

**ULSTER COUNTY  
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

Dave Haldeman, Chair  
Emilie Hauser, Vice-Chair  
Vacant, Secretary



**Meeting Minutes**

Regular Monthly Meeting *December 1<sup>st</sup> 2021, 6:30 PM*

Via Zoom

<https://ulstercountyny.zoom.us/j/97442549615?pwd=ZHB6NVJ2MFFlvRTEiS3ZJeVFzdWNmUT09>

Meeting ID: 974 4254 9615 | Passcode: 278571 Call in: +1 646-558-8656 US (New York)

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*“The purpose of the Council shall be to review and advise the county and local governments on present and proposed methods of using, protecting and conserving the environment for the benefit of all the people.”*

With a quorum present, the regular meeting of the Ulster County Environmental Council was convened at **6:35 p.m.** by David Haldeman, Chair.

<b>Municipal Members Present (6)</b>	Dave Haldeman, Chair, Shawangunk (DH) Emilie Hauser, Vice-Chair, Kingston (EH) Mark Ellison, Esopus (ME) Neil Rindlaub, Gardiner (NR) Simon Strauss, Olive (SS) Mary O’Donnell (MO) Kristen Schara (KS)
<b>At Large Members Present (1)</b>	Roberta Clements (RC) Jim Mays (JM)
<b>Ulster County Staff (3)</b>	Nick Hvozda, Department of the Environment Amanda LaValle, Department of Planning
<b>Guests (1)</b>	George Profous, NYS DEC (GP)

A link to the meeting agenda can be found here:

<https://ulstercountyny.gov/environmental-management-council/emc-meeting-dates-minutes>

**Introduction of Speaker/Presentation**

George Profous, Senior Forester, NY State Department of Environmental Conservation Region 3 is currently the urban forester for the 7-County Hudson Valley Region north of New York City.

A copy of the presentation slides is attached.

**Q & A**

KS: What are the pros vs cons of cutting down trees to install solar?

GP: Scenic Hudson has a solar siting tool that assists with these decisions. It is better to use other

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land: abandoned areas, parking lots, rooftops. It depends on the situation, but generally solar wins when it comes to carbon reduction, but carbon reduction is not the only climate benefit – the effects evapotranspiration are important too and it should be considered. I have a blog with the Urban Forestry Council titled “A River to The Sky” (Attached to minutes)

MO: Regarding proposed development, is there a criteria/stand to inform what percentage of tree cover that should be preserved?

GP: Up to 40% is the usual goal, but lately the guidance is “as much as possible.” The percentage is the ground cover of canopy when viewed from above. Where the trees are also matters (i.e. what are they shading?) It is better to have them distributed throughout the property – both for shading purposes/temperature reductions and stormwater protection.

MO: Saugerties comprehensive plan calls for 50% coverage by trees.

RC: How much does connectivity matter when planning tree placement?

GP: Ideally, you want 5-6’ wide strips that range 20-30 feet long. Groups of trees in areas are much better because they will be maintained over time. Root surface important.

Mulch protects roots during winter and summer by controlling temperature and allows the roots to grow longer.

EH: Please mention mulch volcanoes, when to mulch and how to mulch?

GP: We tell people not to do it. Too much mulch can cover the roots with too much depth and cause the trees to die due to lack of water. Also, it can cause roots to grow upward and lead to shallow rooting. It causes problems in the future. One example is upheave during storms.

George’s number: (845) 256 – 3082

## **Announcements**

None

## **Discussion/Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the October 27th meeting of the EMC were discussed and approved.

It should be noted that there was no meeting in November.

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The minutes of the December 1st meeting of the EMC were discussed and approved.

**Report from Department of the Environment (Nick Hvozda)**

The Department of the Environment is completing a County-wide NRI project with a consultant and will be convening stakeholder groups to review the municipal toolkit. Please let Nick know if you or a representative from your town wishes to participate. We are also inviting any member from the council to participate on the review committee to evaluate proposals from consultants.

The DoE is also completing a Climate Adaptation Plan and vulnerability assessment for Ulster County. This project also has a municipal toolkit component. The DoE will be assisted by a Bard graduate student class in the development of the municipal toolkit guide. We're requesting to conduct a student presentation to the EMC at the April meeting for the Bard students to receive feedback.

The DEC has issued a notice that the Draft State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) General Permit for Stormwater Discharges from Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems, draft GP-0-22-002 and Fact Sheet (PDF) available for public comment.

The documents are available here: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/43150.html>

The DoE is reviewing the changes to the permit and will advise any needs or recommendation for public comment.

The DoE has funding available for community tree planting events this year, generally focused on Arbor Day, but events do not have to be coincident with Arbor Day (i.e. anytime in 2022). The general requirement is that the planting has a community benefit and/or aligns with a Climate Smart Communities action. The DoE will share an application form with the EMC.

DH: I will be meeting with the DoE next week to discuss getting additional membership from communities that have CACs/ECCs.

**Report from Planning (Amanda LaValle)**

Regarding the presentation: it is difficult for Planning Boards to make good and effective recommendations on tree cover requirements for proposed projects.

**Lower Esopus Stream Management Plan:** moving forward with scoping the stream management plan. There is money available from the consent order. The plan will include a list of implementation plans and actions. The money remaining (~\$2M) will be used for implementation. These funds can be used as match funds for other grant funding.

There has been no decision to date from the DEC about a Supplemental EIS for the Catalum SPDES permit. The process will likely be prolonged. However, this will not limit progress on the

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stream management plan.

**Transportation Vulnerability Planning Process:** in progress in the planning department. Evaluating all local and County roads within the County, then ranking and prioritizing the assets for vulnerability and critical importance.

Midtown Linear Park (Kingston): Construction is nearly completed on the 0.8 mile park connecting Kingston plaza to Cornell St in midtown Kingston. The trail is paved and the trees are planted.

Also, the trail on the O&W corridor between Washington and Hurley (parallel to Hurley avenue) is under design.

**Housing Smart Communities Program:** is being developed by the planning department this year. It is based on the State's Climate Smart Communities program and meant to encourage and incentivize planning conversations around development of housing and affordable housing. This is important in helping to navigate development discussions on or near environmentally sensitive areas and to determine areas that are agreed to be appropriate for development. There is also a connection to helping people relocate out of floodplains and other general resilience actions.

RC: We have had discussions about road salt lately in Gardiner. Is there any discussion about road salt at the County level?

AL: The County is moving to brining because it reduces the overall salt load. There should be a discussion of salt vs. grit use.

GP: There is a good publication the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies titled:

“Road Salt: the problem, the solution and how to get there”

<https://www.caryinstitute.org/news-insights/road-salt-problem-solution-and-how-get-there-report>

EH: Recommend looking at the Cary Institute document. Insurance considerations tend to trump everything when people consider the use of salt in residential and commercial settings. Humans are also a source of salt: a septic system can put salts into drinking water.

Also, it is difficult during melt periods because the salt hits the ecosystem all at once.

AL: another reference:

[https://wri.cals.cornell.edu/sites/wri.cals.cornell.edu/files/shared/documents/2019\\_Meierdiercks\\_Final.pdf](https://wri.cals.cornell.edu/sites/wri.cals.cornell.edu/files/shared/documents/2019_Meierdiercks_Final.pdf)

DH: The County highway garage nearby him in Shawangunk uses a blend of salt and grit.

## **Old Business**

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None

**New Business**

None

**Legislature Report – Energy & Environment Committee**

DH: No committee meeting last month.

Tracey Bartels is Chair of the legislature.

Does anyone want to be appointed from the EMC to the recycling oversight committee?  
Representative to the ROC is currently Margot Becker, but she should attend meetings of the EMC to report. DH will send more information about the requirements.

**Council Member Roundabout**

City of Kingston Emilie Hauser	-City of Kingston is also doing community preservation. Received a \$50k grant and bids have gone out for a consultant. Planning for a referendum on the November ballot. -the City applied for a grant for stream monitoring at the tidal Rondout
Town of Gardiner Neil Rindlaub	-Kudos to RC who is wrapping up Gardiner’s NRI initiative with an interactive map. It has been presented to the Gardiner planning board and they seemed receptive. Updated comprehensive plan may recommend that the planning board use the NRI for decision making. -Working on a drinking water protection initiative. Hydrogeologist Steve Winkley is assisting with well data that will supplement the NRI maps. -Have applied to HREP for a stream monitoring project -starting a community preservation initiative. to use a real estate tax to preserve open land
Town of Olive Simon Strauss	-Had to depart the meeting early
Town of Esopus Mark Ellison	-Two new members to env. committee have been submitted to Town board -Setting 2022 goals and formalizing in February -Continuing with zoom meetings -Town board approved NY Stretch Code in December and received \$5,000 grant.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Water board is updating program which was last updated in 1987</li> <li>-Highest priority this year is installing charging stations</li> </ul>
Town of Shawangunk Dave Haldeman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Planning dept. is near approval of a 2<sup>nd</sup> solar installation. The CAC is involved in discussions with the planning department.</li> <li>-Working on charging station installations with the town</li> </ul>
Town of Saugerties Mary O Donnell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Received notification from NYSERDA that the community solar campaign was approved and they will receive a \$5,000 grant</li> <li>-Also evaluating the NY Stretch Code, recommended last year but it was put on hold.</li> <li>-Also working on Tree City USA designation</li> <li>-Also contacted by Mountainkeeper to consider pursuing the B City designation</li> <li>-The Winston Farm development is a major issue under discussion with the town and CAC</li> <li>-The Climate Action plan calls for an Annual Report; currently working on the annual report for 2021, expecting completion by March.</li> </ul>
Town of Hurley Kristin Schara	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Applied for grant funding for an NRI but was not funded</li> <li>-Town is looking into West Hurley private water system that is not providing good service</li> <li>-Climate Smart task force completed Solarize campaign in the summer and received a \$5,000 action grant – to be used for energy audits at town buildings.</li> <li>-Q: on rail trail section from Kingston to Hurley, will there be a connection to Hurley avenue? AL: There is an area that is close to the road near the Trailways garage. Will double check and let KS know</li> </ul>
At Large Jim Mays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Nothing to report</li> </ul>
Town of Wawarsing Sarah Underhill (comments emailed separately)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The "Somerset" enterprise planning to take over the old Nevele Hotel complex and turn it into a housing development with a hotel and restaurant. Open Space is working with the group to manage the area where the Rail Trail crosses the property. Water use is a concern as the town has promised it will provide all the water the development needs.</li> <li>- Cresco, the major manufacturer who is working towards building a large indoor operation to produce medical grade cannabis, on the site of the old Shrade knife factory. Riverkeeper has brought up some concerns about water use and effluent coming out of the proposed factory.</li> </ul>

**Extra Discussion**

DH: the speaker for next month is Judith Enck, prior administrator for the EPA, and founder of Beyond Plastics.

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DH: Elections for the EMC will be discussed in February. Please make any nominations for positions of Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary.

AL: Dept. of the Environment is reviewing the draft 303(d) list on water quality impairment in Ulster County. The deadline for comment has been extended until the 15<sup>th</sup> of February. NYS DEC updates the 303(d) list every two years.

**Date of Next Meeting**

February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2022.

**Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 8:28 pm by unanimous consent.