



# Schuyler County Environmental Management Council

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105 Ninth Street, Unit 39  
Watkins Glen, NY 14891

Phone: 607-535-8211  
Fax: 607-535-8193

## MINUTES

Wednesday, January 8 ~ 6:30 p.m.

**I. 6:34 pm - Call to Order and Attendance – Confirmation of Quorum.**

**In attendance:**

Gita Devi; Martha Hawksworth; Anne Secord; Kate Bartholomew; Mary Hayes; Mike Bergen, Planning Commission; Joann Lindstrom, Staff.

non-EMC members: Janet Thigpen (Southern Tier Central Regional Planning & Development Board) and Kristina Hansen (Hector resident)

Excused: Michael Lausell, Jessica Verringi

**II. Public Comments – none, but we went around the room and introduced ourselves**

**III. Approval of Mins**

**A. November 2024**

Motion to approve: Mike

2<sup>nd</sup>: Gita and all approved

**IV. Election of Officers**

**Chair: Kate Bartholomew**

Mike made motion, Martha 2<sup>nd</sup> and all approved

**Vice-Chair: Mike Bergen**

Gita made motion, Anne 2<sup>nd</sup> and all approved

**Secretary: Gita Devi and Martha Hawksworth**

Kate made motion, Mike 2<sup>nd</sup> and all approved

**V. Chair and Staff Report**

**a. DEC Environmental Notice Bulletin**

Kate gave an overview. There is nothing related to Schuyler County in this ENB. Several state projects are still open to public comments ending in February. Kate will email a link to those projects.

No update on the Padua Ridge Project from the DEC at this time.

## **VI. Old Business**

### **a. 2024 Membership vacancies (Towns of Catharine, Cayuta, Orange & Student Rep)**

General consensus was that Cayuta will not be represented. Mary will check with her son about potential members in Catharine, Kate will check for Orange and with the school about getting students reps. Joann said she got an email from the school looking for speakers for their agricultural class.

### **b. 2025 Goals & follow up discussion from Liv Lovejoy's visit in November**

**Janet Thigpen, Flood Mitigation Specialist, with the Southern Tier Central Regional Planning & Development Board gave us a comprehensive presentation via slide show of their current and future map plans and gave us a hand-out to share with our local town board/supervisor. Highlights:**

- Get funding to help committees draft a land-use development plan
- Tell her how we can be of help
- What can be done to ameliorate flood plain damages
- She handed out a questionnaire asking about each town's floodplain development regulations, zoning, land use regulations, and asking what other data would be helpful for the towns to have included in future maps. She asked us to get this form filled out and return to her. She went over all items included in the form.
- FEMA scheduling a new flood mapping project for Schuyler County next month.
- Handed out several older maps to show us what they look like.
- Talked about the need to show 100' buffers around lakes and streams and said these will show up on the new maps.
- New maps can help towns/counties to require new regulations.
- Her focus is on safety issues
- Her organization can provide maps specific to a town's needs
- She had previously done a presentation on steep slopes issues and Joanne will share this with the EMC.

Discussion after the presentation included Anne suggesting that Janet present this to the Town Boards as most members of the EMC are not qualified to answer the questions on the form. Janet concurred and asked us to share the form with our local town Boards, Code Enforcement Officers. Gita asked where to have the forms sent to and Janet handed out her business card. Janet said she is willing to present to any Town Boards/Supervisors who are interested.

- a. Anne suggested that we apply for a grant for a Comprehensive Plan and Joann said this is only happening in-house.
- b. Anne suggested that we apply for a grant for a Natural Resources -Climate Smart County study. Joann will ask about this.
- c. Kate said she would like to be involved in an advisory role for the Comprehensive Plan as Chair of EMC.
- d. Recommended that we attend any public meetings and make suggestions at that time.
- e. Student enrollment discussed. Michael had previously said he would be working on this.
- f. Need to update the Natural Assets Inventory

c. **Review of Town of Hector Natural Resources Inventory**

Portions of the Gregoire's document could be included. The By-Laws need to be updated. Discussion ensued. Lots more needs to be done, updated. We need experts to help so a grant would be very useful. Could we enlist Cornell or CCE resources?

**VII. New Business, Committee and Member Reports**

- a. **Countywide Comprehensive Plan update** underway. The advisory committee met yesterday and will continue working on this during the next 12 months.
- b. **Countywide Housing Study** beginning next week – being approved this Monday. Discussion on where are the needs/demands. The state is passing a law where counties can charge taxes on short-term rentals.

**VIII. Schedule 2025 Meetings**

It was decided that we should meet every other month rather than quarterly since we now have more items on our to-do list. We will meet on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday. Next meeting will be March 19<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm.

**IX. 8 p.m. - Adjournment**

Motion to Adjourn: Gita  
2<sup>nd</sup>: Martha and all approved.



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## Minutes – March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025 ~ 6:30 p.m.

### I. Call to Order at 6:30 pm by Kate and Attendance – Confirmation of Quorum.

Gita Devi, Kate Bartholomew, Martha Hawksworth, Joann Lindstrom, Michael Lausell, Emma Malnoske, Mary Hayes

**Excused:** Mike Bergen

**Absent:** Anne Secord, Jessica Verrigni

**Public:** Kris Hansen

### II. Public Comments – Kris Hansen indicated she was pleased with the council

### III. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from January 2025 were reviewed, no changes made. Gita made a motion to approve, and Mary seconded the motion. All approved.

### IV. Chair and Staff Report

**A. ENB Review** – Kate looked at the DEC environmental notice bulletin. The website has changed, and it is more difficult to navigate. We missed the comment period for a U.S. Salt title 5 air permit renewal.

**B. Comment letters**- no new news regarding Padua Ridge

### V. Old Business

**A. 2024 membership vacancies** – We still have vacancies for the towns of Catherine, Cayuta, and Orange as well as a student representative. Michael will follow up with Amy about a student representative. Emma also emailed the school and spoke with a contact in the school who surmised that this may be a busy time of year for students. It may be easier to recruit a student at the beginning of the year.

**B. 2025 Goals & Follow-up discussion from Liv Lovejoy's visit in November** – Reviewed the minutes from this meeting and discussed that a large item that the council would like to focus on from that was the Natural Resources Inventory. There was discussion regarding whether the council would complete the Natural Resources Inventory or write a grant to outsource the project. The grant would be due in June for the state consolidated funding application. Joann needs to first get approval from the legislature as the county would need to contribute 20% if we are able to get the 80% grant. Joann will try to address CDNR next week and if not at the next CDNR meeting in April. In the meantime, Joann will research comparable studies to have an estimated cost.

**C. Countywide Comprehensive plan** – Joann reported that the county is performing a survey as part of the plan. Currently, Watkins Glen has a survey published for their comprehensive plan. The county survey for the comprehensive plan will be published in May.

**D. Countywide Housing Study.** Joann reported the survey for this study is currently being conducted.

## **VI. New Business, Committee, and Member Reports**

- A. **Discussion of grant for countywide Natural Resources Inventory**-Joann will begin exploring other natural resources inventories to help develop a grant and submit to the legislature a proposal for the writing the grant.
- B. **Member reports**- Gita commented on the smart meters that NYSEG has changed in most houses and wondering if this will impact the housing study? How will the raising costs of utilities affect housing? Emma reported that Montour Falls and Hector are holding their second repair café.
- C. **2025 terms expiring**  
Kate, Martha, and Gita are all on their last terms. There was a discussion regarding petitioning the legislature to increase the number of terms. Joann will mention this to the legislature.

**Adjournment** Motion to Adjourn at 7:20 pm: Gita 2<sup>nd</sup>: Mary - All approved.

**Next Meeting – Wednesday May 21, 2025.**



# Schuyler County Environmental Management Council

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## Minutes – June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025 ~ 6:30 p.m.

- I. Call to Order at 6:30 pm by Kate and Attendance – Confirmation of Quorum.**  
Kate Bartholomew, Martha Hawksworth, Joann Lindstrom, Michael Lausell, Mary Hayes. There was no quorum.  
**Excused:** Anne Secord, Jessica Verrigni, Gita Devi  
**Absent:** Mike Bergen  
**Public:** Kris Hansen, Liv Lovejoy (Southern Tier Central), Emma Malnoske & Marcus Zerbey (Village of Montour Falls)
- II. Public Comments** – Kris Hansen asked if the gravel mine permit had been approved for Padua Ridge and if the public had access to the Village of Burdett Wastewater Feasibility Study. Emma reported that the Village of Montour Falls has been assigned a forester by the DEC. They will be starting a tree inventory on municipal properties.
- III. Approval of Minutes**  
The minutes from March 2025 were reviewed, no comments. They could not be approved due to lack of quorum.
- IV. Chair and Staff Report**
  - A. ENB Review** – Kate reported that the Padua Ridge Final Environmental Impact Statement has been accepted by the DEC. Michael reported that the Mayor of Watkins Glen was considering sending a letter stating that the village is still opposed to the expansion. A discussion regarding how reclamation plan guidelines are enforced ensued.
  - B. Town of Hector- Village of Burdett Wastewater Feasibility Study-** Joann reported that the report is completed and has been submitted to the wastewater committee for review. In short, the report examined the feasibility of either connecting to the existing wastewater treatment plant or building a new plant.
  - C. Schuyler Scenic Byway-**Joann reported that the Scenic Byway nonprofit board met and is proposing an expansion of the Schuyler Scenic Byway along the west side of Seneca Lake. They are currently writing a Corridor Management Plan.
  - D. Additional reports-** Kate reported that the NYS Assembly struggled to move forward many environmental bills in comparison to the NYS Senate.
- V. Old Business**
  - A. 2024 membership vacancies** – We still have vacancies for the Towns of Catherine, Cayuta, and Orange as well as student representative. The council will wait until school is back in session in the fall to recruit a new student representative.

- B. 2025 Goals & Follow-up discussion from Liv Lovejoy's visit in November –**  
Liv discussed that they are looking to conduct a regional greenhouse gas inventory. While they are hoping to inventory all 3 counties in their region, they are also looking to work with individual townships and communities. Conducting a greenhouse gas inventory can count towards participation in the climate smart program. The year they are using for the inventory is 2023. Liv discussed how the data they use to calculate the inventory. emission study.
- C. Countywide Natural Resources Inventory –** Joann demonstrated the Chemung County Natural Resources Inventory website that is a StoryMap. There was discussion that if Schuyler County chooses to digitize their natural resources inventory, the council could help select the sections to be part of the map.

## **VI. New Business, Committee, and Member Reports**

- A. Kate reported that the Sierra Club attempted to push a sewage/sludge spreading ban in the state legislature. While this ban did not move forward in the state, the Sierra Club has moved to work towards developing a ban in individual counties. A discussion ensued regarding how sewage sludge is handled at the local wastewater treatment facility.
- B. Joann reported that on July 22<sup>nd</sup> at 6 pm there will be a live and virtual recycling education event at the county building. The goal of the event is to educate the community about recycling options and answer recycling questions.
- C. Joann reported that the terms will not expire in 2025. Members can serve 4 terms.

**Adjournment** Martha made a motion to Adjourn at 7:38 pm: Mary 2<sup>nd</sup>. - All approved.

**Next Meeting – July 16th, 2025 at 6:30pm**



# Schuyler County Environmental Management Council

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## Minutes Wednesday, August 20, 2025 ~ 6:30 p.m.

### I. **6:30 pm - Call to Order and Attendance – Confirmation of Quorum**

Gita Devi, Mike Bergen, Mary Hayes, Kate Bartholomew, Emma Malnoske, Michael Lausell, Anne Secord  
Excused: Martha Hawksworth, Joann Lindstrom, Jessica Verigni  
Public: Kristina Hansen – Town of Dix

### II. **Public Comments -**

It was requested that an agenda be sent to all EMC members prior to the meeting. Gita had contacted Joann in order to prepare the minutes so she was able to provide this to Mike Bergen as he chaired the meeting.

### III. **Approval of Mins of June 2025**

- a. Motion to accept: Michael Lausell  
2nd: Mary Hayes  
All approved

### IV. **Chair and Staff Report**

#### • **DEC Environmental Notice Bulletin (Kate)**

Kate said it is getting harder to get access to the ENB, but she presented 3 items for discussion:

1. Cayuta Transfer Station at the Cayuta County line for a solid waste permit. Comments were due by Aug. 29<sup>th</sup>.
2. Village of Watkins Glen – Waterside Town Houses on Seneca. Discussion about how this could impact the environment. Everyone agreed that more information is needed on what is exactly planned for this housing project.
3. It's Greener Now (Padua Ridge project) had its permit approved. Discussion ensued.

#### • **Town of Hector Village of Burdett Wastewater Feasibility Study (Joann)** **Per Joann, the study report is complete and will be posted to websites within the next week.**

During the discussion it was noted that there will be an initial fee per household (\$4K ?) and then a monthly fee for public sewerage. Ann said there is a meeting scheduled for October 15<sup>th</sup>, 7-8 pm, at the Hector Firehouse that will address the scope of the project and any issues the public has.

### V. **Old Business**

- a. **2024 Membership vacancies** (Towns of Catharine, Cayuta, Orange & Student Rep)  
Mary will ask her sons about possible members, Emma will check about a student

- rep. Deb Albro, from Cayuta, was mentioned as a possible member.
- b. **2025 Goals & follow up discussion from Liv Lovejoy's visit in November** – no discussion on this.
  - c. **Countywide Natural Resources Inventory - Planning Dept can create a Story Map of this if the EMC will write/update the most recent one from the 1980s**  
Mary will investigate. Kate will look for the old map. Suggested that we talk with John and Sue Gregoire (Kestrel Haven) as they track eagles and kestrels. Elaine Dalrymple was also mentioned as she monitors local eagles' nests. Kate asked if the freshwater sponge is still appearing in the Cayuga Outlet.
  - d. Emma said that **a garbage/recycling program for Montour Falls (village and town) is being discussed.** Would contract with Greenleaf. Pick-up would be weekly vs. monthly. The DPW would pick up and residents would pay a fee. They had a public meeting on July 31<sup>st</sup> that was well attended.
  - e. **2026 New Member / By-laws revision** – no discussion other than what was already said above.

## VI. **New Business, Committee and Member Reports**

- 1. **Wind Park in Cayutaville?** – Mike said that Rockwell, a Texas-based company, is in charge of the wind turbine project.
- 2. **Next Meeting: Natural Resources Inventory**
- 3. **Discussion of the need for affordable housing in the county – Michael said the study is complete. The village of Montour got a forward grant of 4.5 million in 2023. The mayor will be looking into affordable housing.** The only item of notice is that a dentist's office is coming to town. Would the former Shepherd Niles be converted into housing? Kate noted that would require extensive renovations.
- 4. Mary asked if anyone had information about **the eColi problem in Seneca Lake** and what could be causing this: Sewage/Treatment Plant, Grape fields violations, Excess rainfall, thermal pollution from Greenidge. Short discussion.

- ## VII. **Adjournment 7:15 pm**
- Motion to adjourn: Gita**  
**2<sup>nd</sup>: Michael Lausell and all approved.**



# Schuyler County Environmental Management Council

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## AGENDA - Wednesday, October 8, 2025 ~ 6:30 p.m.

### I. 6:05 pm - Call to Order and Attendance – Confirmation of Quorum

**Members:** Gita Devi, Michael Bergen, Kate Bartholomew, Martha Hawksworth, Anne Secord, Joann Lindstrom, Michael Lausell

**Public:** Kristina Hansen, Liv Lovejoy – STC

**Excused:** Emma Malnoske, Mary Hayes, Jessica Verrigni

### II. Public Comments - none

### III. Approval of August 2025 Minutes

a. 2 changes were requested. Kristina represents the town of Hector, not Dix and the last sentence in the Town of Hector, Village of Burdett discussion should be removed. Gita will make the changes and email updated minutes to EMC members.

Motion to approve: Gita

2<sup>nd</sup>: Mike and all approved

### IV. Chair and Staff Reports

a. DEC Environmental Notice Bulletin (Kate)

Kate handed out “Village of Watkins Glen – State Park Ailanthus Management” paper and discussion ensued. This concerns the spotted lantern fly and how to best deal with it. Plans are to remove mature Trees of Heaven as it is a major food source for the fly. Kate wants to know what type of herbicide will be used to treat the stumps

b. Joann said the Housing consultants have submitted a final report. She will email us the final **Comprehensive Plan** flyer. These meetings, both in-person and online are scheduled and she will email us the dates/locations tomorrow.

Oct. 20 – Zoom

Oct 22 – Town of Reading @ 6 pm – public water district discussion starts at 7pm

Oct 28 – Burdett @ 6 pm at the new Firehouse

### V. Old Business

a. **2024 Membership vacancies** (Towns of Catharine, Cayuta, Orange & Student Rep)

No updates on town vacancies. Michael Lausell will no longer be a legislator

next year but we all welcomed him to continue to attend our EMC meetings.

- b. **Countywide Natural Resources Inventory** – Liv provided an in-depth overview of the status of this project. Rich, the GIS person, is willing to do a story map. Joann will send out a word doc to us. Anne raised issues with the content of the Inventory as being too expansive for most people to understand and/or apply. Hector has done one and she will share it. It was done by an outside vendor. Liv said the STC may be able to help financially/grant-wise and provide with some free consultation but the towns/counties would have to provide a 50% match for the NRI. Discussion of how to proceed with this. Joann said Rich could work on this with creating layered maps based on DEC data. We would supply him with background information, photos for the story map. Perhaps a grant could be gotten later to more fully fill out the information. The town of Ithaca is already doing something like this now.

The difference between an Open Space Inventory and a Natural Resource Inventory was discussed.

Liv provided information on her current projects and the methodology being used to map wetlands. Check out the Chemung County 'story map' at: [www.chemungcountyny.gov/198/Chemung-County-Natural-Resources-Map.com](http://www.chemungcountyny.gov/198/Chemung-County-Natural-Resources-Map.com) and [www.data.ny.gov](http://www.data.ny.gov)

- c. **Set meeting dates for 2026** – It was agreed that the EMC will meet quarterly (January, April, July and October) on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m.

## VI. **New Business, Committee and Member Reports**

**HABS** - Discussion of how to deal with HABS in the lakes and how to best notify the public of their danger based on an email from Mary Hayes who could not attend the meeting. The group discussed if signage could be posted alerting people of the danger of HAB outbreaks and how to recognize them. Kate said perhaps we could partner with Seneca Lake Pure Waters Association as they do notify members, via text, of outbreaks.

### **Sustainable Finger lakes Neighborhood Mini-Grants (\$150 - \$750)**

Liv said Schuyler County should submit something as it's a pilot program, Application is due 10/17! She provided more information on the types of projects to consider and what has been done in the past.

- Hector is submitting one for \$350.00 for a community garden
- Towns or County can not apply, but individual groups can. Liv said she would check if the EMC might be viable. We could approach schools, non-profits and local environmental groups to see if they'd want to apply for a grant.

- applications should be emailed to [sasha@sustainablefingerlakes.org](mailto:sasha@sustainablefingerlakes.org) or mailed to Sustainable Finger Lakes, 309 N. Aurora St., Ithaca, NY 14850. Call 607.272.1720 with questions.

**Repair Cafes** – short discussion on how successful they have been and more are planned for the future.

**NYSEG Rate Hikes** – Kate said rates are going up \$30/month per customer for both electric and natural gas. She will email us with more information about upcoming hearings.

**Moratorium on sewage sludge, PFAS contamination of agricultural fields and water.** – Discussion ensued on how to address this. Suggestion:  
- Martha suggested the EMC should write a letter and submit to the County Legislature in January when new members have been sworn in. Kate volunteered to write the letter. Several towns, but no counties, in New York State have already passed laws prohibiting the practice.

**Discussion on impact of Crypto**

**Adjournment**

**7:50 pm** - Motion to Adjourn: Martha  
2<sup>nd</sup>:Mike and all approved.