

ULSTER COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Dave Haldeman, Chair
Emilie Hauser, Vice-Chair
Kenneth Panza, Secretary

Minutes for the EMC Meeting of February 24, 2021

A quorum present, the regular meeting of the Ulster County Environmental Council was convened by Zoom video conferencing at 6:34 PM by David Haldeman, Chair. Meetings of the EMC are open to the public, and if others wish to attend, please notify the secretary or the chair to obtain Zoom login instructions and passwords.

Municipal Members Present

Mark Ellison, Town of Esopus
Dave Haldeman, Town of Shawangunk
Emilie Hauser, City of Kingston
Jim Mays, Town of Olive
Mary O'Donnell, Town of Saugerties
Kristen Schara, Town of Hurley
Eric Stewart, Town of Marbletown
Simon Strauss, Town of Olive
Sarah Underhill, Town of Wawarsing

At Large Members Present

William More
Kenneth Panza
Virginia Starke

Department of the Environment

Amanda LaValle, Director

Guests

Andrew Faust, Permaculture and Bioregional Educator, Rondout Creek Watershed Alliance
Mary McNamara, Saugerties, Lower Esopus Watershed Partnership

Speakers

Rebecca Martin, Director of Community Partnerships, Riverkeeper
Bill Wegner, Staff Scientist, Riverkeeper
Victoria Leung, Associate Staff Attorney, Riverkeeper

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of **January 27, 2021** meeting of the EMC were presented, discussed, and approved by unanimous consent.

Announcements

The chair asked for recommendations for subjects and speakers for EMC meetings.

Speaker/Presentation

The major issues related to turbidity in the Esopus were discussed at last month's EMC meeting. Bill Wegner, Staff Scientist, Riverkeeper, presented a history of turbidity on the Esopus and how the

weir in the Ashokan was designed to control turbidity entering the reservoir from the upper Esopus. In 2011, the Ashokan Release Working Group was formed consisting of the DEP, local communities, and other stakeholders as a forum to discuss problems caused by releases from the Ashokan.

Riverkeeper discussed a fact sheet and a proposed resolution, which was distributed earlier to the EMC, as a source for comments that could be offered at the public hearings and could be included in a formal resolution.

These documents are available at Riverkeeper's Stop the Mud campaign website.
<https://www.riverkeeper.org/campaigns/safeguard/ashokan-reservoir-stop-the-mud/>

Old Business

Dave Haldeman, Chair and Amanda LaValle, Director, will review Riverkeeper's sample resolution as a template for consideration by the Legislature's Energy & Environment Committee.

Report from Department of the Environment

Amanda LaValle, Coordinator

Lower Esopus Turbidity – Focused on responding to the issues in the DEIS and the public hearings.

Report to Legislature – Preparing Green Fleet, building, and other reports documentation energy usage and improvements in 2020.

Silver Recertification – Creating documentation required for submission to Climate Smart Communities to obtain recertification at the Silver Level.

Updating the County's Storm Water Plan

Bard College Student Project – Working with a Bard environmental class to identify towns they could assist a developing sustainability plans.

Issuing a second RFP for Community Distributed Solar Generation

Considering request from Catskill Railroad for chemical weed applications

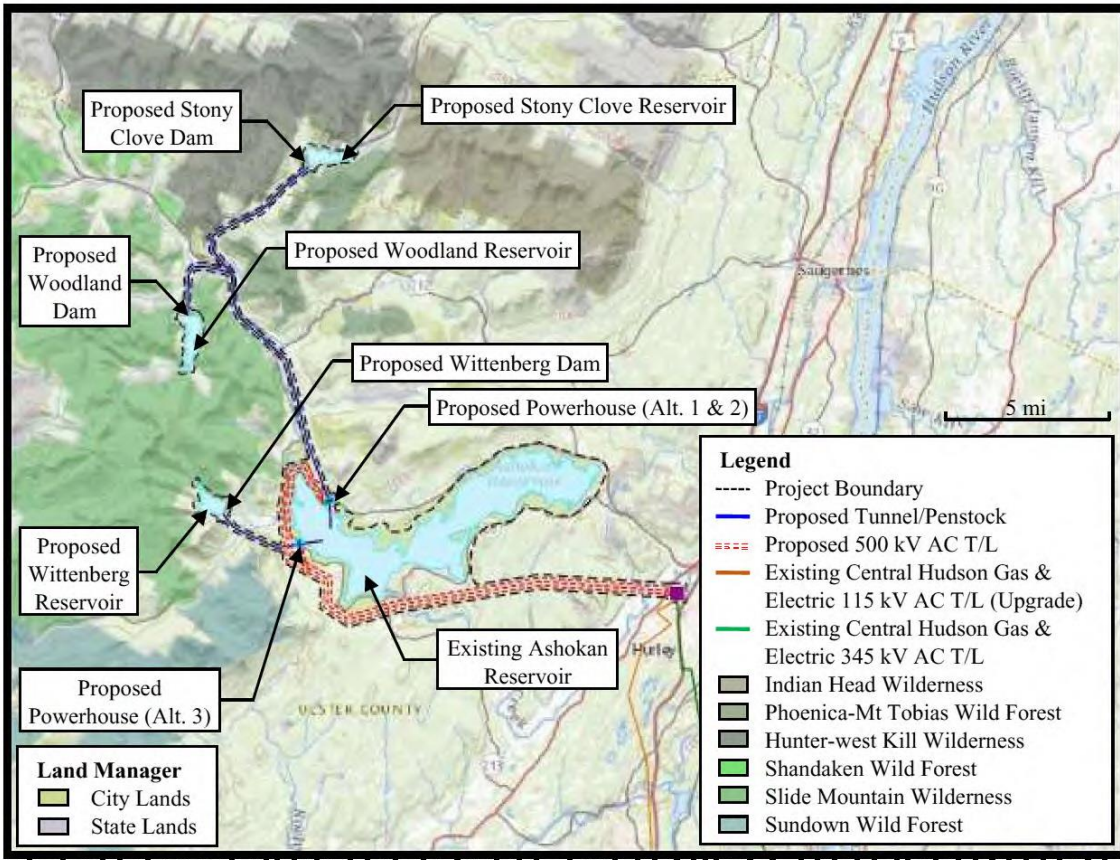
Distributed turbidity presentation by Brian Yellen of UMass given at Water Quality Working Group meeting.

Ashokan Pumped Storage Project

On November 19, 2020, Premium Energy Holdings, LLC, filed an application for a preliminary permit, pursuant to section 4(f) of the Federal Power Act (FPA), proposing to study the feasibility of the Ashokan Pumped Storage Project to be located 14 miles west of the City of Kingston in Ulster County, New York. The sole purpose of a preliminary permit, if issued, is to grant the permit holder priority to file a license application during the permit term. A preliminary permit does not authorize the permit holder to perform any land-disturbing activities or otherwise enter upon lands or waters owned by others without the owners' express permission.

Ashokan Pumped Storage Project Study Area Boundary

Project Layout



The proposed project would consist of the following:

- (1) a new 2,618-foot-long, 212-foot-high roller-compacted concrete dam for the upper reservoir for alternative 1 (Stony Clove Reservoir) with a surface area of 245 acres and a storage capacity 22,496 acre-feet at a surface elevation of 1,500 feet above mean sea level (msl);
- (2) a new 2,736-foot-long, 232-foot-high roller-compacted concrete dam for the upper reservoir for alternative 2 (Woodland Reservoir) with a surface area of 313 acres and a storage capacity 26,231 acre-feet at a surface elevation of 1,210 feet msl;
- (3) a new 2,527-foot-long, 304-foot-high roller-compacted concrete dam for the upper reservoir for alternative 3 (Wittenberg Reservoir) with a surface area of 226 acres and a storage capacity 25,558 acre-feet at a surface elevation of 1,180 feet msl;
- (4) the existing Ashokan Reservoir for the lower reservoir with a surface area of 8,300 acres and a storage capacity of 382,358 acre-feet at a surface elevation of 585 feet msl;
- (5) new 13.99-mile-long tunnels, shafts, and penstocks for alternative 1 connecting the upper and lower reservoirs;
- (6) new 11.58-mile-long tunnels, shafts, and penstocks for alternative 2 connecting the upper and lower reservoirs;

- (7) new 3.81-mile-long tunnels, shafts, and penstocks for alternative 3 connecting the upper and lower reservoirs;
- (8) a new 500-foot-long, 125-foot-wide, 150-foot-high underground reinforced-concrete powerhouse containing five turbine-generator units with a total rated capacity of 800 megawatts;
- (9) a 17.3-mile-long, 230-kilovolt new transmission line for alternatives 1 and 2 from the proposed Ashokan switchyard to the existing Hurley avenue substation;
- (10) a 12.9-mile-long, 230-kilovolt new transmission line for alternative 3 from the proposed Ashokan switchyard to the existing Hurley avenue substation; and
- (11) appurtenant facilities. The proposed project would have a maximum annual generation of 2,700 gigawatt-hours.

Champlain-Hudson Power Express

Governor Cuomo in his 2017 State of the State address announced New York State reached an agreement with Entergy to close Indian Point by April 2021. Under the terms of the agreement, one of the nuclear reactors will permanently cease operation by April 2020 and the other by April 2021.¹

The following statement was included in his announcement.

- Replacement Power: Indian Point produces 2,000 megawatts of electrical power. Currently, transmission upgrades and efficiency measures totaling over 700 megawatts are already in-service. Several generation resources are also fully permitted and readily available to come online by 2021, after the plant's closure, including clean, renewable hydropower able to replace up to 1,000 megawatts of power. Together, these sources will be able to generate more than enough electrical power to replace Indian Point's capacity by 2021.

Two new natural gas generators in the Mid-Hudson Valley are replacing Indian Point's generating capacity: the 690 MW CPV Valley Energy Center in Orange County and the 1,200 MW Cricket Valley Energy Center in Dutchess County. The Champlain-Hudson Power Express would provide an additional 1,000 megawatts of Canadian hydroelectric power for New York City. Combined, these three sources would completely replace the 16,666 GWh of generation from the Indian Point Energy Center.

The Champlain Hudson Power Express will supply up to 1,000-MW of hydroelectric with a high voltage direct current (HVDC) cable. The route will start at the U.S.–Canadian Border, travel south through Lake Champlain and along railroad right of ways, and then enter the Hudson River south of Albany. The power will be delivered to an inverter station in Astoria, Queens.



Canada to New York City

Although permitting for the Champlain Hudson Power Express was completed in 2015, it didn't become economically viable until CLCPA and the introduction of Tier 4 RECs. The Public Service Commission's October 15, 2020 Order established Tier 4 within the Clean Energy Standard (CES)

¹ Governor's Press Office, "Governor Cuomo Announces 10th Proposal of the 2017 State of the State: Closure of the Indian Point Nuclear Power Plant by 2021," January 9, 2017, <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-announces-10th-proposal-2017-state-state-closure-indian-point-nuclear-power>

to increase the penetration of renewable energy into New York City (NYISO Zone J), which is particularly dependent on polluting fossil fuel-fired generation.

Through Tier 4, the State will procure the unbundled environmental attributes (in the form of Tier 4 RECs) associated with renewable generation delivered into Zone J. These environmental attributes include the avoidance of GHG emissions, as well as the avoidance of local pollutants such as NO_x, SO_x, and fine particulate matter.

Hudson 7

In 2018, seven Hudson River communities pledged to work together by forming the Hudson River Drinking Water Intermunicipal Council – “the Hudson 7” – representing more than 100,000 residents that use the Hudson as a source of drinking water. The construction of the Champlain-Hudson Power Express risks stirring up sediments and pollutants from the river bottom that would contaminant the water supplies of towns using the Hudson as their source of drinking water.

The Ulster County towns of Lloyd and Esopus are members of the Council, and Europa McGovern of the Ulster County Dept. of the Environment represents the County. On February 25, 2021, Hudson 7 held a Special Workshop with Transmission Developers, Inc., the project developers, to answer questions about the proposed Champlain Hudson Power Express.

[The Hudson 7 Meeting and Video Archive](#)

Council Member Roundabout

Kristen Schara, Town of Hurley

The Farm Hub has rebuffed requests for access to Esopus Creek for fishing. Town supervisor asked about the reports of establishing launching areas for kayaks and if this would also improve assess for fishing.

Proposing a letter for the town to file in the DEIS proceeding.

Simon Strauss, Town of Olive

Ashokan Pumped Storage Project a major concern and focus for the supervisor.

NRI complete and accepted by the town board.

Launching CCA public information sessions.

Reviewing DEC plans for trail heads and parking on land recently acquired by the Open Spaces Institute.

Mary O'Donnell, Town of Saugerties

Launching CCA public information sessions.

Mark Ellison, Town of Esopus

Only 5 members on a 9 member environmental board.

Participating as a member of the Hudson 7 in the special meeting with TDI about the Champlain-Hudson Power Express.

Dave Haldeman, Town of Shawangunk

Large solar array with massive battery storage proposed in the town of Shawangunk, but zoning law does not regulate. Shawangunk EMC is recommending a moratorium.

Town of Shawangunk EMC is petitioning to have the planning board allow the EMC to review ALL applications to the Planning board for their environmental impact

Ken Panza, Woodstock

Woodstock completed conversion of municipal streetlighting to LEDs.

Woodstock has been designated a NYSERDA Clean Energy Community for completing four high impact actions and is eligible for a \$5,000 grant.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:13 p.m. by unanimous consent.

Respectively submitted,



Kenneth S. Panza, Secretary

Attachments

Letter submitted to Town of Gardiner Town Board

Ashokan Pumped Storage Project



ULSTER COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Dave Haldeman, Chair
PO Box 1800
Kingston, NY 12402
Phone: 845-338-7287

January 29th, 2021

Gardiner Town Board
PO Box 1
Gardiner, NY 12525

RE: Town of Gardiner EMC

Dear Town of Gardiner Town Board,

We have become aware through published reports that the Town of Gardiner is struggling to determine the role of your EMC or whether to change it to a Conservation Advisory Council. Whichever direction the Town Board chooses to go, we would like to encourage you to continue to support an environmental council in your Town. We have found EMC's play an integral part as towns plan for future development as well as recognizing areas of special environmental significance which should be protected, thus enhancing the value of your community and preserving the health, welfare, and economic well-being of your citizens. Given that we represent many of the towns in Ulster County and have years of experience working collaboratively with town boards and planning boards, we would be willing at any time to assist you in helping to determine the role of, and the interrelationship between, the various boards within your Town.

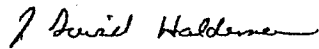
In a related matter, there seems to be some discussion about reducing protections afforded to the Shawangunk Ridge. The Ridge, as I am sure you are aware, represents one of the most visual examples of the natural beauty we appreciate in the southern part of Ulster County. Its steep, wooded slopes provide protection for wildlife, a buffer against erosion, numerous areas

to enjoy the outdoors while biking, hiking, hunting, and unrestricted scenic beauty. From a County perspective, preserving such areas of natural beauty and environmental significance are essential in promoting the environmental goals that have been set at the county level. We would hope that you would take this into consideration as you deliberate your future actions regarding the protected status of the Ridge.

Please feel free to contact us at any time. Once again, we would be glad to help you with any determinations you may have concerning the future of your EMC.

Sincerely,

J. David Haldeman



Dave Haldeman

Chairman, Ulster County Environmental Management Council (EMC)
90 Kings Lane
Wallkill, NY 12589