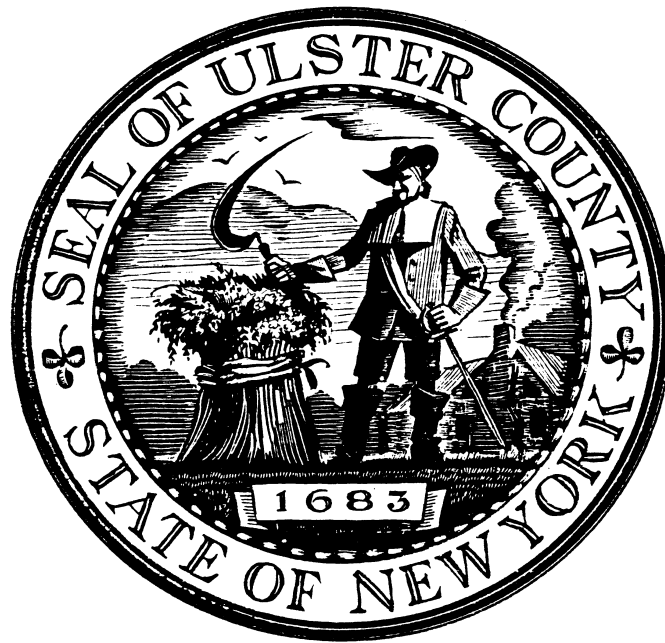


# **2013 Ulster County**



**Michael P. Hein**  
**County Executive**

## **Annual Reports of the Executive Departments**

## **Department of the Environment**

### **Mission Statement**

Work across County government to increase efficiency and efficacy of projects with a variety of environmental concerns, provide a forum for the coordinated departments to share information on environmental projects, provide technical assistance to County departments, help County departments characterize and address existing environmental needs, and prevent duplication of services.

### **2013 Accomplishments**

#### **Ulster County Environmental Management Council (EMC) Support**

- Provided administrative support to the EMC, including posting minutes and agendas to the EMC website (<http://ucenvironment.org>) as well as maintaining and updating the website.
- Worked with the EMC to organize and coordinate the 4th annual Ulster County Creek Week. A total of twenty-two events were held and more than 325 people participated.

#### **Stormwater and Pollution Prevention**

- Completed and filed the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC) Stormwater Annual Report for 2012-2013.
- Completed the required stormwater outfall monitoring (100% of outfall within five years) as per the NYS DEC MS4 stormwater permit.
- Provided oversight and helped to acquire materials for the construction of the first phase of the "green-infrastructure" improvements to the County Office Building parking lot.
- Produced maps of expanded Urbanized Area (MS4) from 2010 census data.
- Completed field collection of MS4 stormwater infrastructure on County roads and outfalls in newly expanded (from 2010 census) Urbanized (MS4) Area.
- Assisted MS4 towns with employee training and audit issues.
- Updated MS4 construction project policy and SWPPP review procedure.
- Oversaw and managed the development and submission of a grant to the NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation's "Green Infrastructure Grant Program" for the S.T.R.I.V.E. project at the former Sophie Finn Elementary School in Kingston. The grant

to develop green infrastructure at the facility was successful and the County was awarded \$439,000.

### **Energy and Sustainability**

- Continued to provide regular updates to [www.SustainableUlster.org](http://www.SustainableUlster.org) - which showcases ways residents and businesses can improve energy efficiency. The website received 44,857 total unique visits in 2013.
- Continued to track utility usage in coordination with Department of Public Works (DPW) using a utility tracking software package.
- Completed a greenhouse gas inventory for Ulster County operations (baseline year 2012) with technical assistance from a consultant provided through NYS DEC and NYSERDA.

### **Natural Resources**

- Continued involvement in the Ashokan Release Working Group (ARWG) regarding NYCDEP's releases from the Ashokan Reservoir.
- Continued to participate and provide technical assistance after the Consent Order issued by DEC regarding DEP's releases to the Lower Esopus Creek.
- Provided input on the County's comments on the draft midterm 2007 FAD Revision.
- Participated in numerous meetings of the Flood Hazard Mitigation Working Group and subsequent efforts related to developing Flood Hazard Analysis, commercial and residential relocations, and a city-funded flood buyout program convened by the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (NYC DEP) and Coalition of Watershed Towns (CWT) in response to flooding in the City of NY watershed.
- Continued involvement with the Ashokan Watershed Stream Management Program (AWSMP) Project Advisory Committee and other subcommittees, as well as those convened by the Rondout/Neversink Stream Management Program.
- Continued to actively participate in the environmental aspects of the Greater Catskill Flood Remediation and Buyout Program Phase II Wawarsing, including an environmental review and also providing GIS technical support.
- Participated, as a committee and voting member, in the NY Rising – Community Reconstruction Zone program for the communities of Shandaken and Hardenburgh.
- Participated and provided input to recently-released Kingston Flood Task Force and its final report.
- Facilitated the production of, and received the updated GIS data for hydrography for the portion of the County outside of the New York City Watershed from

GroundPoint Technologies. This project was the last stage of a NYS DEC funded grant previously awarded to the County.

- Continued to support and update, along with UC Information Services, the Ulster County REConnect ([www.UlsterCountyAlive.com/REConnect](http://www.UlsterCountyAlive.com/REConnect)) website.
- Continued to lead the Ulster County Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Task Force in order to better coordinate the County and affected municipalities' response to this invasive forest pest.
- Provided data-collection, map-making, technical assistance, and input on various aspects of the Ulster County Rail Trail project, including the coordination and submission of a grant application to repair the critical Butternut Cove culvert along the corridor.
- Successfully completed the Ulster County case-study for the high profile "green-infrastructure" guidebook – titled: "Evaluating and Conserving Green Infrastructure Across the Landscape: A Practitioner's Guide" for New York developed by the Green Infrastructure Center for NYS DEC. The project resulted in a sophisticated natural resource mapping database for Ulster County which will ultimately be used for a wide variety of conservation and development planning. This project is already being highlighted as a state and national model.

### **Key Statistics**

- Received 44,857 unique website hits to [SustainableUlster.org](http://SustainableUlster.org), the County's energy efficiency site.
- Received over 6,000 unique website visits for Ulster County REConnect.
- Awarded, in collaboration with UC Planning, a \$439,000 grant from the NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation through their "Green Infrastructure Grants Program" to fund stormwater and other improvements at the Sophie Finn School in Kingston as part of the S.T.R.I.V.E. project.
- Received another year of funding (\$5,000) from the Catskill Center for Conservation and Development to help coordinate the Ulster County Emerald Ash Borer task force.
- One staff member became a NYS Certified Floodplain Manager.
- Two staff members serve on various grant review committees, including the Ashokan Watershed Stream Management Implementation Grants Program and the Catskill Watershed Corporation's "Public Education Grants Program," that help direct funding to education, outreach, infrastructure, research, and recreational access projects that benefit residents of Ulster County.
- Mapped 34.4 miles of new MS4 roads (based on 2010 census urbanized area).

- Mapped 198 new MS4 stormwater outfalls on those road segments.

### **Collaborations**

By design, the Department of the Environment is charged with coordinating environmental projects and activities across County government. As such, staff are continuously collaborating with other County department and outside agencies. The preceding list of 2013 accomplishments highlights the regular collaboration across County government. Below are additional collaborations.

- Continued to support the Healthy Ulster initiative and partner with the Health Department by participating in a sub-committee tasked with combating Environmental Quality and Obesity.
- Continued participation with UC Planning on the Hudson Valley Greenway Compact Program.
- Worked with UC Information Services and UC Tourism to highlight recreational opportunities in Ulster County through the online REConnect web map.
- Collaborated with several departments and agencies on future programming that will become available for residences, businesses, and communities in the NYC Watershed, such as local flood analysis, residential buyouts and relocations, anchor business and critical facility relocations, and other flood hazard mitigation initiatives. Departments and agencies included UC Planning, County Attorney, Emergency Services, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Soil & Water Conservation District, and non-County groups including the Catskill Watershed Corporation, Coalition of Watershed Towns, the NYCDEP, New York State DOS, DOH, and DEC, and the counties of Delaware, Sullivan, Greene, and Schoharie.

### **Goals for 2014**

- Begin implementation of the newly revised Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan for Ulster County.
- Support Ulster County municipalities covered by the MS4 program.
- Organize, and continue to expand participation in the 5th annual Ulster County Creek Week event in September in coordination with the EMC.
- Seek grant funding opportunities for stormwater and apply as appropriate.
- Continue to work collaboratively with other county departments to implement the 2008 Ulster County Government Energy Policy.
- Launch a green infrastructure/natural asset mapping website in partnership with UC IS and Planning that builds off the work and guidebook done by the Green Infrastructure Center, and will be used by local municipalities for planning purposes.