



**[DRAFT] FEBRUARY MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, February 13, 2025**

Agency Members, Designees, and Executive Staff Present:

John Ernst	Chairperson (remotely)
Mark Hall	Member
Steve Hunt	Empire State Development
Art Lussi	Member
Ken Lynch	Member
Zoë Smith	Member
Matt Tebo	Department of State
Dan Wilt	Member
Joe Zalewski	Department of Environmental Conservation
Barbara Rice	Executive Director
Damion Stodola	Counsel

Absent and Excused

Benita Law-Diao Member

Local Government Review Board Present

Gerald Delaney, Sr. Executive Director

1. CALL TO ORDER

A quorum of board members being present in person, the meeting was called to order at approximately 9:46 AM and Matt Tebo, acting Chair, welcomed the public, presenters, and staff.

2. WELCOMING REMARKS

Acting Chair Matt Tebo welcomed the public to the February Agency meeting.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

The Acting Chair recognized Clay Arsenault, Supervisor for the Town of Long Lake and Chairman of the Hamilton County Board of Supervisors, who spoke in support of a public safety communications system in Hamilton County.

The Acting Chair recognized Brian Wells, Supervisor for the Town of Indian Lake, who spoke in support of a microwave-based system for an emergency services tower in Hamilton County.

The Acting Chair recognized Jackie Bowen, Director of Conservation at the Adirondack Council who expressed concern regarding the use of Other Power-Driven Mobility Devices in the forest preserve areas as proposed in amendments to the proposed State Land Master Plan.

The Acting Chair recognized Cathy Pedler, Director of Advocacy at the Adirondack Mountain Club, who expressed appreciation and support of the inclusion of accessibility measures in the proposed State Land Master Plan amendments but concern over the definition of Other Power-Driven Mobility Devices.

The Acting Chair recognized Dave Gibson of Adirondack Wild who endorsed comments made by Jackie Bowen and Cathy Pedler.

The Acting Chair recognized Lorraine Duval who expressed concern regarding Other Power-Driven Mobility Devices in wilderness areas and recommended a user study be done prior to any action being taken on the proposed amendments to the State Land Master Plan.

4. APPROVAL OF JANUARY 9, 2025 AGENCY MEETING MINUTES

On motion of Dan Wilt, seconded by Mark Hall, the January 9, 2025, minutes were unanimously approved without modification with Joe Zalewski abstaining.

5. RECUSALS

None

6. MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION

None

7. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Executive Director Barbara Rice presented the Executive Director Report, highlights of which included:

- Executive Director Rice noted that the Governor's proposed Fiscal Year 2026 Budget includes a \$1.6 million increase in operating budget, an increase in FTE levels to 59, and an additional capital budget of \$10 million for the Agency headquarters project.
- Executive Director Rice provided a presentation of the Agency's 2024 Annual Report, highlighting collaborative science-based approaches to decision making, and challenges being faced by Adirondack communities.

8. MOTION TO ADJOURN INTO COMMITTEES

On motion of Art Lussi, seconded by Zoë Smith, the Agency Board voted unanimously to adjourn to committees at approximately 10:30 AM.

Public Awareness and Communications Committee

The committee meeting convened at approximately 10:01 AM.

Committee Members Present: Mark Hall (Committee Chair), Steve Hunt (ESD), Dan Wilt.

Other Members and Designees Present: John Ernst, Art Lussi, Zoë Smith, Ken Lynch, Matt Tebo (DOS), Joe Zalewski (DEC), Steve Hunt (ESD)

Local Government Review Board: Gerald Delaney

Agency Staff Present: Barbara Rice, Damion Stodola, Keith McKeever, Ben Brosseau

Community Spotlight

Mark Hall, Committee Chair, introduced Ernest Witkowski, Supervisor for the Town of Waverly, and Cory Haynes, Town of Waverly Historian, to present the Community Spotlight for the Town of Waverly.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Committee adjourned at approximately 11:09 AM.

Park Ecology Committee

The committee meeting convened at approximately 11:13 AM

Committee Members: Zoë Smith (Committee Chair), Steve Hunt (ESD), Joe Zalewski (DEC)

Other Members and Designees Present: John Ernst, Mark Hall, Art Lussi, Ken Lynch, Matt Tebo (DOS), Dan Wilt

Local Government Review Board Present: Gerald Delaney

Agency Staff Present: Barb Rice, Damion Stodola, Dr. Elizabeth Schuyler, Aaron Ziemann

(1) RASS Division Report (Dr. Elizabeth Schuyler, APA)

Dr. Elizabeth Schuyler, Supervisor – Natural Resource Analysis, presented the Resource Analysis & Scientific Services (RASS) report, highlights of which included reflections on the progress, collaboration, and scientific advancement accomplished in 2024 by the RASS team.

- The team was able to complete 460 spatial determinations, 264 wetland site visits (by mostly 3 staff members), 1,246 wetland technical reviews, 74 site visits for engineering and 1,005 engineering technical reviews by a team of two.

- RASS staff worked with GIS to modernize the Agency’s GIS capabilities, integrating advanced mapping tools, remote sensing and data analytics to support sustainable land use and resource protection.
- The RASS team created an ArcGIS map tool to aid staff in identifying areas where solar energy development may be initially suitable by highlighting land cover with high carbon sequestration and storage value. This led o the development of a scientific approach to assess the impacts of forest conversion in the Adirondack Park.
- In 2024 RASS staff participated in numerous conferences, workshops and stakeholder meetings, sharing expertise and learning from partners across the state.
- Looking ahead into 2025, the team remains committed to advancing the Agency’s mission through rigorous scientific analysis, thoughtful policy recommendations, and continued collaboration with partners.

Herbicide Treatment of Invasive Milfoil in the Adirondacks: Assessing Outcomes and Success Metrics (Aaron Ziemann, APA)

Aaron Ziemann, Associate Adirondack Park Project Analyst, Forest Resources, presented an overview of post-treatment reports associated with eight Agency-permitted herbicide treatments to control Eurasian watermilfoil undertaken in 2024.

Getting My Feet Wet: An Internship Mapping Wetlands with the Adirondack Park Agency (Lydia Harvey, 2024 APA Intern)

Lydia Harvey, 2024 APA Intern, presented her master’s project research focusing mapping deep water marshes on six lakes in the Park during the summer of 2024 using GIS technology, boat-based surveys and field data collection. This work provided essential data for the Agency to guide land use planning, monitor ecological changes, and enhancing wetland conservation efforts.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Committee adjourned at approximately 11:50 AM.

The Board returned to Full Agency at approximately 11:51 AM

9. Committee Reports

9.1. Public Awareness and Communication (Mark Hall)

As part of the Community Spotlight series, the committee received a presentation from Town of Waverly Supervisor Ernest Witkowski and Town Historian Cory Haynes.

9.2. Park Ecology (Zoë Smith)

The committee received a RASS division report from supervisor Dr. Elizabeth Schuyler, a presentation on the outcomes of Agency-permitted herbicide treatments of Eurasian watermilfoil undertaken in 2024 from Associate Adirondack Park Project Analyst Aaron Ziemann, and a presentation from former APA intern Lydia Harvey who shared a portion of master's research compiled during her summer internship mapping deep water marshes in six lakes in the Adirondack Park.

10. Interim Reports

The Administration, Economic Affairs, Enforcement, Legal Affairs, Local Government Services, Park Policy and Planning, Park Ecology, Regulatory Programs, and State Lands committees did not meet this month.

G. Delaney followed up on the public comments presented by Supervisors in Hamilton County indicating that the exchange of information between applicants and the Agency is crucial and will increase efficiency of the process on both sides.

11. Member Comment

Dan Wilt noted that he believes the earlier public comments were referring to an emergency communications tower in Hamilton County, not a cell tower.

12. Old Business

None

13. New Business

None

14. Public Comment

None

[Link to video and audio recordings of the full Agency presentation to be added.]

Chairperson Ernst noted that the next meeting will be March 13 and 14, 2025.

The meeting was adjourned without objection at approximately 11:59 AM.

John Ernst, Chairperson