

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)

Notes from the meeting held Thursday, November 2nd, 2006

Chenango Town Hall, Community Hall, 1529 NYS Rte 12, Chenango Bridge, NY

Present:

Members-at-Large: Terry Woodnorth, Tim Wolcott, Mary Cronk, Bill Heaviside, André LaClair, and Tony Lubzanski

Student Reps: Melanie Feltmate (BU)

CAC Reps: Cindy Westerman

Special Reps: Chip McElwee (BCSWCD) and Kevin Mathers (CUCE-BC)

Ex-Officio: Bob Denz (BCHD)

Legislative Reps: Ron Keibel

Staff/Intern: Stacy Merola, Beth Egitto and Ken Holmes

Visitors: Chris Burger, Josephine Chu, Jeanette Rebecchi, Allison Pfeifer, Laurie Kocak, John Kocak, Laura Mattarell, Jacquelyn Murray, Peter Knuepfer, and Larry Lepak (NYSDEC)

Absent with Excuse: Doug Garner and Karen Ciatyk

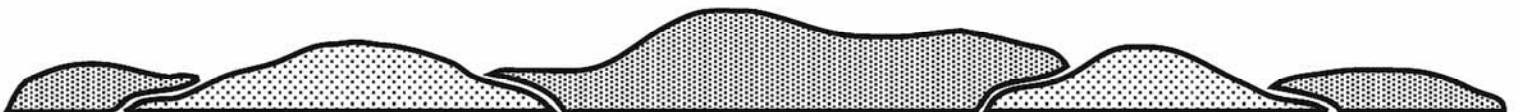
1. Following introductions, Terry **convened** the meeting at **7:06 pm**. Minutes from October were approved with the following amendments, on a motion by Mary, seconded by Melanie. In the third paragraph of section six, the question that Tim asked was unclear. "Given that not only did the media but other reputable organizations [feel] that the legislature [was] in gridlock, due to the control of the majority leaders in each of the chambers and the governor, how [Assemblywoman Lupardo] felt she could pursue a productive engagement of her duties, when those were somewhat controlling the situation to the detriment of the state?" In that same paragraph, the word "sensors" was misspelled, and Andre's question was unclear. Andre asked of the status of legislation for open burning and Outdoor Wood Boilers (OWBs) and if Ms. Lupardo planned to sponsor/support legislation again next session. Motion carried.

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

- On November 4th, The EMC will have a table at the Oakdale Mall, 10 am -2 pm, for America Recycles Day. The event is being organized by BC Solid Waste. The EMC will have various activities, in addition to membership information. Finch Hollow Nature Center and CUCE will have hands on demonstrations, as well.
- Chris mentioned a NYS Recycling Conference on November 16-17, taking place at the Syracuse Center for Environmental Excellence. The theme will be "Greening New York" and will include a free composting lecture. The \$125 event is sponsored by NYSDEC, New York State Association for Reduction, Reuse and Recycling (NYSAR³), EPA, and the Syracuse Center for Environmental Excellence.
- Cindy is selling 2007 Sierra Club Calendars for \$12/\$13. Please contact her if you would like one.
- The November 16th Natural Resource Committee Meeting will take place in Public Works' Meeting Room, on the other side of the 5th Floor. The Planning Department's Conference Room is being expanded.

3. Guest Speakers: "June Flood – Impacts, Images and Impressions". Larry Lepak, NYSDEC Environmental Engineer, and Chip McElwee, Broome County Soil & Water Conservation District

Chip began the presentation noting the history of floods in the Greater Binghamton Area. Some notable floods include 1935, 1936, 1972, 1975, 1996, 2004, and 2005. He mentioned how various floods devastated some areas while avoiding others.



Chip presented a precipitation map from the 2006 flood that showed two clear concentrations of precipitation, a strip over Binghamton and a strip to the east. The eastern strip happened the night before the Binghamton strip. The atypical nature of this fed the Susquehanna, as it progressed southward. Areas to the south of Broome County got upwards of 13-16 inches of rain in four days and various individuals recorded 10-12 inches of rain overnight. The water-level gauge in Vestal was topped, but its peak was estimated at 33.5 feet. Conklin's gauge measured the water at about 25 feet. In both locations, the 2006 flood was the highest on record. That being said, this flood was about a 250 year flood. This means that every year there is a 0.4% chance of a flood that size happening.

The presentation continued with various pictures of destroyed roads, flooded plazas, bridges, levee leaks, and more. Chip discussed some of the options that the community has in flood damage mitigation. These include floodwalls, levees, flood control dams, property buy-outs, land use controls, stream channel restructuring, and wetland construction. Each option has its costs and benefits. There are no clear answers to flood prevention. Floods are a natural occurrence and will continue to be a problem, as long as there's development alongside rivers.

Larry's portion of the presentation addressed the various DEC structures around the county and how they fared. Protected communities with DEC structural projects include Binghamton, Ithaca, Union, Vestal, Bainbridge, Green, Johnson City, Lisle, Nichols, Oxford, Endicott, and Whitney Point. The NYSDEC Region 7 is home to 9 Projects in Oswego River Basin and 17 Projects in Susquehanna River Basin. Exactly half of the twenty six projects are structural. The average age of a structure is fifty-three years. Including those projects, Region 7 oversees 52 miles of channel, 17.5 miles of levee, three miles of floodwall, 179 gates, 24 closures, and one large dam (Onondaga Creek). Larry touched on his department's procedure for routine, intermediate, and severe high river periods. The June 2006 flood was classified as severe.

The presentation continued with summary of the DEC's daily actions during the June 2006 floods.

- June 27-* Began filling sandbags. Began coordination to install roadway/railroad closures (coordination included two railroads, NYSDOT, fire departments, county Emergency Management Offices (EMO), local public works entities, state and local police). First closure completed 7:30 PM (S. Washington Bridge).
- June 28-* Final closure completed at 6:30 AM (West Endicott). DEC pumps and personnel responded to Lourdes Hospital flooding (per State EMO request), Personnel patrolled and monitored projects. Sandbagging began at Home Depot levee.
- June 29 -* Project patrolling continued. DEC released at Lourdes Hospital. DEC pumps used to respond to localized storm water drainage/overall sewage flooding, localized pumping (Village of Oxford, BAE property and Home Depot in Johnson City, West Endicott, Watson Blvd in Union, and the Village of Nichols). Sandbag ring completed for Binghamton's under-seepage problem.
- June 30 -* Project patrolling continued; pumping continued at all locations; pumping initiated at Pearl Street (Vestal). Railroad closures removal began.
- July 1-* Project patrolling continued. Pumping continued at all sites. Closure removal continued.
- July 2 -* Pumping gradually concluded at various sites; Pumps moved to Conklin per SEMO request. Closure removal continued and equipment demobilization started.
- July 3&4-* Conklin pumping continued until mid-morning on July 4. Equipment demobilization continued.

Larry noted that although the flood challenged projects and closures and walls leaked, as expected, the flood control projects held back peak flows and prevented millions of dollars of damage.

A few issues were briefly discussed, including the lack of fear by Binghamton residents, a mobile home park in Union that denied a buyout a few years back, and the McDonalds on Court Street that was flooded (500 year flood plain). After responding to a few questions the speakers were thanked for their time and for sharing many pictures of the flood's local impacts.

4. Committee Updates – Due to the presentation running longer than expected and the number of action items on the agenda, committees were asked to give brief reports.

- Natural Resource Committee (NRC): Cindy reported that the NRC met October 19th and its primary discussion concerned designating the Upper Susquehanna as an National Heritage River.

ACTION ITEM: The action comes moved and seconded by the NRC, to direct staff to draft a resolution and letter, based on preliminary discussions and established materials, in support of classifying the Upper Susquehanna as an National Heritage River, for EMC consideration. Melanie offered a friendly amendment to add the word “management” on the last line, should it be deemed necessary. Motion passed, all in favor.

- Recycling & Waste Mgmt Committee (RWMC): Tim offered to report on the RWMC's October 23rd meeting at the next EMC meeting.

ACTION ITEM: The action comes moved and seconded by RWMC, to direct staff to draft a letter to DSWM requesting at least a 45-day comment deadline extension (from original deadline of November 1, 2006) for Landfill SEIS Draft Scope document. Due to time constraints, this motion was put to special voted by phone and email to full Council. The vote by full council passed on October 30th. In favor = M. Cronk, D. Garner, T. Woodnorth, B. Heaviside, A. LaClair, C. Westerman, T. Lubzanski, K. Ciatyk, M. Feltmate. Abstentions = K. Mathers and C. McElwee.

Stacy reported that the Division of Solid Waste Management (DSWM) decided to extend comment deadline until December 15th. The Council discussed the prospect of an official EMC comment on the draft scope for the SEIS and concluded that Council members should send in their comments directly to the Legislative Clerk, or send them to Stacy who will compile comments (identifying the commenters) into one letter.

- Goose Management Task Force (GMTF): Ken formatted the Federal Register notice information presented at the October EMC Meeting into two charts and a brief summary paragraph. The GMTF discussed the issue of placement in the adopted May 2006 Goose Management Report and feel that the addendum would be best placed between Section 4.4 and 4.5. The charts would be Appendix 3. The report will be compiled, printed, and distributed to the BC Legislature for their consideration.

ACTION ITEM: A motion was made by Andre and seconded by Bill, to amend the May 2006 Goose Management Report to include two charts, a summary paragraph, and a bibliography that address the August 10, 2006 Federal Register Notice on the Management of Resident Canada Geese. Motion passed, all in favor.

5. Conservation Advisory Commission (CAC) Reports - Cindy reported that the Vestal CAC met in September and discussed flooding. The next meeting is scheduled for November 28th with Supervisor Andreasen.

6. Staff & Chair Reports:

- Beth prepared a draft calendar for the 2007 year. **ACTION ITEM:** On a motion by Andre, seconded by Mary, the draft 2007 EMC Meetings and Events Calendar was unanimously adopted.

- Stacy mailed EMC Chair and Vice Chair Nomination Forms to all voting members. Nominations will be accepted through November 17th. Bill offered to continue as an EMC Vice Chair and to

assume the position of NRC Chair. Tony accepted a nomination by RWMC members to assume the position of RWMC Chair for 2007.

- Terry, Stacy, Tim, Beth, and Cindy briefly commented on the NYSAEMC's Conference of the Environment, held Oct 13-15 at the Chautauqua Institution in Jamestown, NY. The speakers and presentations were exceptionally interesting this year, and the food and scenery were delightful. A few speakers and attendees were delayed or had to cancel their appearances because of the snow storm just north of the conference.
 - Stacy is drafting Work Plan for 2007. If there is anything that a council members would like added, please contact Stacy. One idea to add is an environmental achievement recognition program.
 - The EMC decided not to have a guest speaker for the December general meeting.
7. The meeting adjourned at **9:48 pm**.

Next meeting: Thursday, December 7th @ 6:00 pm in the Decker Room, Broome County Public Library, 185 Court Street, Binghamton, NY

Ken Holmes, Recorder
Stacy Merola, editor