

**ULSTER COUNTY
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

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



Meeting Minutes

Regular Monthly Meeting *June 29th, 6:30 PM*

Via Zoom

“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 **6:37 p.m.** by David Haldeman, Chair.

Municipal Members Present (5)	Dave Haldemann (Shawangunk) Emilie Hauser (Kingston) Mary O’Donnell (Saugerties, T) Mark Ellison (Esopus) Simon Strauss (Olive) Neil Rindlaub (Gardiner) Sarah Underhill (Wawarsing)
At-Large Members Present (3)	Bill More Jim Mays Roberta Clements
Ulster County Staff	Nick Hvozda, Department of the Environment Amanda LaValle, Planning Department
Guests	

A link to the meeting agenda can be found here:

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

Introduction of Speaker/Presentation

McCrea Burnham, Catskill Coordinator, NYSDEC presented on the state of tourism in the Catskills.

A recording of the meeting is available at the following link:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Pmwi77lrcthc7rP52vOw4XqmcA8P9SIK/view?usp=sharing>

Question and answers:

First question was about accessibility (mobility restrictions (both ambulatory and wheelchair))

Answer: Use trail system evaluations and publicly address items such as number of barriers, what trail surface is, elevation change etc. to allow individuals to make decisions for themselves about whether or not an area is safe for them to venture on. New trails are trying to be more sustainably built which will allow for increased accessibility. Not many stairs/railings.

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Next question was about survey from DEC that was mainly filled out by NYC folk but not the major hunters, fishers, and typical park goers that live in the counties that the Catskills sit in.

Answer: There was website, press release, and social media announcements. Local federations and hunting groups were not notified directly which was most likely a mistake because they have a different view of overuse problems. Potential overuse problem solutions include increased dumpsters and trash receptacles, improve bathroom facilities, and possibly move to a reservation system.

Next question was about DEC plans for Ashokan High Point.

Answer: Unfortunately, the speaker has not heard of any information pertaining to Ashokan High Point from colleagues so no answer was given but can possibly be obtained in the future.

Next question was about snow mobiles and tree cuttings, as well as private property owner restrictions.

Answer: There was a court decision about forest preserve lands that have changed rules for trail maintenance and management near private properties over the past few years.

Next question was about signage.

Answer: Will be marking new trails especially if the DEC sees desired routes and improve kiosks. Also trying to work with public to improve trail processes.

Final question was about rail trails.

Answer: It has been realized they are heavily used, but they are an opportunity to get a lot of people out for usage and public engagement. Rail trails can be a point of struggle between newcomers and hunters.

Announcements

None

Discussion/Approval of Minutes

The Department of the Environment will continue supporting the EMC with written minutes that summarize meetings. (Written minutes preferred over recording links)

It could be a student at SUNY New Paltz who attends to take minutes.

Motion to approve May 25th minutes - **APPROVED**

Motion to approve April 27th minutes - **APPROVED**

Department of the Environment Update

- Opened by talking about EMC membership, as many members terms will end within the next few months.
- Talked about finding a new space for in person EMC meetings because virtual meetings may no longer be supported by County in near future.
- Climate Smart Summit – August 29th at the Rosendale Rec Center
- Several grant opportunities are open:
The DEC standalone grant opportunities are here: <https://cfaresources.ny.gov/standalone-cfa-programs>
The Municipal Zero-emission Vehicle (ZEV) Program is on this page:
<https://www.dec.ny.gov/energy/109181.html>
Partners for Climate Action Hudson Valley - Ecological Restoration Grants
<https://www.climateactionhv.org/initiatives/eco-grants>
- The UC Natural Resources Inventory project is kicking off next month. There will be stakeholder outreach to the EMC in the fall.

Planning Department Update

- Received almost four million dollars in DOT funding for UND corridor
- Moving ahead with stream management plan for Lower Esopus
- Transportation and climate vulnerability work that will go hand in hand with DoE NRI work

New Business

- EMC has been asked to review the County's Open Space Plan, to see how it has evolved since 2007, before it is given to the Energy and Environment Committee.
- July 11th, 7pm at Gardiner Library there is a symposium on trail signage
- Ulster County green living expo at the County Fair this year
- Third Thursday Environmental Seminar Series: July 21st on zoom talk about birding and August 18th Mike D'Arcy from DoE will talk about backyard composting

Energy and Environmental Committee News

- Dave Haldeman was appointed to the Recycling Oversight Committee
- Support has been given for Climate Action Council scoping plan
- Mike D'Arcy spoke about food waste and green businesses

Next Meeting

- The next meeting will be held on July 27th
- There will be no meeting in August due to the Climate Smart Summit on Monday, August

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29th

- Emilie Hauser will preside over the July meeting as Dave Haldeman will be out of town.
- The meeting location is to be determined

Council Member Roundabout

City of Kingston Emilie Hauser	-Rezoning to form-based code -the code recommendations ask for screening of EV charging stations, the group discussed the implications of this requirement -Community preservation plan in work -Draft scoping plan is/was due on July 1 st
Town of Esopus Mark Ellison	-Conducted a Repair Café for the first time. Planning to host it every other month. -Monitoring of endangered plant species at Sleightburg park -Currently working with supervisor about CSC goals -Greenway grant for signage on 3 waterfront parks
Town of Marbletown Eric Stewart	-Energy coaching sessions hosted by Tom Konrad and associates -Attempting to increase permit fees for A/C units that are not heat pumps -Marbletown is planning to participate in future EV parades
Town of Saugerties Mary O Donnell	-CAC made recommendation to prohibit zoning change to allow a car wash in a protected aquifer area -2 nd recommendation to the town board: any large parcel would have at least 50% maintained as open space -Currently harvesting milfoil -Subcommittee working on tree city USA certification -Received CEC points grant for \$10,000. Will be used to install LED lights at the town hall -Received \$5000 CEC action grant – will be used for energy efficient appliances at senior center
Town of Olive Simon Strauss	-3 rd Thursday environmental seminar series -Home energy efficiency seminar had over 20 attendees -Town has received grant to determine and select one or more critical environmental areas -Conducted energy audits of town buildings and town will implement
Town of Wawarsing Sarah Underhill	-Officially bronze level in the CSC program -Obtained a grant to improve the rail trail between Ellenville and the prison -Sam’s Point State Park has an online reservation system this year as a pilot project

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Town of Gardiner Neil Rindlaub	-Struggling with ridge protection with proposed projects because of a cell tower and a subdivision -The community preservation plan has been approved by the town board -Community preservation fund will be voted upon in November, for real estate tax on property sales over the County median
Roberta Clements	No updates
Bill More	No updates
Jim Mays	No updates

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:36 pm by unanimous consent.