

**EMC Minutes**  
**March 12 4:00 p.m.**  
**Via Zoom**

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**Attendance**

Member		Seat	Member		Seat
Dan Antonioli	A	At-Large	Susan Riley	P	At-Large
Steve Bissen	P	Town of Dryden	Barry Siebe	P	Town of Groton
Christine Collins	P	Town of Ulysses	Brian Wendel	P	At-Large
Cait Darfler	P	At-Large	Kathleen Yen	P	At-Large
Edward Dubovi	P	Town of Lansing	Elaine Tietjen	P	At-Large
Ace Dufresne	P	Student 1	<i>Adam Vinson</i>	E	<i>Legislative Liaison</i>
Thomas Hirasuna	P	At-Large	<i>Karen Edelstein</i>	A	<i>Associate</i>
Siobhan Hull	E	City of Ithaca	<i>David Weinstein</i>	A	<i>Associate</i>
Pete Loucks	E	Town of Ithaca	<i>Robert Wesley</i>	A	<i>Associate</i>
Peter McDonald	P	Town of Danby	<i>Jack Zinda</i>	A	<i>Associate</i>
Melissa Millsbaugh	E	Town of Enfield	Darby Kiley	P	Tompkins Co. staff
Steve Nicholson	E	Town of Caroline	Kristin McCarthy	E	Tompkins Co. staff

5 **Guests:** Irene Weiser

6 **Call to Order** – Chair Cait Darfler called the meeting to order at 4:00pm.

7 **Approval of Minutes** – The February 2026 draft meeting minutes were approved (motion by Barry  
8 Siebe, second by Susan Riley) as submitted.

9 **Committee Updates**

10 Executive -- Cait reported on the latest PEEQ meeting, noting that the Department of Recycling and  
11 Materials Management now reports to the Facilities and Infrastructure Committee. Additionally, she  
12 shared a look-ahead calendar for upcoming EMC meetings: April will feature a Finger Lakes Land Trust  
13 presentation on land conservation, May an in-person meeting with area CACs, June a Legislative Affairs  
14 Committee working session, and July a presentation from the Town of Danby on conservation  
15 easements. The draft 2025 annual report is under review, and members were encouraged to take  
16 photographs at future events and meetings for EMC outreach materials.

17 Legislative – Kathleen presented a meeting observation checklist template and a bill tracker listing state-  
18 level environmental legislation, noting that much activity is on hold pending the state budget. Chris  
19 provided an update on the Water Resources Council, which is focused on organizational matters and  
20 developing a 2026 work plan including updating the County Water Quality Strategy. Ed raised the issue  
21 of decommissioning bonds for large structures like data centers, noting that without proactive planning  
22 localities risk inheriting abandoned sites. Barry noted that Groton has already incorporated solar  
23 decommissioning bond requirements into its ordinance and offered to share the language.

24 Unique Natural Areas –Elaine shared that Robert Wesley of Cornell Botanic Gardens will lead a public  
25 field trip on Saturday, May 9, to the O.D. von Engeln UNA in Dryden. The trip is capped at 25  
26 participants, with EMC members given first priority. Members wishing to attend were asked to raise

27 their hand or send an email to the group. Confirmed attendees include Brian Wendel, Steve Bissen,  
28 Kathleen Yen, and Elaine Tietjen. A time is still to be determined and will be communicated via email.

### 29 **Outreach Committee Focus**

30 Elaine led a working session on behalf of the Outreach Committee, covering three primary topics:

#### 31 **Earth Day Tabling – Ithaca Commons, Saturday April 18**

32 Several members confirmed they can staff the EMC table at the Earth Day festival. Proposed materials  
33 include UNA maps, an updated Green Scene subscription flyer with QR code, and an EMC brochure.  
34 Peter suggested a dot-sticker polling activity asking attendees to identify their top environmental  
35 priorities, which was well received as a way to drive engagement and gather community input.

#### 36 **Green Scene Newsletter**

37 The Green Scene currently has just under 300 subscribers. Strategies discussed for growing readership  
38 included distributing a subscription blurb through partner organizations, reaching out to local news  
39 outlets, and leveraging informal networks. Group agreed that an early fall campaign may be optimal for  
40 a broader push to recruit new subscribers and members.

#### 41 **Legislative-Outreach Committee Connection**

42 Elaine raised the question of how the Legislative Affairs Committee might regularly feed content to the  
43 Outreach Committee for publication in the Green Scene—such as bill updates, legislative alerts, or calls  
44 to action. The Legislative Affairs Committee was asked to begin thinking about this connection ahead of  
45 the June working session.

#### 46 **Legislative Liaison Update (as needed)**

47 Irene reported on state budget negotiations, noting concern over proposed weakening of the CLCPA.  
48 She also flagged an opportunity to resubmit the EMC's unanimous resolution supporting a statewide  
49 ban on spreading PFAS-containing biosolids on farmland during the active legislative session. Two  
50 resolutions on energy affordability and climate change are expected before the full County Legislature  
51 on the 19th, and members were encouraged to attend and speak in support.

#### 52 **Municipal Representative Updates (as needed)**

53 Ed reported on the Town of Lansing's rezoning process, with a public presentation scheduled for March  
54 25 at Town Hall. He also noted that a data center proposal by TeraWulf is moving through the Lansing  
55 Planning Board, with a formal site plan and public hearings expected in the coming months. Steve B.  
56 noted that development activity on two Dryden parcels containing Unique Natural Areas appears to be  
57 on pause.

#### 58 **Member Announcements**

59 Cait shared news about the establishment of Three Falls State Park on the former Camp Barton site, a  
60 collaborative effort with the Town of Covert. She also invited everyone to attend the Town of Ulysses  
61 Earth Day on May 2.

#### 62 **Adjournment** – Chair Cait Darfler adjourned the meeting at 5:30pm.

63 The UNA (Unique Natural Areas) committee has been working on a second letter to send to the  
64 developers of Trillium Farm. Steve Nicholson mentioned they had hoped to introduce the letter to the  
65 full EMC at this meeting, but on the very day of the meeting, the Town of Dryden posted the developer's

66 new plans on their website — a 22-page document — so the committee needed to go back and read  
67 through those before finalizing the letter.

68 The target deadline for the letter was a Town of Dryden planning board meeting around April 20th  
69 (described as "the third week in April"). Steve Bissen also noted that Trillium Farm Woods had been  
70 added to the town board's agenda for that same evening (the night of the recorded meeting), though  
71 neither Steve could attend. Cait asked someone from the UNA committee to notify Robert Wesley and  
72 others so someone could potentially show up. Susan Riley then mentioned that the Town of Dryden has  
73 a YouTube channel and would likely record the meeting for later viewing.

74 The place is also referred to as "Trillium Woods" at one point alongside "Trillium Farm." There's no  
75 developer name given — they're just referred to as "the developers of Trillium Farm.

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