



**Dutchess County  
Environmental Management Council (EMC)  
2017 ANNUAL REPORT  
April, 2018**

**EMC Membership:**

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

1. Stephen MacAvery, Chair 6/30/19
2. Pete Berasi 6/30/18
3. Lalita Malik 6/30/18
4. John DeGilio 6/30/18
5. Victoria Kelly, Recording Secretary 6/30/19
6. Constance Kustas 6/30/19
7. Marsha Leed 6/30/19
8. Shannon Fatum, Vice Chair 6/30/2019
9. Brian DiFeo, 7/1/17 – 6/30/18
10. Gail Beverly 6/30/2019 – resigned 2/28/18
11. Yvette Valdes Smith, 7/1/17 -6/30/19 (replacing Charles May who resigned in May 2017)

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

EMC at large members donated approximately 1573 hours of work on EMC projects that benefited Dutchess County (estimated at 2.75 hours per week per appointed member of the EMC). At a NYS rate for volunteer hours of \$26/hour (<https://independentsector.org/resource/the-value-of-volunteer-time>), this totals an amount of more than \$40,898 donated by EMC members for their time and expertise to the county in 2017.

**Ex Officio Members:**

In addition to the eleven at-large seats, the DC EMC membership consists of six Ex-Officio members, and 21 Conservation Advisory Council (CAC) members, for a total of 38 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. It's important to note that this is an onerous number of members; most members don't participate or even realize that they are members and a quorum

is impossible to reach. For this reason, the EMC has suggested a revision of the enabling legislation that would alter the membership structure. As of 2017 the proposed revisions have not been taken up by the Legislature. See below for a description of the enabling legislation. Regular participants in EMC activities during 2017 were:

1. Legislative Liaison (Joel Tyner)
2. Cornell Cooperative Extension Dutchess County (Jeff Luoma until April 2017, Carolyn Klocker from May to December 2017)
3. Dutchess County Planning & Development (Brad Barclay) (note DC Planning & Development is not currently an ex officio member of the EMC)

**EMC Meetings:**

In 2017, the EMC held its meetings predominately on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each month. In 2017, the EMC prepared and approved minutes for all its regular meetings, which are available on EMC's website (<http://dutchessemc.org/>).

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

Cornell Cooperative Extension Dutchess County (CCEDC) is an Ex-Officio member of the EMC and actively participates with and advises the Council. The CCEDC Environment and Energy Program received a Dutchess County Agency Partnership Grant in 2017 and as part of the grant contract CCEDC Environment & Energy Program staff attended EMC meetings and provided the group minimal administrative support. Also as part of this grant contract, CCEDC organized the CAC and EMC Roundtable Forum in February 2017 for EMC and CAC members and provided the EMC support at the Pumpkin Festival (see "Environmental Fair"). Due to the limited funds CCEDC currently receives to support the EMC they are unable to offer more significant support to the Council at this time.

**2017 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 volunteered to be part of these subcommittees. The list of active subcommittees in 2017 and Council members participating in each were:

- Road Salt – V. Kelly, P. Berasi, S. MacAvery
- Recycling, Organics Recycling & Composting – L. Malik, P. Berasi, V. Kelly, G. Beverly, J. Luoma
- Energy Conservation & Alternative Energy – L. Malik, M. Leed, J. Luoma
- Low Impact Development / Water Quality – S. MacAvery, M. Leed, P. Berasi, C. May, S. Fatum
- Environmental Fair – J. DeGillio, M. Leed, L. Malik, P. Berasi, G. Beverly, B. DiFeo, Y. Valdes, J. Luoma
- Fossil Fuel Reduction – S. MacAvery, V. Kelly, P. Berasi, L. Malik, M. Leed, G. Beverly, B. DiFeo

## **EMC 2017 Projects & Accomplishments:**

### **Recycling –**

The committee is working to provide instructional information to the public to serve as a guide for recycling practices to improve consistency. The goal is to improve the effectiveness of recycling programs in the County to reduce waste and minimize waste stream contamination.

A second aim of the subcommittee is to support organics recycling and composting. In 2017, CCEDC completed a feasibility study to assess the potential for organics recycling on a countywide scale. Findings concluded that there is potential to divert approximately 40,000 tons of organic waste in the County from the municipal solid waste stream through a combination of approaches including educational programs; incorporating retrofits to WWTPs; value-added product development and marketing; and home, municipal, and privatized compost facility expansion. For more information about the results of the study, contact [dutchess@cornell.edu](mailto:dutchess@cornell.edu). The EMC supported this program by providing a member to the steering committee.

### **Road Salt –**

The goal of the DC EMC's Road Salt subcommittee is to promote the reduction of road salt used to maintain ice free surfaces without jeopardizing winter road safety. The road salt committee continued work to understand and educate about road salt contamination in our environment as well as best management practices to improve the efficiency of road salt use. The committee is currently collaborating with the Cary Institute and the CCEDC Environment & Energy Program to develop an update to a 2010 road salt report. A scientific publication was accepted for publication on the distribution of road salt in groundwater in the township of East Fishkill for which the East Fishkill CAC, other town officials and the EMC were instrumental.

### **Low Impact Development –**

In 2017 the Low Impact Development committee completed the checklist "*Green Infrastructure Practices to Consider for Development Proposals*" which can be used by CAC's and planning boards when reviewing development proposals.

The Low Impact Development committee began collaborating with Michelle Gluck, Resource Educator, CCEDC, on forum to be held in spring 2018 on the benefits of trees in reducing the impact of development.

**Environmental Fair** - The DC EMC along with CCE DC participated in the Beacon Pumpkin Festival in October 2017. The group was able to secure a \$2000 grant from IBM that helped pay for reusable shopping bags that were given out at the festival. Displays and handouts included information on recycling, stormwater treatment, and other solutions to local environmental problems.

**Fossil Fuel Reduction** - In June, 2017 the legislature asked the EMC to assist the county by studying the issue of fossil fuel reduction and to make recommendations to the legislature on ways in which the county can reduce fossil fuels as a government and actions that can be taken to encourage reduction in the county as a whole. In response the EMC formed the Fossil Fuel Reduction subcommittee. The subcommittee identified fossil fuel reduction research topics, evaluated existing fossil fuel reduction efforts in New York and around the country, and cross-referenced both. The result being that the EMC recommended to the legislature in March 2018 that the county pursue both Climate Smart Community certification and Clean Energy

Community designation. The final Fossil Fuel Reduction report is anticipated to be completed in the summer of 2018.

**EMC Website** – The website created and maintained by the Dutchess County Environmental Management Council continues to be visited by many users. In 2017 the number of visitors exceeded 2,400 people, which brings our total to over 6,245 viewers to since 2015. In addition to the visitors from most of the states in the USA this site has recently been visited by viewers from Columbia, Ghana, Sari Lanka and Peru. In all, the Dutchess County EMC website consists of 18 topics or pages of menus that are loaded with links to environmental websites of groups and agencies that would be of interest to citizens of Dutchess County that are exploring environmental issues. All meeting minutes, reports, agenda items or items that the Council has explored has a presence on the council’s website. The pages that have been most visited include “What’s New” and “Resources”.

Every agenda, meeting minutes, generated report or investigation completed by the DCEMC is present on the council’s website starting from the year the board was reconstituted in 2009 to the present date. The website incorporates recent environmental information in addition to the year’s agendas and meeting minutes. In addition, a copy of the Dutchess County Resource Inventory created by the DCEMC is present on this website. One of the significant values of this website is that it maintains a dialog and connection among the county’s CAC’s. It is notable that the maintenance and development of this digital effort is completed entirely by volunteers. Counting “volunteer” hours, the maintenance of the website generally involves 5 or 6 hours a month

**Hudson River Coast Guard Anchorage Proposal** - The EMC was active in opposing the Coast Guard’s Anchorage Plan for the Hudson River.

**EMC Expenses:**

The EMC is an all-volunteer council; there was a budget line item for \$100 for the DCEMC in the 2017 budget which covered the cost of the DCEMC web site. In addition, there are much appreciated funds provided for CCEDC for support of the EMC. While these amounts are appreciated it would be helpful if the Legislature would provide a small budget for additional administrative support, and travel expenses for appointees to attend training conferences.

In 2017 the following budget was requested by the EMC. These funds are an example the funding needed for a well-functioning council:

EMC Initiative	Funding Amount
EMC website / Social media outreach	\$500
Operations support from CCEDC	\$5000
Supplies	\$500
Community Recognition Program	\$500
NYS Assoc. of Conservation Commissions m	\$75
NYS Assoc. of Conservation Commissions Annual Conference	\$500
Other conferences, training / workshops	\$1000
Total	\$8075

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

The enabling legislation for the DC EMC was adopted by the DC Legislature in 1972 and amended in 1989. In 2014 the DC EMC drafted revisions to this legislation and sent these updates to the Chairman of the Legislature at the end of 2014 for consideration. The EMC followed up on the proposed revisions several times since. As of 2017 the proposed revisions have not been considered by the Legislature. The draft 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 Legislatures Attorney.