



LEILANI CRAFTS ULRICH
Chairwoman

TERRY MARTINO
Executive Director

Draft Minutes
Park Ecology Committee
November 2015 Agency Meeting
November 25, 2015

**MINUTES OF THE PARK ECOLOGY COMMITTEE MEETING
November 12, 2015**

The Committee meeting convened at approximately 3:30 p.m.

Park Ecology Committee Members Present

Arthur Lussi, Acting Chair, Daniel Wilt, Bradley Austin, Robert Stegemann.

Other Members and Designees Present

Lani Ulrich, Karen Feldman, Sherman Craig, Richard Booth, Dierdre Scozzafava, William Thomas.

Local Government Review Board

Fred Monroe.

Agency Staff Present

Terry Martino, James Townsend, Ed Snizek.

Approval of Draft Committee Minutes for October 2015

A motion to approve the draft committee minutes was made by Mr. Wilt and was seconded by Mr. Austin. All were in favor.

Review of EPA Grant Phase II Wetlands Project (Steve Langdon)

Mr. Snizek introduced Steve Langdon and the work he has done in developing a monitoring program for detecting climate change. This is a final update on the second phase of the EPA Grant entitled "Detecting Climate Change in Wetlands in the Adirondack Park." He noted that the EPA fund has provided nearly \$3 million to the Agency to improve wetland mapping and data collection. The APA Lookup System with its regulatory wetlands maps are an example of the improvements made with the EPA funds.

Mr. Langdon discussed the Phase I project background and objectives to identify vulnerable wetlands, develop protocols to develop reference conditions, and develop protocols to monitor phenology of important climate change indicators.

Mr. Langdon then discussed the Phase II process undertaken in monitoring changes to vulnerable wetlands, the collection of phenological data used in monitoring changes, and the importance of the citizen science volunteer program to monitor and gather data.

Mr. Langdon noted that through his work, previously unknown rare peatland communities were discovered. These communities are the southern-most communities known to be in the northern hemisphere.

Mr. Langdon stated the next steps will include monitoring by citizen scientists, data analysis and integration, and publishing results.

Ms. Scozzafava asked what a citizen scientist is. Mr. Langdon responded that a citizen scientist is a volunteer trained by the project partners to help monitor and assess conditions and collect data.

Mr. Lussi asked why peatlands maintain low temperatures even on a hot 90 degree day. Mr. Langdon responded that the cold air sinks and the systems form in low parts of valleys. Sphagnum moss, the dominant plant in these systems, is an amazing insulator and is able to maintain the colder temperatures.

Mr. Booth asked how information is sorted out to determine whether impacts are caused by climate change or other factors. Mr. Langdon responded that a landscape condition assessment model with before and after data is utilized to determine sites with the least amount of human influence. The most pristine sites allow for determining direct effects of climate change.

At the conclusion of the presentation, Chairwoman Ulrich presented a plaque to Mr. Langdon which acknowledged his contributions to the Agency. She was joined by Executive Director Martino, Ed Snizek, and Committee Chairman Art Lussi in the recognition of his work.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:40 p.m.