



DRAFT MINUTES
Public Awareness and
Communications Committee
September 14, 2012
Agency Meeting
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PUBLIC AWARENESS AND COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE
September 14, 2012

The Public Awareness and Communications Committee convened at 10:35 am.

Public Awareness and Communications Committee Members Present:

William Valentino (Committee Chair), Frank Mezzano, Sherman Craig

Not Present: Jen McCormick (DED) and Dierdre Scozzafava (DOS)

Other Members or Designees Present:

Lani Ulrich (Agency Chairwoman), William Thomas, Richard Booth, Arthur Lussi, and Robert Stegeman (DEC)

Agency Staff Present:

Terry Martino (Executive Director), Sarah Reynolds (Acting Counsel), Keith McKeever (Public Information Officer), Mary Palmer, Dan Kelleher (Special Assistant-Economic Affairs), Richard Weber (Deputy Director Regulatory Programs), Emily Tyner

Others Present:

Frederick Monroe (Executive Director, Local Government Review Board)

Committee Chair Mr. Valentino called the committee to order and introduced Dr. Jodi Ann Hilty, Director of the Wildlife Conservation Society's North America Program.

Dr. Hilty's presentation was on climate change case studies and their relevance to the Adirondacks. Presentation attached.

Chairwoman Ulrich asked for clarification about the movement of animals on the Albertine Rift in Africa. Dr. Hilty said that some of the species were actually moving up in elevation.

Bill Thomas asked how we should be looking at the span of time for climate change due to the differences of weather, for example one winter being mild and the next being severe. Chairwoman Ulrich added if the difference between weather and

climate is what we should be aware of as we are looking at big picture long term trends? Dr. Hilty said that you cannot really associate weather events, but scientists can show that increased extreme events such as the 100 year flood, are happening more frequently. When you look at averages, for example 50 year averages, you can see the climate is warming. Climate change does not mean you are just going to see warming, but you will see an increase in extreme events.

Robert Stegeman asked whether Invasive Species will now become a more common species? Dr. Hilty said that at some point there has to be a decision point on what species are going to be acceptable and we need to focus on saving the stage, giving extra help to some special species, and choosing what to manage.

Chairwoman Ulrich asked as an Environmental Organization, how do we lead the way in listening to science. Dr. Hilty said that we need to have the scientists come and give us the science to help us manage our resources better.

Sherman Craig asked what you can influence on Connectivity - animal and plant migration? Dr. Hilty said the key for establishing connectivity is for communities in those core habitat areas is to have an awareness. She said to work with private landowners, Land Trusts and Ranchers, to restore riparian quarters. Working to make humans and animals co-exist.

Richard Booth stated that we all underestimate how difficult it is to create change to be able to deal with something on a scale of global warming. And that countries need to be willing to work together to make changes. It has to be done on a national basis.

Dr. Hilty commented that the APA has a need and the opportunity to think about what role do you play in creating those changes in order to protect your resources? You can become a model and who do you partner with to make it possible?

Chairwoman Ulrich noted that the top three threats to the Adirondack Park are - Invasive Species, Acid Rain and Climate Change. She said the message has to continue to be out there over and over again if we find solutions to better protect this place.

Executive Director Terry Martino asked how do we counter the Anti-science rhetoric? Dr. Hilty said the easiest way is to just start a conversation with someone that is going through a

specific situation, such as the lack of water to irrigate fields, then once that conversation and trust builds you can either agree or agree to disagree.

Committee Chair Mr. Valentino stated that one of the problems with the climate summits and doubters is often people attribute the two 100 year floods that we had this year to climate change. And climate scientists would point out that they couldn't directly connect it. One of the things we can do is to not attribute every severe weather event to climate change. Our role here is adaptation and recognition of the problem, and linking it to things like invasive species.