet to be notified when the next "Big Night" will occur was circulated; Melissa estimates mid March. EMC was given "A Guide to Creating Vernal Pools" for our library. If you know of a vernal pool and would like to have it included in the USC database please contact Melissa at melissa@u-s-c.org.

Melissa said the USC has extra wetland and vernal pool educational signs and wants to give them to educational centers, if anyone knows of any that would like a sign. Alex Spencer offered to ask Binghamton

University if they would like a sign, and Chip indicated that there are wetlands in Conklin that may be in need of an educational sign. Ray Nolan thought that restoring a wetland in Chenango Forks would be a good Eagle Scout project that USC might want to look into.

Melissa was thanked for her presentation, time, and donation of resources.

4. The council took a short **break**.

5. **Committee Reports**

Natural Resource Committee (NRC) - Bill reported the NRC met January 18. **Free Tree seedlings:** NYSDEC is offering free trees or shrubs to local schools. Info was shared with the Binghamton Shade Tree Commission and a few local educators. **OWBs:** EPA regulations for outdoor wood boilers is forthcoming; Suffolk County placed regulations on the units so that they must be 1000 feet away from any building. **RGGI:** The NYSDEC "Regulations for Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI)" review deadline is March 13, 2007. **Open Space Plan:** NCR continued discussions that included scenic byways, historic resources, and water resources. **Next meeting:** February 15 at 4:30pm, BCOB.

Recycle Waste Management Committee (RWMC) - Stacy reported the RWMC met January 22; the new committee chair, Tony Lubzanski, began a new job and could not attend. **Landfill Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) Scope:** The EMC received the final draft scope for the Landfill SEIS January 26. Those who submitted written comments on the draft scope should receive a copy in the mail. **Landfill Air Permits:** a) Broome County Solid Waste completed their NYS Title V Air Facilities permit application (7-0399-00027/0009) for the County Landfill as required pursuant to 6 NYCRR 201-6. The County is subject to NYS Emission Guidelines for Municipal Solid Waste Landfill Emissions and Standards of Performance for Municipal Solid Waste Landfills to control the flare of methane and control emissions of non methane organic compounds (NMOC) to below 50 Mg per year. Landfills with NMOC below 50 Mg per year are not subject to collection control requirements. Broome County demonstrated, through site specific (Tier 2) testing, that emissions of non-methane organic compounds (NMOC) are below 50 megagrams (Mg) per year. The County is required to submit a NMOC emission report annually, semi-annual compliance monitoring reports, and an annual compliance certification. DEC will accept comments until Feb 26. b) An Air State Facility permit for the Landfill Gas Recovery Facility (issued to Broome Energy Resources, LLC) is also available for review (7-0399-00011/00003). The permit became effective January 17, 2007; there is no expiration date. **Cigarette litter:** A CD from Keep America Beautiful will arrive soon with information on cigarette litter campaigns. Suggestions were made to contact the Mayor's office to inquire about the City providing receptacles for cigarette wastes near Lourdes Hospital. **Recycling items:** Dell Computers will no longer charge consumers to recycle old computers. TYVEK envelopes can be recycled by mailing them back to DuPont. **Next meeting:** March 26 at 4:30pm, BCOB.

Membership Committee – There was no membership meeting in January. **Membership Open House:** EMC is looking to hold a membership recruitment drive March 1st at Cornell Cooperative Extension. Perhaps new members will be able to help with our Environmental Awards program. Cindy feels that we should have more publicity for this meeting. Ron would like to see local Planning and Zoning Board members get training credit for attending EMC's membership meeting. Stacy noted that the EMC Membership Open House would not be a training session that warrants credit. However, staff will convey the idea to the Planning Dept, which oversees Planning and Zoning Board Training offered by the County. It is up to the local boards to grant credit authorization for such trainings. **Vacancies:** EMC needs to fill nine (9) member-at-large vacancies, a few CAC vacancies, and two (2) student reps. Melanie Feltmate will be graduating from BU in May, so we are looking for a new BU student representative, as well as a BCC and a high school representative. **Legislative Reps:** The Chairman of the Broome County Legislature nominated Ron Keibel and Tim Cleary for non-voting seats on the EMC for a two year term. The Economic Development and Planning Committee of the legislature will meet February 6 to consider EMC membership resolutions; the

full legislature meets February 15. CACs: Stacy sent letters late last year to the Vestal, Union and, Dickinson CACs, and to the Town of Chenango Environmental Review Board asking for representative appointments to EMC. She has not received any replies.

6. Conservation Advisory Commission (CAC) Reports

Vestal: Cindy did not attend this month's meeting; she was away. The next meeting is Tues, February 27. Chip will also be attending to talk about streams.

7. Staff and Chair Reports

The Great Warming: EMC Associate member Terry Woodnorth asked the Council if they want to co-sponsor a local viewing of a documentary called "The Great Warming" with Valley Church in Chenango. The Susquehanna Chapter of the Sierra Club is also co-sponsoring. The 82-minute DVD is about global climate change and represents opinions and perspectives from educators, scientists, political leaders, faith-based communities, universities, CEO's, and people from all over the world. André, Terry, Beth, Stacy and Bill screened the film and generally support the viewing. Mary motioned, Melanie seconded, to cosponsor the viewing of "The Great Morning." at Valley Christian Reformed Church, Chenango Saturday, February 17 at 7:30pm. Lengthy discussion and debate ensued. Chip called the question, seconded by Bill. All in favor to end debate. The motion for a vote on the floor is to support a local viewing of the Great Warming at Valley Christian Reformed Church, Chenango Saturday, February 17 at 7:30 pm. Five ayes (Mary, Bill ,Andre, Chip, Melanie), one nay (Cindy). Motion carried. Members were asked to contribute refreshments for the event.

8. The meeting adjourned at 9:41 pm.

Next meeting: Thursday, March 1st at 7 pm,
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Broome County,
Upper Front St, Binghamton

Christina Prete, recorder
Stacy Merola, editor