



EMC News

March 6, 2002

Volume 9, No. 3

Chair's Report

I recently was on a panel discussion in Owego, where a number of people and organizations are hoping Tioga County will set up an EMC. According to several attendees, environmental issues are not discussed much at the county or municipal levels. While they were impressed with the work of our EMC, I was inspired by their desire to introduce environmental issues into the political and planning dialogues. I'll report more fully on this meeting at the March EMC meeting.

submitted by Susan Brock

Executive Committee Report

At February's EMC meeting, the Executive Committee was asked to review the revised Vital Communities Initiative principles. The Executive Committee has done so and recommends their endorsement by the full EMC. A draft resolution will be e-mailed to members before the March general meeting.

submitted by Susan Brock

Coordinator's Report

The 2002 Liaison slate was set at the February EMC meeting:

Water Resources Council: Dooley Kiefer

Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan: Kenny Christianson
Cornell Univ. Lake Source Cooling: Karen Edelstein (John Dennis, alt.)

Cornell U. Community Waste Management Advisory Committee: Kenny Christianson (Dooley Kiefer, alt.)

Intermunicipal Organization for Cayuga Lake Management Planning: Don Weir

Flood Hazard Mitigation Advisory Committee: Roger Yonkin

There is one Liaison vacancy. This is for the Ag & Farmland Protection Board (because Bill Lesser will not be here). Herb felt it is currently important because of the PDR study currently going on.

Congratulations to the new 2002 Vice Chairs!!! Elected at the February meeting were Karen Edelstein, Steve Nicholson, and Herb Engman.

Regarding EMC municipal appointments:

Don Weir has been officially appointed by the BOR. He will be able to vote at the 3/13 meeting. We have received copies of the resolutions passed by the T.Groton (for Tony Zachchowicz) and the T.Newfield (for Donna Jean Darling). Each of these EMC members has been mailed a BOR application to submit for 2002 membership. Once their

applications are received, they can officially be appointed by the BOR at their 3/19 or 4/9 meetings. They then will be eligible to vote at the April EMC meeting.

submitted by Tom Mank

Don't Forget!

March 13, 2002 - EMC Meeting

Education Committee

On March 5 Stephen Nicholson presented the ICLEI milestone trophy to the Tompkins County BOR, and thanked them for sending him to the Cities for Climate Protection workshop in Seattle. At the same meeting Gwen Fay presented the GHG Emission Inventory report, which was very well received. The next step will be to form a community based Ad Hoc task force to begin implementing an emission reduction strategy. Please contact Steve (scnfish@clarityconnect.com) if you are interested in participating. We will be meeting with the new CCE Environmental Educator, Monica Hargraves, to discuss current county activities and needs relating to environmental education.

submitted by Stephen Nicholson

Energy Committee

The EMC Energy Committee had its first meeting on February 26. We discussed Steve Nicholson's trip to Seattle for the ICLEI conference and what the next step should be in the ICLEI process for the county. We also explored areas where the county may improve energy efficiency and reduce energy use. We hope to establish an ad hoc committee of interested parties from the county. We discussed our review of the New York State Energy Plan. We will submit written public comments, which are due to NYSERDA by March 15.

An ICLEI presentation and comments about the ICLEI trip were provided to the county board at its March 5 meeting.

submitted by Kenny Christianson

Cornell Waste Management Committee - Liaison

The Cornell Waste Management Committee met on February 6 to discuss the proposals for constructing a new facility to handle medical and animal wastes from the Vet School. Currently, an incinerator is used for animal wastes, and regulated medical wastes are shipped, untreated, to a processor in Syracuse. Originally, Cornell had proposed building a new, larger incinerator. A group of interested citizens formed the Cornell-Community Waste Management

Advisory Committee, and convinced Cornell to look at alternative disposal methods. After extensive research, the group advocated for the use of an alkaline hydrolysis process, where the animal wastes are steam-treated, turned into a liquid soup, and sent to the wastewater treatment facility (WWTF) for disposal. Regulated medical wastes would be ground up, processed through an autoclave, and then landfilled.

Cornell held a public hearing on February 27 to introduce the DEIS. Two alternatives include shipping the waste through the sewer system for aerobic treatment at the WWTF, or truck transport to the WWTC so that the anaerobic digesters can be used to produce methane. The public comment period ends on April 19, when another public hearing will be held. A copy of the DEIS has been provided to the EMC for review.

submitted by Kenny Christianson

Environmental Review Committee

Five members of the ERC visited the wooded area at the eastern end of the Tompkins County Airport runway approaches in two separate groups on Friday, Feb. 15. A proposal stood to either selectively thin or “top” the trees in this wooded area in order to remove so-called obstructions to airport traffic.

The on-site inspection revealed several pertinent facts:

1. The imperiled area consists of approximately three acres of mature mixed hardwood trees with a relatively clear understory that is immediately adjacent to the Sapsucker Woods Sanctuary.
2. The boundary between this area and the sanctuary is, excepting a low, rusty wire fence and some signage, imperceptible from any distance. This area is by all appearances an integral part of the Sapsucker Woods Sanctuary habitat.
3. Locally unique to this area are more than a dozen large and very tall White Pine trees. These afford added diversity to this corner of the Sanctuary habitat and are irreplaceable due to the presence in this County of a beetle infestation that stunts White Pine growth.
4. A high voltage power line borders and parallels both the wooded area and the runway approach. This obstruction is nearly as tall as the tallest trees present.

Based on these observations we recommend the following:

1. No “obstruction removal” activity affecting these trees should be approved in this area. Given the presence of the power line obstruction we could find no rationale for felling or topping any tree that does not exceed the minimum flight clearance for the power line, absent relocation of the power line itself. It is nonsensical that these trees, far off to the side of the runway flight path, should present a greater hazard to navigation than the power line does.
2. The UNA 106 description in the “Unique Natural Areas Inventory of Tompkins County” states, under Special Conservation/Management Needs that “the site does not have an adequate protective barrier.” This piece of forest helps provide a buffer and should be retained without disturbance.

3. The UNA boundary (Unique Natural Area 106 – Sapsucker Woods Bird Sanctuary) should be amended to include this area.

submitted by Steve Uzmann

No Reports Submitted

Public Safety Communication System Committee Report
Pesticide Neighbor Notification Committee Report

Environmental Appreciation Days

Each spring since 1975, Tompkins County 4-H has sponsored a 3-day-long hands-on science program for local 4th, 5th, and 6th graders. The program, known as Environmental Appreciation Days, is run largely through the teaching efforts of volunteers, many of who are Cornell students and staff. And they have a blast participating!!

How can you fit into this program?

Volunteer for 1, 2, or all 3 days. Come up with one coherent 50-minute long, interactive lesson that can be presented outdoors. Kids in groups of about 15-20 will rotate through 3 separate lessons in the course of the program, given by you, as well as 2 other presenters, so you will teach your lesson 3 times in one day. You can teach alone or with a few friends, on the subject of your choosing, as long as it relates to the environment or natural history.

When?

Environmental Appreciation Days take place May 3 (Cornell students note: this is the last day of classes) and MAY 6 and MAY 7. Plan on setting up at 8:30 AM, teaching your lesson 3 times, and packing up and leaving by 1:30.

Where?

Lessons are usually taught in beautiful settings at local state parks, as well as at a few elementary schools.

Do you prefer to work more "behind the scenes?"

If you want to be involved in this program, but don't feel up to teaching a lesson, you can still help out! We are also looking for people to be site coordinators. This task involves keeping the program at each site on schedule, and making sure the lesson rotations go smoothly.

Want more information and an application?

Check out our web page, at <http://www.cce.cornell.edu/tompkins/ead/index.htm>. In addition, lesson plans and ideas from past years can be found on reserve with NatRes 201 reserve readings in Mann Library.

Is there a DEADLINE for sign-ups?

YES!! We will need lesson plan descriptions by March 11, so don't put this one off. Check out that web site NOW!!

Feel free to contact a live person for more information....

Tim Stetter, Tompkins County Cooperative Extension 272-2292, tss251@cornell.edu OR Joann Gruttadaurio, Plant Sciences Extension Associate, 255-1792, jg17@cornell.edu OR Karen Edelstein, Environmental Educator, kle2@cornell.edu