



**TOMPKINS
COUNTY
PLANNING
DEPARTMENT**

The Tompkins County EMC has seats for all local municipalities. The following seats are currently filled:

- City of Ithaca
- Town of Caroline
- Town of Danby
- Town of Dryden
- Town of Groton
- Town of Ithaca
- Town of Ulysses
- Village of Dryden
- Village of Cayuga Heights
- Village of Freeville
- Village of Lansing

Vacant seats currently exist for the towns of Enfield, Newfield and Lansing, as well as the Villages of Groton and Trumansburg.

In addition, the EMC can have 12 at-large voting seats. Non-voting associate members also serve on the Council, and vote on EMC committees.

From the County Planning Department, Scott Doyle, Senior Planner, serves as the EMC staff coordinator. Other support includes an administrative assistant who takes minutes and coordinates recruitment. For most of 2015, Jennifer Turner was the administrative assistant. The County also appoints a Legislative liaison.

Guests are often invited to give special reports and presentations on environmental topics.

2015 Annual Report

Environmental Management Council

Brief history of the EMC

The Tompkins County Environmental Management Council – the EMC – was created in 1971 by a resolution of the County Board of Representatives. The EMC was founded to act as an advisory body to the County Legislature on matters affecting the natural features of the county regarding:

- Use,
- Development, and
- Preservation.

The EMC was tasked with: identifying problems, proposing

priorities, and coordinating activities in the development and management of our natural resources.

It also provides a public forum for discussing issues related to the natural environment in Tompkins County.

The EMC reports directly to the County Legislature's Planning, Development and Environmental Quality Committee (PDEQ). TC Planning Department staff and equipment are utilized to help support the EMC.

In 2015, Stephen Nicholson served as Chair for the fifth consecutive year. He's the primary liaison between the EMC and the County Legislature. Brian Eden, John Dennis and Carolyn Peterson served as Vice Chairs.

County Legislator Dan Klein served as the legislative liaison to the EMC in 2015.

EMC members are appointed by the County Legislature to serve two-year terms. Currently, there are 16 voting members.



2015 Membership Roster

Officers:

Stephen Nicholson, Chair
John Dennis, Vice Chair
Brian Eden, Vice Chair
Carolyn, Peterson, Vice Chair

Municipality Members:

Steve Bissen, Town of Dryden
Diana Bryant, Town of Newfield
Ben Carver, Village of Trumansburg
John Dennis, Village of Lansing

Brian Eden, Village of Cayuga Heights
Bill Evans, Town of Danby
Pegi Ficken, Town of Groton
John Hertzler, Town of Ulysses
Vladimir Micic, Town of Ithaca
Stephen Nicholson, Town of Caroline
Tom Shelley, Ithaca CAC
Linda Spielman, Village of Dryden

Ron Szymanski, Village of Freeville

Associate Members:

Spring Buck, At-Large
Kenny Christianson, At-Large
Karen Edelstein, Associate Member (UNA)
Peter Harriott, Associate Member
Daniel Kopcow, At-Large
Dooley Kiefer, Associate Member
Dan Klein, Legislature Liaison

Jim McGarry, At-Large
Carolyn Peterson, At-Large
Susan Riley, At-Large
Margaret Soulstein, At-Large
Gary Stewart, At-Large
Roger Yonkin, At-Large

TCPD Staff:

Scott Doyle, EMC Coordinator
Jennifer Turner, Administrative Assistant

2015 Presentations and Discussions

- Unique Natural Areas:** The UNA Committee sent out 400 postcards to landowners affected by recent UNA designations or modifications.
- Honey Bees:** EMC members attended a presentation on "Honey Bees: Colony Collapse Disorder and the Importance of Wild Bees in Crop Pollination," presented by Cornell University entomologist Bryan Danforth.
- Environmental Toxins:** Walter Hang, founder of Toxics Targeting, a company that studies environmental toxins, gave a presentation on toxic waste contamination in the environment and its risk public health.
- Waste Reduction and Recycling:** The EMC heard a presentation by Kat McCarthy on current waste reduction and recycling efforts in Tompkins County.
- Cayuga Lake Water Treatment Facility Tour:** EMC members toured the Bolton Point Water Treatment Facility, led by Michael Newman from the Southern Cayuga Lake Intermunicipal Water Commission, and Joan Foot, general manager of the Bolton Point Water System.
- Deer Nuisance:** Cornell University's Bernd Blossey is working to resolve deer nuisance problems in City and Town of Ithaca, working with the Conservation Board.
- Clean Air:** Irene Weiser, Town of Caroline Board Member, gave a presentation called "Clearing the Air: Myths and Facts about the Cayuga Power Plant."
- County Energy Roadmap:** Katie Borgella, TC Planning Department Deputy Commissioner, presented the Energy Roadmap outlining the county's comprehensive plan of action on how to meet energy demands and reduction goals.
- Lake Modeling Update:** Liz Moran gave a report on the Cayuga Lake Modeling Project and its research into lake water use required by the state for Cornell's proposed Lake Source Cooling Project.
- Medical Waste Disposal:** Ed Gottlieb gave a report on the importance of safe disposal of pharmaceuticals and medical waste, both legal and illegal, to protect the community.

The EMC's monthly meetings provided a forum for a variety of guest speakers to come and present on regional topics concerning the environment.

The EMC hosted a state environmental conference in October 2015, that welcomed 58 attendees from 16 NYS counties to Ithaca, NY.



EMC Hosted a State-Wide Environmental Conference

The 2015 New York State Conference on the Environment was held in Ithaca at the Tompkins County Public Library on October 16 -17, 2015, and it was hosted by the Tompkins County Environmental Management Council and sponsored by the New York State Associations of Environmental Management Councils and Conservation Commissions.

This annual conference gave attendees a chance to hear about the most recent issues and solutions in environmental stewardship, protection of natural resources, and climate change mitiga-

tion with a focus on the accomplishments of the Tompkins County region.

Friday morning, October 16, featured a panel with seven presentations on “Access to Renewable Energy Technologies: Implementation Strategies.” The afternoon session included a track on pest and deer management strategies and a track on stormwater management and the Cayuga Lake Watershed.

The two keynote speakers were David Wolfe, PhD, in the school of Integrative Plant Science on Challenges

and Opportunities for Building Climate-Smart Communities, Farms, and Landscapes in New York; and Tony Ingraffea, nationally known professor of civil and environmental engineering, who presented: “Is A Rapid Transition to Renewable Energy in New York State Possible?” at the evening dinner at Coltivare.

Saturday morning brought board meetings of the New York State Associations of Environmental Management Councils and Conservation Commissions.

There were 58 registered attendees from 16 counties. Attendees included 11 members of Conservation Advisory Councils and Boards, 23 EMC members, and 5 municipal officials.

Eight volunteers from the Tompkins County EMC were also in attendance.

The conference was determined to be a great success by all attendees.

For more information on the NYSAEMC conference, go to: <http://www.nysaccny.org/2015-conference-on-the-environment>.

Environmental Review Committee Report

An annual report of a committee reporting to the Tompkins County Environmental Management Council

2015 Environmental Review Committee Annual Report
Members: John Dennis, Chair, Brian Eden, Pegi Ficken, Dooley Kiefer, Carolyn Peterson, Tom Shelley, Roger Yonkin

The Committee provided comments on the proposed major subdivision for Lake Forest Circle in the Town of Lansing. Our comments expressed concerns for excessive erosion on this steeply sloped development during grading, installation of roads/driveways, and removal of mature vegetation as well as the adequacy of the stormwater management plan.

The Assistant Attorney for the City of Ithaca reported that the City intended to enforce the law against firearm discharges in the City. This will mitigate the conflict between recreational uses of the trails and waterways and waterfowl hunting. Appropriate signage was posted at Stewart Park.

The Committee expressed concerns that some invasive species continue to be sold locally to unsuspecting consumers. It was also noted that some plants treated with neonicotinoids that are toxic to honey bees have

been sold at local big box retailers.

The Committee continued its discussions with the Airport Manager with regard to their handling of propylene glycol. As a result of ERC suggestions on-site improvements were made to the treatment facility and recovered deicing fluids are now treated at the Ithaca Area Waste Water Treatment Facility rather than shipped to a Watertown facility.

The ERC commented to the Tompkins County Department of Health on the proposed Asbury Road Morgan Duplex apartment development in the Town of Dryden. Given the number of units on this small parcel there was concern that the septic system would be located in too close proximity to the groundwater well.

A major item of interest for the Committee was the pro-

tection of Cayuga Lake water quality. DEC has not fined Cargill for periodic exceedances of its SPDES permit for releases of chloride and free cyanide into Cayuga Lake. The Committee decided that follow-up

investigations were warranted.

Brian and John presented a program to the Water Resources Council on the Mitigation and Remediation of Coal Combustion Residuals at

the Cayuga Power Plant. The WRC offered to write a letter of support for our concerns. The ERC sent a letter to the NYSDEC opposing the extension of Cayuga Power's SPDES permit without a full technical review and a public hearing. The ERC requested that Tompkins County support NYS Legislation to ban the

sale of cosmetic products containing microbeads. Studies found microbeads present in Cayuga Lake. The Committee wrote letters to our NYS Senators requesting their support.

The EMC adopted Resolution 2015-02: Recommending that the Tompkins County Legislature Adopt a Pesticide Use Reduction Local Law. Many pesticides currently in use in the United States have been identified as adversely affecting the reproductive, nervous, immune, endocrine, and metabolic systems. A presentation was provided to the County's Planning Energy and Environment Committee. County Planning indicated a willingness to convene a stakeholder interest group to discuss next steps.

The ERC informed the Tompkins County Legislature regarding risks to Seneca Lake and to ecotourism as a result of proposed expansion of natural gas storage at Seneca Lake by a Houston-based firm, Crestwood Equity Partners. The Legislature subsequently became one of 32 counties and municipalities adopting resolutions opposing the expansion of gas storage facilities at Seneca Lake.

A major item of interest for the Committee was the protection of Cayuga Lake water quality.

Resolutions Passed in 2015

- **Geothermal Tax Credit – EMC RESOLUTION 01 – 2015**

Requesting the Tompkins County Legislature to review NYS Assembly bill A.2177-A amending the NYS Tax Law to establish a tax credit for the purchase and installation of geothermal energy systems and to urge the adoption of such law if deemed appropriate. The resolution was approved with 10 in favor and 1 against.

- **Pesticide Use Reduction Local Law –**

Brian Eden moved RESOLUTION 02-2015: Recommending that the Tompkins County Legislature adopt a pesticide use reduction local law, seconded by Pegi Ficken. The resolution was approved unanimously.

- **Coal Ash Landfill Contamination –**

Brian Eden reported on RESOLUTION 03-2015 that was present-

ed at the previous meeting. He noted the various edits that were made, and that the intent of the resolution was to enter into a discussion with the delegates to try to resolve for the potential

issues with the Cayuga Power Plant. RESOLUTION 03-2015 was unanimously approved to include friendly amendments by a vote of all voting members.

- **Approval of Salmon Creek Boundary Revision – Steve Nicholson**

moved RESOLUTION 04-2015 to expand the Salmon Creek Woods UNA by an increase of 1,282% as previously discussed, seconded by Tom Shelley. Members discussed changing the name of the UNA, and

ultimately decided against it with the possibility for discussion at a later date. RESOLUTION 04-2015 was approved by a vote of 11-1, with one abstention.



A stand of pine trees after a blow-down.

2015 Energy Committee Annual Report

Members: Brian Eden, Chair, Kenny Christianson, John Hertzler, Peter Harriott, Dooley Kiefer Jose Lozano, Ron Szymanski

Adopted EMC Resolution

2015-01: Requesting the Tompkins County Legislature to review NYS Assembly bill A.2177-A amending the NYS Tax Law to establish a tax credit for the purchase and installation of geothermal energy systems and to urge the adoption of such law if deemed appropriate. The Tompkins County Legislature unanimously supported this request. Subsequently both the NYS Senate and Assembly also adopted this provision unanimously but Governor Cuomo vetoed it in November.

Adopted EMC Resolution

2015-03: Requesting the Tompkins County Legislature Undertake Specific Measures to Address Environmental Contamination Associated with Cayuga Operating Company's Coal Combustion Residuals Landfill in the Town of Lansing. EMC presented on this issue on several occasions at the Planning, Energy, and Environmental Quality (PEEQ) meetings.

NYS Association of Environmental Management Councils: 2015 Conference on the Environment hosted by the Tompkins County EMC in Ithaca in October.

Six energy-related presentations were held at the Conference pursuant to the theme Expanding Access to Renewable Energy

Technologies: Implementation Strategies; Energy and Equity, Solar for All: New York's Community Shared Renewables Program, Developing a Solar Energy Cooperative Project in Tompkins County, Seal the Cracks Campaign: Finger Lakes Climate Fund, Tompkins County Energy Roadmap: A Vision for Achieving an 80% Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction by 2050, Building and Heating with the Climate in Mind: Alternatives to Expanding Fossil Fuel Infrastructure, and the HeatSmart Tompkins Program.

EMC provided testimony at public hearings conducted by the NYS Public Service Commission on the "Reforming the Energy Vision" proceeding (14-M-0101). Track One explored the role of distribution utilities in enabling system-wide efficiencies and market-based deployment of DER and load management. The first track also considered the role of the incumbent electric utilities and whether they should serve as the Distributed System Platform Providers (DSPP), the entity that would manage and coordinate DER, as well as wholesale market issues and opportunities for customer

engagement. Track Two addressed the regulatory changes and ratemaking issues that would be necessary to implement the REV vision and related utility business models. Both hearings were held in Binghamton, the first in

February and the second in November.

The EMC provided comments on several proposed new construction projects in the City of Ithaca urging the incorporation of demand management measures to ensure that such buildings would achieve high standards for energy performance.

We encouraged the City to adopt planning tools to support its Energy Action Plan adopted in January 2013 such as stricter local energy conservation codes which are permitted by state law.

The EMC wrote the Mayor of the City of Ithaca urging him to include funding in the FY 2016 Budget to employ a full-time Sustainability Planner with expertise in high energy performing buildings.

The EMC also urged developers to strive to adopt energy efficiency measures in their buildings. We met with the

architects and engineers engaged in the design of the buildings for the Tompkins Financial Headquarters, Campus Advantage State Street Project, and the Dewitt House.

The EMC participated in the Building and Heating with the Climate in Mind presentation which was provided to a wide range of local audiences and venues such as the Common Council Chambers, Cornell University, and the Hotel Ithaca.

The EMC sponsored a program on the Energy Roadmap.

The EMC with many other local organizations provided comments to the Tompkins County Legislature following the COP 21 meetings in Paris, urging them to recommit themselves to aggressive efforts to achieve the County's greenhouse gas emission reduction goals.

The EMC met with Iberdrola staff to provide programmatic suggestions for the development of its Community Energy Coordination program.

The EMC collaborated on public programs, document preparation, and local and statewide strategy meetings with many other organizations with whom we had shared purposes; Energy Roadmap Steering Committee, Solar Tompkins HeatSmart, Ratepayer and Community Intervenor, Coalition for Sustainable Economic Development, NY Renews, Energy Democracy Alliance, Fossil Free Tompkins, Green Education Legal Fund, and Campaign for Renewable Energy.

**The EMC
provided
testimony at
public hearings
conducted by the
NYS Public
Service
Commission on
the 'Reforming
the Energy Vision'**

**TOMPKINS
COUNTY
PLANNING
DEPARTMENT**

121 East Court Street
Ithaca, New York
14830 .

Phone:
607-274-5587

E-mail:
EMC@tompkins-co.org

Website:
www.tompkinscountyny.gov/emc

2015 UNA Report

Unique Natural Areas

Members: Steve Nicholson (Chair), Steven Bissen, Karen Edelstein, Brian Eden, Dooley Kiefer, Carolyn Peterson, Linda Spielman, David Weinstein, Robert Wesley.

Robert Wesley and Karen Edelstein continue to serve as consultants with funding provided by the County to assist with UNA Update efforts.

Activity of the UNA Committee in 2015 included:

- Prepared a budget requesting funds for an additional 33 property boundary revisions of UNA's, and allocated some of the funding to assess the Bell Station property as a possible new UNA.
- Representatives from Cornell presented their consultant's report on the proposed expansion of UNA-106(Sapsucker Woods). A field trip is planned in May.
- EMC Resolution 04-2015 was successfully introduced and passed to expand the Salmon Creek Woods UNA-2 by an increase of 1,282% in area.

- Reviewed the information presented by the Indian Creek Neighborhood Association concerning possible inclusion of the Biggs property as a UNA. The committee decided that the lack of biological diversity, not being contiguous to the nearest UNA, and it's small size, disqualifies the property as a UNA.
- The Planning Department sent out approximately 400 UNA landowner notification postcards in early December, and CD's were sent to all libraries and municipalities. This included a link to our interactive website that provides maps and information on the approved changes of the last two years. (<http://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/emc/educational-materials>). There were many favorable responses received from landowners.

In 2016, the committee will continue the revision process on an additional 30 or so UNA's, and decide if Bell Station qualifies for inclusion in the inventory. We will also resolve the boundary expansion proposal for the western lobe of Sapsucker Woods.



Pink Lady's Slipper

