



**Dutchess County  
Environmental Management Council (EMC)  
2015 ANNUAL REPORT  
Approved October 26, 2016**

**EMC Membership:**

The Dutchess County Environmental Management Council (EMC) enabling legislation provides for a total of eleven at-large seats. The 2015 at-large appointed members of the EMC and their term expiration dates are listed below:

1. Stephen MacAvery, Chair 6/30/17
2. Pete Berasi 6/30/18
3. Lalita Malik 6/30/18
4. John DeGilio 6/30/18
5. Victoria Kelly, Recording Secretary 6/30/17
6. Constance Kustas 6/30/17
7. Marsh Leed 6/30/17
8. Bob Cohen 6/30/17 (resigned 5/22/2015)
9. Christon Robbins, Vice Chair 6/30/16

**EMC At-Large Members – Value of Volunteer Hours:**

EMC at large members donated approximately 625 hours of work on EMC projects that benefited Dutchess County. At a NYS rate for volunteer hours of \$26/hour, this totals an amount of more than \$16,000 donated by EMC members for their time and expertise to the county in 2015.

**Ex Officio Members:**

In addition to the eleven at-large seats, the EMC membership consists of six Ex-Officio members, and twenty-one Conservation Advisory Council (CAC) members, for a total of thirty-eight members. Ex-officio members include: a member of the County Legislature, the chairman of the county planning board, commissioner of public works, county attorney, chairman of the board of directors of the Soil and Water Conservation district and the president of the Dutchess County Cooperative Extension Association. Regular participants in 2015 EMC activities were:

1. Legislative Liaison (Joel Tyner)
2. Cornell Cooperative Extension Dutchess County - (Jeff Luoma)

### 3. Dutchess County Planning Board Members (Brian Kehoe)

#### **EMC Meetings:**

In 2015, the EMC held its meetings predominately on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each month. In 2015, the EMC took, prepared and approved minutes for all of its regular meetings, which are available on EMC's website (<http://dutchessemc.org/>).

#### **Partnership with the Cornell Cooperative Extension Dutchess County Environment and Energy Program:**

Cornell Cooperative Extension Dutchess County (CCEDC) is an Ex-Officio member of the EMC and in 2015 actively participated with and advised the Council. The CCEDC Environment and Energy Program staff (under contract with the DC Department of Planning and Development) attended EMC meetings and organized the CAC and EMC Roundtable Forum in February 2015 for EMC and CAC members. Due to significant cuts in the county funding to the CCEDC Environmental and Energy Program, CCEDC was not able to offer more significant support to the Council.

#### **Current EMC Committees and Members:**

The EMC has established subcommittees to address issues it sees as relevant to its mission and supportive of the County Legislature and CACs. Subcommittees are formed to focus the Council's efforts on these issues. Council Members volunteer to be part of these subcommittees. The list of active subcommittees and Council members participating in each in 2015 follows.

- Road Salt – V. Kelly, P. Berasi
- Recycling – L. Malik, P. Berasi, V. Kelly
- Clean Energy – L. Malik, M. Leed, C Kustas
- Low Impact Development – S. MacAvery, M. Leed, P. Berasi
- Resiliency to Climate Change – C. Robbins, V. Kelly
- Environmental Fair – J. DeGillio, M. Leed, L. Malik, P. Berasi

#### **EMC 2015 Projects & Accomplishments:**

Dutchess County Recycling – The EMC continued to promote the reduction of waste stream going to landfills and waste to energy plants. An article was published in the Poughkeepsie Journal about metal recycling with a comprehensive table of facilities in Dutchess County. The committee has also discussed a program called "We Future Cycle", a nonprofit organization that teaches composting and recycling in Westchester schools that could possibly be adapted here. Also, there was a discussion of the CCEDC Master Gardner's display regarding recycling, safe pharmaceutical disposal, composting and vermiculture that can be taken on the road to various agencies and organizations. Additional goals for 2016 include more public and municipal awareness of the benefits of recycling as well as a focus on composting and organic recycling, and supporting the CCEDC – which received a grant to conduct a feasibility study on organic recycling under the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) Cleaner, Greener Communities Program.

Road Salt Education – The overarching goal of the EMC's Road Salt committee is to promote the reduction of the amount of road salt used to maintain ice free surfaces without jeopardizing winter road safety. During 2015, Vicky Kelly received an overwhelming response from reporters around the Northeast for interviews regarding road salt. The Road Salt committee continued its research on best management practices, specifically with regard to brine and anti-icing. Vicky collaborated with Dr. Mary Ann Cunningham of Vassar College and Dr. Stuart Findlay of the Cary Institute in a GIS analysis of salt in the groundwater in East Fishkill. Vicky also worked with Marist College students in gathering and compiling data on salt use and NaCl concentrations in Dutchess County with the goal of updating the report "Road Salt, Moving Toward the Solution." Additional 2016 goals include the publication of a summary report analyzing the relative effectiveness of the current best management practices, including the use of brine as a means to lower the overall amount of salt used. Additional reports will explain where and why salt is distributed in the groundwater and a summary of the issue of using gas and oil well brine for road treatment. Planning will also proceed regarding additional training sessions for municipal officials on effective winter snow and ice control.

EMC Website – The website created by the Dutchess County Environmental Management Council continues to be visited by a core of interested users. In the current year the number of visitors that visited exceeded 2100 people and that brings our total to over 17,000 viewers to date. Among the pages that have been most visited include the "What's New" Page and the "Resources" pages. Much of the recent activity on line has been to incorporate the articles in the local newspaper published by members of the EMC. History has shown that the time that the Poughkeepsie Journal keeps digital versions of articles published as part of the "My Valley" section is not always a long time. To keep sequential articles together the EMC website makes the access to each segment easy. The record of this year's agendas and meetings minutes on the website is complete. It has been added to those for each of the seven previous years. One of the significant values of this website is that it keeps the dialog and connection between the environmental efforts in the county's townships (CAC's) united as a website coordinates the sharing of efforts and projects. It is notable that the maintenance and development of this digital effort is completed entirely by volunteers with no expenditure of county funds.

Low Impact Development - During 2015, the Low Impact Development subcommittee collaborated with CCEDC to present two workshops on Green Infrastructure practices. The first workshop, "Reviewing Stormwater Management in Site Design: A Guide for Planning Board Members", occurred on March 19, 2015. This workshop released a stormwater review guide for planning boards, and introduced mapping resources that are available for reviewers. This workshop was attended by 46 people from many municipalities in the county. The second workshop, "Planning for Green Infrastructure: What Municipal Boards Need to Know", occurred on March 29, 2016. This workshop provided an overview of what municipal boards should consider when reviewing and incorporating green infrastructure practices into site plans with a focus on municipal capacity, future maintenance considerations, and enforcement options. Goals for 2016 include the expansion of the knowledge of Green Infrastructure practices to encourage that growth and development within the county occurs in an environmentally responsible manner, and working with CAC's to incorporate Green Infrastructure practices into municipal zoning and building codes.

Resiliency to Climate Change – In 2015 the committee promoted activities that build awareness and resiliency to climate change. Chris Robbins spearheaded the production of a report that lists

resources available to municipalities and individuals. The report “Sustainability, Climate Change and Flood Resiliency Resources” is posted on the EMC website. Goals for 2016 include the further distribution of the report as well as updates to the resources listed.

Clean Energy – The group worked with CCEDC on several initiatives including a "Solarize Dutchess" kickoff event in September 2015 about extending the program throughout the County and a forum held at the CCEDC for municipal officials to cover standardizing building and zoning codes to assist and promote renewable energy systems. The group discussed the temporary moratorium on ground-mounted solar panels in the Town of Wappinger. Additional 2016 goals will be to work with CCEDC as part of their Cleaner Greener Communities grant on the benefits of methane from anaerobic digestion as an energy source.

Environmental Fair – In 2015 the EMC proposed a fair to be held in 2016 sponsored by EMC with the aid of CCEDC. The fair would consist of a series of “stations” for the public to visit that would provide information on personal and collective solutions to local environmental problems. In 2015 the EMC members pursued various avenues of funding and submitted a request to the Dutchess County Planning Department for a 2016 event.

Newspaper Articles – The EMC published numerous articles in the Poughkeepsie Journal in 2015. They include articles about energy efficiency, solar power, recycling and low impact development.

The articles can be found on the EMC website at <http://dutchessemc.org/projects/community-communications/>.

#### **EMC Expenses:**

The EMC is an all-volunteer council, and there was no budget line item for the EMC in the 2015 Dutchess County Budget. There is a budget line item for \$100 for the DCEMC in the 2016 budget, which will cover the cost of the EMC website. While this amount is appreciated, it would be helpful if the Legislature would provide a small budget for administrative support and travel expenses for appointees to attend training conferences.

#### **Enabling Legislation and By-Laws:**

The enabling legislation for the EMC was adopted by the DC Legislature in 1972 and amended in 1989. In 2014 the EMC drafted revisions to this legislation and resent these updates to the Chairman of the Legislature at the end of 2014 for consideration. The draft of revisions consolidates and clarifies membership of ex-officio and Conservation Advisory Commission (CAC) members and updates the powers and duties of the EMC by eliminating participation in the no longer existent Scenic Roads Committee and updating language of the powers and duties of the EMC to incorporate currently relevant needs, resources and materials. Final adoption of the revised enabling language is still pending and is with the Legislature’s Attorney.