



St. Lawrence County Environmental Management Council

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Approved

MEETING MINUTES

June 15, 2011 7:00 PM

Room 226, County Courthouse, 48 Court Street

Canton, New York

Action items in bold italics

1. **Call to Order:** David Katz, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM. Since there were guests present, he reviewed procedures for public participation at EMC meetings.

2. **Roll Call, Determination of Quorum:** A quorum was present.

Members present included: A. Heidenreich, R. Horst, D. Howard, G. Johnson, D. Katz, D. O'Shea, J. Rosales, L. Rudiger, Scott Sutherland.

Members absent included: T. Cutter, D. Doe, B. Flavin, G. Hart, P. Skomsky, A. Soutar, B. Zimmerman.

Staff: J. Montan, J. Tenbusch.

Guests: Debbie Christie, St. Lawrence County Snowmobile Association; Judy Wendt, St. Lawrence County ATV Association; Greg Denny, John Gardner, another person, St. Lawrence Valley Sportsmen Club; John Barron, Tom Ortmeyer, Mark Simon, Adirondack Mountain Club – Laurentian Chapter; Mark Martin.

Press: None.

Hearings, Comments from the Public: D. Katz introduced Debbie Christie and Judy Wendt; Wendt made a presentation about the development of the SLC Recreational Trails Advisory Board. Interested persons made a proposal to the Board of Legislators 2002 that a multi-purpose trail system be established in the County; this proposal grew into the Recreational Trails Advisory Board. The BOL has established a 10-mile pilot multi-use trail system in Parishville; by all reports this trail is well-used.

In 2006, the group was awarded \$500,000 from Empire State Development to develop a combined ATV/ snowmobile trail system. The group hired a consultant in 2008 to develop the Generic Environmental Impact Statement for a proposed trail system; this GEIS is available for comment until August 17, 2011 at:

<http://www.co.st-lawrence.ny.us/Departments/HighwayDepartment/TrailDGEIS>

EMC: Everybody Must Care!

Wendt commented on general economic impacts of a multi-use trail system; she felt that an improved system would bring additional users to the County; these visitors could be expected to spend money here during their visits. Wendt noted that “A good trail system mitigates many dangers”, and that “Good planning and development will help to protect natural resources”. Wendt reported that in 2004 St. Lawrence County had the highest number of registered ATVs in the state. She noted that there has been an increase in the number of UTVs and side-by-side vehicles; she thought that these should be required to be registered, like ATVs . Wendt stated that multi-use trails allow access for older or handicapped persons to access the outdoors, and provide access to emergency vehicles.

Wendt then spoke about the need for a Trails Coordinator position in St. Lawrence County. She reported that this position was anticipated to cost approx. \$100,000 per year. An alternative might be to contract with an existing organization (Co. Chamber of Commerce) to employ such a Trails Coordinator. Wendt identified three phases of development that a coordinator for this multi-use trail system would be involved in: a.) to do outreach activity with stakeholders; b) to coordinate work on development of the trail system; c) marketing the trail system to outsiders.

Comments from EMC members and guests included:

- D. Howard reported that she has been working with the Recreational Trails Advisory Board, and that she supports providing a place and a means for ATVerers to recreate.
- S. Sutherland noted that he works with the Recreational Trails Advisory Board; he is ready to support a Trails Coordinator.
- An unidentified guest noted that ATVerers help to maintain roads and trails.
- J. Montan asked what remains to be done. Wendt replied that the group needs to work through the process with DEC.

Other persons made a variety of comments:

- John Gardner, Greg Daniels and an unidentified person from the St. Lawrence Valley Sportsmen Club spoke about their group’s efforts over the past 25 years to stock walleyes; they noted that such fish stocking brings tourists to the area, and that some stocking of northern pike is needed. They also reported that their organization will need some funding at some future date in order to continue their efforts. L. Rudiger noted that walleye populations in the St. Lawrence River had crashed before the Sportsmen Club began its stocking program; he asked if testing of fish fingerlings, required by NYS, might be done locally to save costs.
- John Barron, chair of the Laurentian Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club, stated that ADK promotes self-propelled use of the Adirondacks. He noted that, in general, the DGEIS for the recreational trail system was well done. He was glad that some trails have been designated for use by ATVs; he felt that the tone of the DGEIS was somewhat slanted in favor of ATVs. He submitted a letter from the Laurentian Chapter, and a letter from John Omohundro, coordinator for the Red Sandstone Trail in Potsdam.
- Tom Ortmeyer, with the Laurentian Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club, has worked with the Recreational Trail Advisory Board; he reported that he supports the idea of a cross-County trail for ATVs. He expressed concerns about mechanized use of feeder trails. He reported that next steps for the recreational trails project would include:

obtaining county permission to use some roads and forests; obtaining permissions from other landowners; obtaining DEC approvals for use of some state lands.

- Mark Martin of the St. Lawrence County Mountain Bike Association reported that he supports the overall DGEIS for the recreational trail. He expressed some concerns about trespass by ATVs, and about the “multi-use” designations; he felt that there needs to be better documentation of the types of users for trail segments. He submitted a letter from the Mountain Bike Association.
- Mark Simon, Stone Valley Trail Coordinator for the ADK, stated that the multi-use trail proposal does not adequately address conflicts between user groups, or the issue of ATV trespass. He felt that the issue of ATV trespass on the current pilot trail system should be studied. Simon distributed photos and a letter.

At the conclusion of these comments, Chair Katz called a brief recess. The meeting resumed at 8:38 PM.

4. **Acceptance of Order of Business, Items for New Business, Items for Unfinished Business:** D. O’Shea will have an item for New Business. The Order of Business was accepted by consensus.
 5. **Approval of the Minutes of the May 2011 Meeting:** The minutes of the May meeting were approved unanimously (A. Heidenreich / S. Sutherland).
 6. **Report by the Representative of the Board of Legislators (BOL):** Scott Sutherland reported:
 - Regarding County finances, the Board of Legislators is looking for additional information in order to make informed decisions about the County budget; he felt that the budget would be very hard to put together.
 - He noted that there had been some discussion among legislators about the proposed Climate Action Plan.
- Due to the late hour, EMC members agreed by consensus to not report on conversations with legislators, listen to committee meeting reports or staff reports**
7. **Reports by EMC Members on Conversations with County Legislators:** None.
 8. **Report of the Committees:** None
 9. **Report of the Staff:** None.
 10. **Unfinished Business:** None.
 11. **New Business:**
 - The EMC unanimously approve a motion (Rudiger/O’Shea) to support fish stocking opportunities.

- The EMC unanimously tabled (Rudiger/Howard) a request by Donald Hassig that the EMC sign on to a letter which states “Cancer Action NY worked with several other advocacy organizations to produce a sign-on letter, which advocates for POPs exposure reduction education awareness as a top priority in the 2011 NYS Comprehensive Cancer Control Plan. We are hopeful that as a result of the EMC’s awareness of the POPs health hazard, your organization will be willing to become a signatory to this letter.”
- D. O’Shea provided information about DEC activities regarding Emerald Ash Borers (EABs), Asian Longhorn Beetles (ALBs), and Giant Hogweed.

12. Announcements: None.

13. Message to Board of Legislators: EMC members agreed by consensus to talk to their assigned legislators about the adoption of the St. Lawrence County Climate Action Plan. Specifically, EMC members were asked to make the same five points that were included in the letter submitted to the BOL on June 2, 2011 by 58 signers, who stated that they “represent a broad group of academics from all four colleges in the county. Our training and professional opinion compel us to ask you to take this modest step toward addressing the most serious environmental problem of our time.”

The five points include:

- The Climate Action Plan aligns our county with the scientific consensus on climate change.
- As a “no regrets” strategy, the Climate Action Plan encourages actions that will save our county money and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- The Climate Plan sensibly addresses our dependence on a limited and increasingly expensive resource, fossil fuels.
- The Climate Action Plan enables our county to participate in statewide, federal and international climate actions.
- It is the right thing to do.

14. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted:



Thomas Cutter
Secretary

Minutes prepared by J. Tenbusch.

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