

Watershed Agricultural Council

Agriculture ♦ Forestry ♦ Conservation Easements ♦ Economic Viability

nycwatershed.org



MINUTES OF THE WATERSHED AGRICULTURAL COUNCIL MEETING

July 22, 2025

I. Meeting called to order at 10:10 a.m.

Directors Present:

Dwight Bruno
James Darling
Paul Gallay
Wayland 'Bud' Gladstone, *Chair*
Karl Gockel, *Treasurer*
Barb Hanselman (via 'Teams')
Jason Helmbold
Fred Huneke
Tom Hutson, *Vice Chair*
Steve Reed
Marilyn Wyman (via 'Teams')
Michael Vander Werff, *NYC DEP*
John Verhoeven (via 'Teams')
Jennifer Grossman, *Secretary* (via 'Teams')
Kyle Clark (via 'Teams')

Others Present:

Ryan Naatz, *Executive Director*
Amy Faulkner, *Director of Operations*
Carol Bishop, *Finance Director*
Connor Young, *WOH Agricultural Program Manager*
(via 'Teams')
Serena Orleski, *Easement Program Manager*
Kayla Henderson, *Head of Administration*
Kristan Morley, *Economic Viability Program Manager*
Heather Magnan, *Communications Manager*
Lee Harris, *NYC DOI*
Patrick Palmer, *NYS DOH*
Morgan Zyzik-Tarbell, *NYC DOH*
Shilo Williams, *NYC DEP*
Sara Storrer, *NYC DEP* (via 'Teams')
Bruce Dolph, *DC SWCD Board*
John Jackson, *Database Administrator*
Chelsea Ingram, *Procurement/Contract Coordinator*

Directors Absent: N/A

II. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes of the June 24, 2025 meeting, as presented.

Motion: Tom Hutson

Second: Steve Reed

Approved

III. Executive Director's Report – Ryan Naatz

A. 1. Operational/Programmatic Updates – New Reporting Formatting

Utilization of the new reporting formats is being deferred to next month. The purpose is to reflect on a more unified, streamlined, and efficient reporting system that is inclusive with DEP, based on data points received. Dashboards will be reported on by respective Managers at the quarterly meetings.

B. Spotlight Presentation: Conservation Easement Program – WAC CE Refresher (What are the ties to succession planning?) – Serena Orleski, CE Program Manager

The following key points were highlighted:

- What a conservation easement is
- What makes WAC's CE program unique
- Benefits of CE's to the local community
- What areas are considered useable (e.g. Acceptable Development Area (ADA), Farm Area (FA), Forest Conservation Easement Area (FCEA), Resource Protection Area (RPA), including forest CE use areas which include ADA, Multiple Use Area (MUA) and Forest areas).
- Process/timeline for acquisition
- Benefits of conservation easements to the landowner
- Reserved rights and stewardship of WAC CE's
- Collaboration/other resources
- How it all ties together

Council members are encouraged to pass this information along to others for informational purposes.

C. Manager Updates

a. Economic Viability – Kristan Morley, EV Program Manager

- Will report on EV's new dashboard data at next month's EV Committee, which will reflect on the impact the program plays.
- 40,000 copies of 'Pure Catskills' guides have been produced; all but one pallet has been distributed.
- Capacity study/RFP details to be reviewed in the August EV Committee meeting.
- New board member representatives, Kyle Clark and Paul Gallay, have been brought up to speed on committee agenda items.

b. Outreach – Heather Magnan, Communications Manager

- 40 WAC events are scheduled; Delaware County Fair preparations are underway.
- Every year, regional partners for clean water and a healthy environment host a community hazardous waste collection day, known as 'Clean Sweep'. This event provides a safe disposal venue by collecting chemicals and other materials which pose a threat to public health, water and the environment. This year's event will take place on Columbus Day weekend.

- New WAC website redesign contract in the works; details discussed. Implementation target date is currently set for this Fall.
- c. East of Hudson (EOH) – Amy Faulkner, Director of Operations
 - 60% of the ASR goals have been completed. Donald Arrant, Conservation Planner, is working on outreach with Putnam and Westchester County farms.
 - The Hemlock Hill project site showing is coming up, this project will be funded through a collaboration between WAC, USDA and the landowner.
 - EOH RFP for contracted services for CAD to assist with the implementation process.
 - An upcoming EOH staff meeting is planned. Amy Faulkner continues to act as interim EOH Ag Program Manager.
- d. WOH Agricultural Program – Connor Young, WOH Agricultural Program Manager
 - Chelsea Ingram was introduced to the Council as the new Procurement/Contract Coordinator. Rachael House, will be joining Chelsea’s team Monday, July 28, as the new WAP Administrative Assistant.
 - An extended search has been ongoing for an open position; four candidates for consideration to-date.
 - An offer has been made to a candidate for the CCE PFM Team Leader role. CCE is also beginning a search to fill their open Executive Director role.
 - Larry Underwood has recently retired as DCSWCD’s Executive Director. Graydon Dutcher is acting as interim until the position is filled. Transition planning is underway for a Tech Coordinator.
 - Construction season – More extensions are being granted than anticipated; details discussed regarding timeline drivers.
 - CREP – Some cost share contracts have been approved (four (4) enrollments received); no issues are anticipated.
 -

IV. Chair’s Report – Wayland “Bud” Gladstone

A. Transparency Policy Approval – Ryan Naatz

The policy should be reviewed periodically once it has been approved. Michael Vander Werff confirmed that DEP and their legal team have reviewed the revisions and felt assured that those changes meet contractual obligations.

Motion to approve revisions made to the Transparency Policy as presented.

Motion: Fred Huneke

Second: Steve Reed

Approved

V. Building Committee Updates – Karl Gockel

No meeting was held this month. Staff worked with Kenneth Gay, Lead Architect, from Keystone regarding space needs to be incorporated into the site build plans that are aligned with New York City requirements. We will need approval from the respective municipalities to move forward with the planning process. Ryan Naatz confirmed DCSWCD are not interested in relocating any staff to the new building once that is erected. CCE is an uncertain endeavor considering the change in leadership over the last few years.

VI. Governance Committee – Jason Helmbold

The last committee meeting was held in March. Copies of ‘Robert’s Rules of Order’ are available to take after today's meeting. The by-laws have been reviewed by legal and an analysis regarding independent director definition is being conducted. A review will take place on how to fill openings on the Board going forward; another recommendation has been recently received.

VII. NYC DEP Report – Michael Vander Werff

DEP will join WAC at the Delaware County Fair in August in providing information to the public about its services. The wildlife study team will be set up in the conservation area for people to learn about the different types of species that live within the watershed. Michael reported that there have been recent realignment changes made within the organization, one of which is the DCSWCD Stream Program which he and his team have taken over; details discussed.

VIII. NYC DOH, US EPA Reporting

There is nothing to report at this time.

IX. Executive Session

Motion to enter Executive Session at 11:25 a.m.

Motion: Karl Gockel

Second: James Darling

Approved

Motion to come out of Executive Session at 12:37 p.m.

Motion: Fred Huneke

Second: Tom Hutson

Approved

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:38 p.m. by common consent.

The next meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, August 26, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.**