

# Broome County Environmental Management Council

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## 2007 Annual Report

### BROOME COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

The Broome County Environmental Management Council (EMC), established in 1971, serves as an advisory council for county and local government on environmental matters. The local volunteer citizen advisory board gathers to discuss environmental issues and make policy recommendations to County government. The Council also helps raise public awareness about environmental concerns through public participation and education programs.

Two full-time staff members facilitate the activities of the EMC: a Senior Environmental Planner, and an Environmental Analyst. The EMC is a division of and is housed within the Broome County Department of Planning and Economic Development, from which it receives technical, bookkeeping and mapping support services.

Council staff are responsible for coordinating committees, implementing projects, facilitating public participation, fulfilling environmental information requests, providing technical assistance to County and municipal governments regarding New York State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) procedures, and other tasks. Staff are also responsible for preparation and administration of the annual work program.

The following items represent the activities of EMC staff and volunteer members for 2007.

#### **ADMINISTRATION**

##### **New Member Recruitment and Orientation**

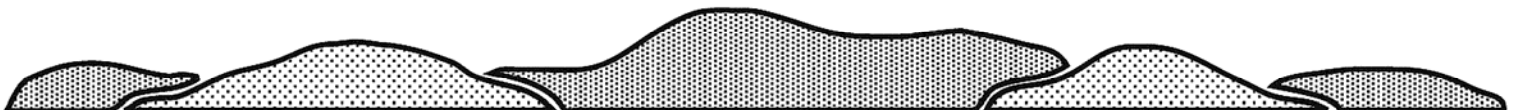
The EMC promoted and held an Open House in March kicking off a membership drive to fill vacancies on the Council. Staff created and shared a power point presentation and displays that promoted EMC program areas and activities, our initiatives, reports, and volunteer opportunities, and offered educational brochures and pamphlets on a variety of environmental topics. There were over 20 interested guests who took membership packets. In addition, staff attended Binghamton University's Fall Volunteer Resource Fair to encourage student participation in environmental policy development and EMC volunteer activities

##### **Internship Program**

In the spring, the EMC supervised one undergraduate student intern Christina Prete, an Environmental Engineering student from Binghamton University. Christina compiled criteria for an EMC environmental recognition award program, entered data from county operations good housekeeping surveys, and indexed loose documents and brochures from a section of the EMC's library into a comprehensive categorized list for assessment and archiving.

##### **Environmental Education Resources**

The EMC maintained extensive collections of print and electronic reference resources, books, periodicals, pamphlets, and information fact sheets. Resources available on EMC's webpages include meeting and program information, volunteer opportunities, public participation activities, EMC position statements and papers, educational brochures, fact sheets, pictures and links to related references and agencies.



## **Agency Coordination**

EMC staff served on several other committees and boards throughout 2008, including

- the Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study (BMTS) Planning Committee,
- the Broome-Tioga Stormwater Coalition (BTSC) and Public Education & Participation Committee,
- the Broome County Book Recycling Fair Planning Committee,
- the NYSDEC NY Recycles Steering Committee,
- the Landfill Citizens Advisory Committee,
- the NYS Region 7 Open Space Advisory Committee, and
- the New York State Association of Environmental Management Councils (NYSAEMC) Board of Directors and Nominating Committee.

## **Conferences/Seminars/Trainings**

Council staff and members attended and participated in a variety of educational conferences and training seminars during 2008. These included the Binghamton Neighborhood Assemblies' Sustainability Seminar (April), a Planning & Zoning training seminar about the State Environmental Quality Review Act (May), Construction Site Inspections training for Stormwater Management (May), the NYSDEC annual program and legislative summit with the NYSAEMCs (June), and the NYSAEMC's annual Conference on the Environment (October).

## **GENERAL**

At their regular monthly meetings, the EMC hosted speakers and offered educational presentations on the following topics: Environmental Art (January), Vernal Pool projects in the Upper Susquehanna Watershed (February), Binghamton VISTA Neighborhood Assemblies Program (April), Composting Awareness Week (May), Historic architecture – NYSLandmarks.com (June), Eco-Home Network Going Green (July), Metropolitan Greenways update (September), Outdoor Wood Burning analysis (October), and Archaeology of the new downtown University Center (November). The EMC also co-sponsored a local pre-viewing of *The Great Warming*, a global climate change video (February).

In late summer, the EMC met with the NYS Attorney General's Special Counsel on the Environment, Katherine Kennedy and other support staff to learn about their services, and to share with them at their request any concerns about local environmental topics and regulatory enforcement issues. Representatives of several other county departments attended.

Staff also assisted several teachers with environmental education projects including a Chenango Forks High School science class and BU's Environmental Impacts Statements class.

## **LAND USE AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

### **Municipal Land-Use/Zoning/Development Reviews**

EMC staff provided environmental review support to the Planning Department and rendered 35 advisory opinions per NYS General Municipal Law §239 (l) & (m) review process for site and subdivision plan reviews, special permits and zoning actions. The EMC adopted a letter asking Wal-Mart to employ low impact development strategies when designing and building their facility in Johnson City. Another major project that staff reviewed was plans for a business park at the

former Anitec site in the City of Binghamton's First Ward. Other projects reviewed included several auto sales/maintenance facilities, beauty salons, municipal salt storage and a strip mall.

### **Stormwater Management Program**

As members of the Broome-Tioga Stormwater Coalition (BTSC) and the Public Education & Participation Committee (PEPC), EMC staff facilitated meeting, mail list, and website administration for the Coalition. The EMC provided educational materials, opportunities for public involvement, and outreach services to county and others municipal officials and citizens to comply with federal phase II stormwater requirements. Early in the year, the PEPC created content for a logo and website, which is hosted by Broome County, and in late 2007 the PEPC purchased an official domain name – [www.broometiogastormwater.com](http://www.broometiogastormwater.com). The group continued to develop stormwater awareness advertisements, news articles, and customized educational brochures, among other things for 15 regulated MS4s.

In late winter, the EMC Director and the Economic Development Planner sent a Stormwater Municipal Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping self-audit to County departments dealing with stormwater management (Airport, Public Works Highways, Facilities and Fleet, Solid Waste, Parks, Central Foods, Willow Point NH). The self audit assessed existing policies, procedures, equipment, staff, facilities, operations and training needs mandated for a stormwater program that is meant to improve or protect receiving water quality from stormwater discharges originating at municipal operations or facilities. The assessment was the first step toward identifying areas for improvement in county good housekeeping operations.

The Planning Dept provided to DPW local law technical assistance related to meeting stormwater management minimum control measures 3, 4, and 5 as required by NYS and EPA.

The EMC compiled portions of the County's year 4 Stormwater Annual Report (March 10, 2006 - March 9, 2007) specifically reporting documentation for minimum control measures 1 & 2 (Public Education and Participation) and measure 6 (Good Housekeeping). Assisted Jeremy Evans with data collection for the other minimum measures, and helped with assemblage of the report for public release and comment. Posted the report on the County website and held a public meeting May 17 before the EMC's Natural Resources Committee to solicit feedback from the general citizenry about the County Stormwater Management Program.

EMC staff attended a workshop on May 17th, "Stormwater Construction Site Inspections", organized by Southern Tier East Regional Planning & Development Board. In addition, six BCDPW engineers also attended this important training event that consisted of a classroom style presentation about the importance of these inspections for compliance with NYS requirements for designated MS4s, followed by a field session at a local construction site (JC Toy-R-Us Plaza). Throughout the year, EMC staff also received technical stormwater management training through the EPA's Stormwater Management webcast technical series.

### **Natural Resources Committee (NRC)**

The NRC continued to be a resource for concerned parties seeking information and/or support related to natural resources. EMC staff and the NRC kept abreast of natural resources and land use issues throughout the year via development, plan, and policy reviews. The NRC kept informed and advocated for green building considerations, especially for new development, and monitored legislation to keep abreast of issues related to Outdoor Wood Boilers (OWBs) and open burning, to name a few.

The EMC adopted in March by recommendation of the NRC a letter supporting NYSDEC's reduction of greenhouse gas emissions through proposed Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) Preliminary Draft Regulatory Proposal AND supporting the auction of 100 percent of the carbon dioxide allowances to increase amount of funds to support programs to stabilize and reduce energy demand. In June, the EMC also adopted a letter to state representatives by recommendation of the NRC calling for support and passage of the NYS Community Preservation Act. The bill would authorize municipalities to establish through local referendum a fund to preserve open space through a real estate transfer fee *of up to 2%* on real estate transfers *exceeding* the county's median sale price.

At the September EMC meeting, the Council approved by recommendation of the NRC a draft letter requesting that Wal-Mart consider incorporating green technologies, specifically Low Impact Development (LID) strategies, into the site design of the proposed Wal-Mart on Lester Avenue in Johnson City. The letter also requests that the Village of Johnson City work with Wal-Mart and their contractors to integrate LID into the site design.

At the December EMC meeting, the full EMC approved a letter by recommendation of the NRC, in support of the Town of Vestal's application through the NYS Department of State (DOS) Coastal Resources program for funds to develop a county-wide Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP).

### **Open Space Plan**

The NRC continued work on the Broome County Open Space Plan (OSP). A recommendation of the BC Plan, a county open space plan serves to identify open space areas important for natural resource protection and preservation of community character and offer program and policy recommendations for the enhancement and implementation of local open space preservation. This will serve as a key element in shaping the future form and character of development and open space. All sections of the Inventory portion of the plan are currently in development. These include an inventory of water resources, working landscapes, recreational resources, distinctive landforms and landmarks, and areas important for biodiversity. In the first half of 2008 the NRC will develop the recommendations portion of the plan and a final draft is anticipated by June.

## **RECYCLING AND WASTE MANAGEMENT**

### **Recycling and Waste Management Committee (RWMC)**

Throughout the year, the RWMC researched and monitored local, national and international recycling trends for plastics and electronics, advocated for recycling provisions at parks and public events, and toured the \$20M Delaware County municipal composting facility in Walton, NY (May)., among other things.

In the spring, the EMC adopted by recommendation of the RWMC a letter to NYS representatives asking for support in a compromise with in the NYS Bottle Bill: remove all 1.75L bottles from the nickel deposit in return for an expansion to include all non-carbonated single-serving beverage containers less than 1.75L. (March). The State did not pass a bigger, better, bottle bill.

Responding to citizen concerns from recent summer festivities, the RWMC adopted letters for the Council's consideration specifically requesting organizers of prominent local events including Spiedie Fest and the Dick's Open support local recycling policies and efforts.

### **Waste Management Education**

The EMC being a focal point for discussion about environmental topics received many complaints and made many referrals about recycling and disposal options available locally for computers and compact fluorescent bulbs, to name a few. Council staff promoted waste reduction and reuse principles, and the importance of recycling household hazardous waste and electronics properly at the County Landfill whenever possible. However available these options, the Council requested RWMC address CFLs specifically by advocating for more consumer outreach and by investigating existence of CFL take-back programs, like battery drop-offs at retail stores. Continued to educate members about several retailers and companies that are establishing or expanding programs to take unwanted electronics.

Throughout the year, EMC staff assessed numerous proposals through the 239-development review process for potential waste related issues. Provided advisory opinions that promoted proper handling of hazardous waste and the accessibility of services at the landfill for conditionally exempt small quantity generators of hazardous waste.

### **DSWM Research and Development Assistance**

Throughout the year, the EMC Director met with DSWM staff to review consultant's work and provide procedural and technical review assistance for the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the landfill entrance evaluation.

### **Landfill Citizens Advisory Committee (LCAC)**

EMC staff continued to provide technical support to the LCAC when requested. The EMC coordinated outreach to residents within ½ mile of the county landfill boundary to inform them of the Notice of Completion of the Draft SEIS for the Section IV Landfill Entrance Evaluation, and to seek nomination of a resident representative to serve on the LCAC.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIPS: PUBLIC EDUCATION AND ACTIVITY PROGRAMS**

### **Earth Fest 2007**

EMC volunteers and staff participated in the annual Earth Fest Saturday, April 28 at the BCC Ice Center to raise awareness about local environmental issues. The EMC's displays included information about stormwater management, energy incentives, and a recycling/reuse game, among others things. The EMC also promoted upcoming programs and volunteers opportunities and recruited potential members.

### **2007 Joyce K.L. Smith Environmental Photography Show & Competition**

The EMC sponsored the 11th annual Joyce K.L. Smith Environmental Photography Show & Competition to portray and celebrate all aspects of Broome County's natural and cultural surroundings: wildlife, plantlife, natural landscape, cultural landscape, and people in action. EMC, custodian of the account, deposited \$250 in donations to the Joyce K.L. Smith Memorial Fund. The County received 254 entries from 99 amateur photographers. Winners and honorable mentions in each of the five competition categories and the best submission from a local high school student were honored at an opening reception and awards ceremony May 9 at the Broome County Library. Honorees each received a certificate of recognition from Broome

County. The Press & Sun-Bulletin published a feature article in the Lifestyles section, showcasing the five first-place photographs and best student. Winning and honorable mention photographs were displayed at the Broome County Public Library during May and June.

In addition, the Library's exhibit room contained kiosks highlighting the EMC's Riverbank Clean Up, drawing attention to stormwater issues and a memorial to the late Joyce K. L. Smith.

### **2007 Broome County Book Recycling Fair**

In September, the EMC co-sponsored the 9th Annual Broome County Book Recycling Fair in cooperation with the BC DSWM, Cornell Cooperative Extension of BC, the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program, and local rotary clubs. EMC staff assisted with planning and promotion, coordinated volunteers, secured food donations, and contributed time and labor during the collection days September 13-15 and giveaway days September 21-22. Staff also provided administrative and technical assistance to the Committee. 150 volunteers helped recycle 23 tons of books; 18,000 books were redistributed, and \$1033 donated to literacy programs.

### **2007 Broome County Riverbank Clean Up**

The 22nd Broome County Riverbank Clean Up was held Saturday, October 6 along miles of Susquehanna and Chenango Rivers and a few tributaries to enhance and protect County's natural resources. Over 285 volunteers in 26 different groups cleaned 22 locations and collected 3.69 tons of trash including 81 tires. The EMC organized the annual event in conjunction with the International Coastal Clean Up Day sponsored by the Ocean Conservancy and the American Littoral Society (ALS).

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