



EMC News

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OPEN BURNING PRESENTATION

Submitted by Steve Nicholson

Chris Neurath will speak to us about the health effects of open burning at our March meeting. Chris works with the American Environmental Health Studies Project [<http://americanhealthstudies.org/>], is a member of the Great Lakes Binational Toxics Strategy Dioxin/Burn Barrel work group [<http://www.openburning.org/>], and also manages the web site [www.BurnBarrel.org/].

LAKE SOURCE COOLING PANEL DISCUSSION

The Tompkins County Water Resources Council (WRC) will host a panel discussion on Lake Source Cooling on Monday, March 21st at 4:15 PM in the Borg Warner Room of the Tompkins County Public Library. The panel will answer the WRC's questions about LSC and its permit. The WRC plans to take this information into consideration with other information about trends in the lake to issue a formal comment about LSC's requested monitoring reduction in the context of the broader monitoring needs for the southern end of the Lake.

WEBSITE COMMITTEE REPORT

Submitted by Keith Epstein

The website committee has begun designing a new website for the Tompkins County EMC. Our new website will serve as a central location for Tompkins County legislators, EMC members, and the public to learn about what we have accomplished and what we are currently working on. Some of the planned sections include: information about our current projects, EMC purpose and history, EMC events, and useful links. Documents that the EMC has created including educational materials and resolutions will be posted, and there will be room for each committee to post information relevant to its projects as well. If you have suggestions for the website, please let us know.

ENERGY COMMITTEE REPORT

Submitted by Kenny Christianson

The EMC Energy Committee met on February 7, 2005. The chair was not able to attend due to personal reasons, but here is a brief summary of the discussions.

Members of the committee reported that:

- (1) The energy audit from Johnson Controls is nearing completion.
- (2) The Tompkins County Public Library has been submitted to join the EPA Green Power Partner Program. Power Partners must generate at least 6% of their energy from renewable sources.
- (3) The costs of purchasing up to 3% of the county's energy needs from wind power will be less than expected. There is not enough money in the budget to purchase the entire amount this year. We may pursue purchasing a portion.
- (4) The library Solar Panels produced 119,480 kWh in 2004, down from 125,385 kWh in 2003.
- (5) There is a new interactive kiosk concerning the solar panels at the library.
- (6) Possible committee projects for the year include the Ten Percent Challenge, implementing the Local Action Plan, Earth Day and Ithaca Festival, and developing a sample wind tower ordinance for municipalities.

The next meeting of the energy committee will be on Monday, March 14 at 4:30 in the Old Jail small conference room.

MUNICIPAL REPORT – TOWN OF DANBY

Submitted by Bob Roe

Current issues in Danby:

By far the major issue in town is the revision of zoning regulations in relation to the 2003 comprehensive plan. Recommendations submitted by a Citizen Taskforce were submitted to both the Town Board and the Planning Board. After review the Planning Board requested major revisions in the proposed changes of the regulation of open space in the town. Many of the changes appear to be driven by county interests rather than representing local initiatives. A joint working session of the boards has been requested.

The Town remains interested in an aquifer study and is seeking ways to initiate such a project.

more News! 

(Current issues in Danby Continued)

The proposed Danby Town Park has finalized its land configuration and is moving forward on more site-specific planning and development.

The Planning Board failed to endorse the current County Comprehensive Plan. Outstanding issues include lack of input by rural communities whose combined representation at the county level fails to insure that their interests will not be overridden or ignored by the interests of the City of Ithaca.

UNA 106 BOUNDARIES QUESTIONED

Submitted by Steve Nicholson

In a meeting with representatives from the EMC, Town of Ithaca, County Planning, and the Lab of Ornithology, a developer presented plans to build 12 new lots on the southern tip of UNA 106. This adjoins the Lab of Ornithology wildlife refuge. Included would be a donation of 10 acres or so of wetlands to the Lab of O. A request was made to redraw the boundaries of UNA 106 so that the proposed subdivision would be outside of the UNA. The developer feels that it was a mistake to include 3 acres of swamp listed on the National Wetlands Inventory, and bordered by vacant open space with an intermittent stream. I told them my understanding was that the EMC had not carefully and thoughtfully designated UNA 106, or any other UNA for that matter, only to have it whittled away at the convenience of a developer. If the central wetland in question is valuable enough to be given to the Lab of O, why isn't it valuable enough to not develop in the first place? If we are to adequately preserve open space for future generations, when do we begin to take a stand? I say, the EMC's UNA's are a very good starting point, and were not intended to be the only land in the county set aside as environmental assets.

. . . ADDENDUM TO ABOVE

Submitted by Heather Filiberto

The developer agreed to submit a formal, written request to the EMC to remove the portion of the UNA boundary that was developed on during the 1990s, and the proposed new development area. The developer conducted on-site delineations of the wetland and other environmental features that will be included in the request. It was understood from the meeting that the EMC will take this request into consideration, along with other requests that have been received in the past, at such a time that a protocol for modifying the UNA Inventory is in place or during the next update.

KEEPING SCORE

Submitted by Karen Edelstein

A fascinating look at how media and human preferences for leisure time can shape the use of our natural resources.

Matters of Scale: March/ April 2004
Planet Golf

Number of photos in the January/February issue of Coastal Living that showed coastal wildlife (seabirds, crustaceans, turtles, or other fauna) 1.
Number of photos in the same issue showing golf courses 61

Amount of water it would take, per day, to support 4.7 billion people at the UN daily minimum 2.5 billion gallons
Amount of water used, per day, to irrigate the worlds golf courses 2.5 billion gallons

Number of golf courses in Japan before World War II 23
Number in operation or soon to open in 2004 3,030

Average amount of pesticides used per acre, per year, on golf courses 18.0 pounds
Average amount of pesticides used, per acre, per year, in agriculture 2.7 pounds

Amount of water used by 60,000 villagers in Thailand, on average, per day 6,500 cubic meters
Amount of water used by one golf course in Thailand, on average, per day 6,500 cubic meters

Current area of the wetlands of the Colorado River Delta, which now receives just 0.1 percent of the river water that once flowed through it 150,000 acres

Area that could be covered to a depth of 2 feet with water drawn from the Colorado River by the city of Las Vegas, which uses much of that allotment to water its more than 60 golf courses 150,000 acres

Sources: Photos: Coastal Living, January/February 2004; Water usage: Chris Reuther, Know Your Environment, Academy of Natural Sciences, 1999; National Golf Foundation; State of the World 2004; Japan: Japan Golfcourses and Deforestation, TED Case #282, 2003; Pesticides: EcoMall: A Greener Golf Course, 2004; Thailand: U.K. Sports Turf Research Institute; Colorado River: Environmental Defense; Las Vegas: Associated Press.

See you at the next EMC meeting!
March 9th at 7:00pm