



ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

TERRY MARTINO
Executive Director

MINUTES OF THE PARK ECOLOGY COMMITTEE MEETING

June 13, 2019

The Committee meeting convened at approximately 1:40 p.m.

Park Ecology Committee Members Present:

John Ernst, Chair, Dan Wilt, Bradley Austin (ESD), Art Lussi, Robert Stegemann (DEC)

Other Members and Designees Present:

Brad Austin Presiding Member, Dr. Chad Dawson, Lynn Mahoney (DOS), William Thomas

Local Government Review Board:

Gerald Delaney, Executive Director

Agency Staff Present:

Terry Martino, Christopher Cooper, Kathy Regan, Keith McKeever, Shaun LaLonde, Kate-Lyn Knight, Ariel Lynch, and Annemarie Peer

Approval of May 2019 Draft Minutes

The May draft minutes were approved on a motion by Art Lussi and seconded by Dan Wilt.

RASS Program Report (Kathy Regan)

Ms. Regan began by reporting that Mary O'Dell has just led a wetland delineation training for Agency and New York State Department of Conservation (DEC) staff, with additional trainings planned for New York State Department of Transportation (DOT) staff this summer.

Ms. Regan pointed out that RASS staff are extremely busy with the field season. She announced Invasive Species awareness week is July 7 through July 13 and that the North American Invasive Species Management

Association will hold its annual conference for the first time in the eastern United States, in Saratoga Springs, from September 30 through October 3, 2019. Some Agency staff will be participating.

Youth as Catalysts for Community Climate Action (Jen Kretser, Wild Center; Dazzle Ekblad, DEC; Patrick Murphy, Village of Saranac Lake; Cedar Young, Saranac Lake High School; Jason Leon, Village of Lake Placid; Anya Morgan, Ellen Lansing, and Elise Pierson, Lake Placid High School)

Ms. Kretser began with a welcome and an overview of the Youth Climate Program, discussing how it has grown considerably over the years. Youth Climate Summits are being offered throughout the world. The Program provides direction for students to develop Climate Action Plans for their schools. She gave examples of initiatives, such as carbon and energy audits of school campuses, compost programs, and solar panel installations. Another important aspect of the program is to enhance youth leadership skills. Ms. Kretser mentioned two Youth Climate Leadership retreats being offered this summer, one in New York City and a second in the Adirondacks.

Ms. Kretser introduced Dazzle Ekblad from the NYDEC Climate Action Program to discuss how youth are becoming involved in local government.

Ms. Ekblad presented on the New York State Climate Smart Communities (CSC) program which assists local governments. Climate Smart Communities is an outreach program that is voluntary, with no fees, and is sponsored by six state agencies. The goal of the program is to help communities reduce greenhouse emissions and build resiliency.

Ms. Ekblad reviewed the 10 climate smart pledge elements, which are seen as the back-bone of the program. The pledge elements primarily focus on energy and energy use.

Ms. Ekblad reviewed some CSC statistics: 262 communities are registered and 24 of those communities are currently certified. Benefits of the CSC include free technical assistance, guidance and tools, networking, leadership recognition, and funding. Ms. Ekblad also reviewed grants available from DEC and how the Youth Climate Summit became involved with CSC.

Following Ms. Ekblad's presentation, several local leaders and students discussed their roles in the CSC program.