

# 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, January 4, 2007 United Way Board Room, Jensen Road, Vestal, NY

### Present:

**Members-at-Large:** Terry Woodnorth, Bill Heaviside, André LaClair, Tony Lubzanski, Mary Cronk and Karen Ciatyk

**Student Reps:** Melanie Feltmate (BU)

**CAC Reps:** Cindy Westerman (Vestal)

**Special Reps:** Chip McElwee (SWCD)

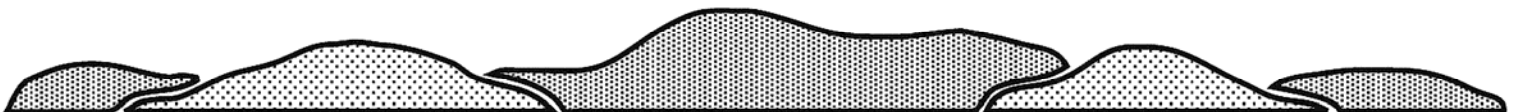
**Ex-officio:** Bob Denz (BCHealth)

**Staff/Intern:** Stacy Merola and Beth Egitto

**Visitors:** Chelsey Dean and Jenna Dunlap

**Absent with Excuse:** Kevin Mathers and Doug Garner

1. Following introductions, Terry **convened** the meeting at **7:15 pm**. Bill moved to approve the minutes from December with the following amendments: change Vestal CAC report to read, "Vestal had \$225K in flood damage in *June* and \$4.5 to 5 million in damage for the *November* flash flooding. The CAC has until March to issue recommendations for the Town's creeks in relation to the flooding issues *involving creeks*". Also change item 5, bullet 4 to "Stacy was asked". The motion was seconded by Andre and approved by all.
2. **Privilege of the Floor/Announcements/Member Items of Interest**
  - The NYSDEC will hold a public information meeting on January 8, 7-9pm, regarding emergency regulations to prevent the spread of Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS) into the inland waters of New York. The regulation prohibits the transport of bait fish to other waters besides where they were obtained. Stacy emailed members previously with more details.
  - BC Div of Solid Waste Mgmt tip-strip with advice for minimizing waste during the holidays was distributed, which included a list of outlets for Christmas tree recycling. Stacy received a call from the Press regarding proper disposal of Christmas trees and questioning whether they could be left in a natural area to decompose. She and others that were consulted suggested that this would be OK in rural areas, only with the property owner's consent. Kevin Mathers (CCE) suggested removing branches to enhance decomposition. Chip suggested that pond owners can use a discarded tree sunk in their pond to create fish habitat. Brief discussion ensued about Union and Vestal that don't have specific pick up dates for trees, but rather drive around to find discarded trees throughout the post Christmas season. Mary also noted that some haulers sent trucks out to specially collect cardboard after the holidays. Many wondered if these practices were wasteful in terms of gas consumption and labor.
  - Copies of the amended 2007 EMC Calendar were distributed.
  - Cindy announced that the Sierra Club will present the Lynda Spickard Award for Environmentalist of the Year to Dick Andrus at a potluck dinner, January 16<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm at the United Methodist Church on Riverside Drive in Binghamton. Following the dinner, at 7:30pm, Steven Nicholson, Governance Chair of Sustainable Tompkins and Chair of the Tompkins County EMC, will give a presentation entitled "Working toward sustainable living" highlighting the activities of Sustainable Tompkins, a



coalition of citizens, community organizations, elected officials, educators and professionals from diverse fields all working to promote a more sustainable community.

- Tony asked Bob and Chip whether any Hazardous Chemicals had spread during the years flooding events. Bob said that one of the main problems was heating oil. Chip said that this is typically not a big issue because it breaks down. Bob said that the DEC caught a lot of the spill and cleaned them up. When water was removed from basements a couple feet of water was left so that the oil could be removed from the water's surface. Bill asked if any got into the river. Bob said that anything that entered the river during the flood is long gone. He cannot say that they were able to get everything due to spills that may not have been reported. However, those reported to the DEC can be found on the spill report website. Chip said that SWCD received no calls of this nature. Stacy mentioned that storage tanks for a pesticide company became loose and floated away. Chip and Bob noted that those containers remained intact. And that the EPA responded and remedied the problem before there was any leak.
- 3. Video Presentation: "Environmental Art: Working with the Elements",** (Environmental Art, Inc. and Hofstra Museums)

This video highlights the use of the natural world for artistic expression. Over time people have had the natural tendency to perceive and admire patterns and images in the natural environment. Objects have been placed in these spaces to recognize that they are special, such as Stonehenge. Environmental art has continued to be prevalent as it is a natural extension of the human relationship with the world. The video highlights works of art that are integrated with various elements of the natural world.

The first element, earth, is used to create an aesthetic experience as well as a place for reflection. Herbert Bayer's "Earth Mound", in Aspen, Colorado is a flood control structure that is designed to provide an intimate enclosure and Nancy Holt's "Sun Tiles" and "Rock Ring" use the sun's natural trajectory and the placement of stone objects to create aesthetically pleasing light patterns. The element of water is utilized in Robert Smithson's "Spiral Jetty", rocks and sediment shaped in a spiral mound, located in the Great Salt Lake, Utah. The salt water and red algae in the area colors the water like wine, enhancing the aesthetic appeal. Patricia Johanson transformed a lagoon in Fair Park, Dallas by integrating paths and sculptures, as well as native plants and wildlife. Strategically placed sculptures were designed to break wave action, reducing erosion. The element of fire has been used in conjunction with ice and water to reflect purification and spiritual energy, such as in "Tetrahedron" and "Nash's Wood Stove". Finally, since the development of the airplane the element of air can be used to reflect artistic expression as in "Line Drawings" for which the artist dropped ribbons from a plane through the air, making several shapes and images as they moved in the wind. Environmental art signifies a return to nature and an expanded view of the environment for the viewers. The pieces, best appreciated on site, alter people's view of the planet and invite them to participate in the natural world.

**4. Committee Reports:**

- Natural Resource Committee (NRC): Cindy reported that the NRC met December 14. The main focus was the Open Space Plan. Discussed the possibility of applying for a Quality Communities Grant in the future. The general consensus was that this would be helpful but that the committee would still want to participate in its completion. Members signed up for a few municipalities to contact to solicit information about their recreational resources. There were brief updates about the success of the Community Preservation Act on Long Island and upgrades to the AES Westover plant to control emissions. Next meeting: January 18 @ 4:30pm.

- Recycling & Waste Mgmt Committee (RWMC): Tony reported that the RWMC met on December 18. They discussed the results of the Landfill Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) Public Meeting. The options were reduced from 12 to 3 which will be expanded upon by the consultants. Stacy shared the display from the America/NY Recycles Day event at the Oakdale Mall 11/4. It featured an interactive game highlighting alternatives to disposing of waste in the trash. Other topics included potential recycling awards for an EMC Environmental Recognition program and pilot recycling at county parks. Next meeting: January 22 @ 4:30pm. Following the report there was a brief discussion about how to dispose of compact fluorescent light bulbs due to concerns about mercury. There was uncertainty about whether they are accepted at the HHW facility, but Stacy will contact Debra Smith in Solid Waste to find out [Note: Deb confirmed that the bulbs can and should be taken to HHW.] Chip mentioned that he has seen an increase in cigarette butt litter in his neighborhood. He feels that this is a result of the no smoking policy on the grounds of Lourdes Hospital which causes staff to smoke in the areas surrounding the hospital. Mary asked who is the appropriate person to call if you witness illegal dumping. She feels that when the municipalities are contacted, code enforcement doesn't follow up on the complaint. There was brief discussion about possible solutions to the problem.

#### **5. Conservation Advisory Commission (CAC) Reports:**

- Vestal- No meeting. Dick Pastore, CAC Chair, suggested to Peter Andreasen, Vestal Supervisor, that he reappoint Cindy as EMC Rep. Chip offered Cindy materials about stream management and offered to address the CAC if they would like. Next meeting: January 23 @ 7:30pm, Vestal Public Library.

#### **6. Staff & Chair Reports:**

- Stacy mentioned that she has not heard back regarding appointments by the other CAC's.
- Andre's nomination as Chair and MAL and Karen's nomination as MAL were submitted to the County Executive. The MAL appointments should appear on the Jan or Feb legislative agenda.
- Stacy sent a letter to Mark Whalen, Legislative Chair, requesting two legislative appointments. Chip noted that Ron Keibel has been reappointed to the Soil and Water Board.
- Stacy heard from Sue McIntyre from the Delaware County Composting Facility, who said that they are more than willing to host a tour and wanted to know what time of year we planned on a tour. Most agreed that the tour would be best in the spring. April and May are not good months due to Earth Fest and the JKLS Photo Show. Therefore the months that would be best are March and June. Stacy suggested having the tour on a Saturday to minimize work conflicts and maximize attendance. [Note: Saturdays will not be possible for a tour. Stacy will try to arrange a tour for a Wednesday or Friday.]
- A tour of the Broome County Landfill will likely be scheduled for fall. Stacy suggested that Chip give a tour of local stream sites, wetlands or farms to highlight BCSWCD projects.
- Stacy received an invitation from the NYS DEC Reg 7 Wildlife division to sit on a committee for the NY State Comprehensive Wildlife Grant Program. She will contact him for further information.
- Christina Prete, a Binghamton University student from Long Island will be an intern with the EMC for the Spring semester.

#### **7. The meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm.**

**Next meeting:** Thurs., February 1<sup>st</sup> @ 7pm, Chenango Town Hall, 1529 State Route 12, Chenango Bridge

Beth Egitto, Recorder  
Stacy Merola, Editor