



**MINUTES OF THE PARK ECOLOGY COMMITTEE MEETING
October 11, 2012**

Committee members in attendance included Agency Chairwoman Leilani Ulrich, Arthur Lussi, Cecil Wray, Designees Patrick Hooker, Department of Economic Development, and Robert Stegemann, Department of Environmental Conservation and Committee Chair Valentino. Members Frank Mezzano, William Thomas, Sherman Craig, Richard Booth and Designee Dierdre Scozzafava, Department of State joined the Committee. Also participating in the meeting was Executive Director Fred Monroe of the Local Government Review Board. Staff included Executive Director Terry Martino, Associate Counsel Sarah Reynolds, and Supervisor Natural Resource Analysis Daniel Spada.

The Committee meeting convened at approximately 2:00 p.m.

RASS Supervisor's Report (D. Spada)

Mr. Spada briefly reviewed the activity report for the RASS Division that was included in the mailing packet sent to the Board.

Vulnerability of At-Risk Species to Climate Change in New York

Matthew Schlesinger with the NYS Natural Heritage Program presented information on climate change and species which are considered to be most vulnerable to changes in weather and habitat.

Dr. Schlesinger indicated that there is evidence that there are poleward shifts of a wide range of taxonomic groups in response to regional warming. Temperature and precipitation are the two major factors that will be affected by climate change. It will be warmer, especially in Autumn, and wetter, especially in Winter. However, summer droughts and heat waves will be more common and pronounced, while winter will be wetter but less snowy. These changes are and will continue to occur regardless of what we do now to reduce our input of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Humans will have to adapt to or mitigate the changes. Stopping emissions now and reducing greenhouse gas emissions are one way to mitigate additional and growing impacts. Dr. Schlesinger also provided five ways to adapt to the coming changes in order of desirability and feasibility including: increasing connectivity, include climate change in planning exercises, mitigate other threats (habitat loss and fragmentation, invasive species, pollution), conduct research on species responses, and translocate species.

Dr. Schlesinger concluded his presentation with the following management recommendations: maintain and restore connectivity,

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especially aquatic; be willing to let go of some species; preparing for long-term monitoring is critical to test vulnerability hypotheses, detect changes in distributions, abundance, phenology and detect unanticipated changes.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:30 p.m.