



MINUTES OF THE EASEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

June 3, 2026

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Tom Hutson, *Committee Chair*, via Teams
Paul Gallay, via Teams
Wayland 'Bud' Gladstone
Jennifer Grossman, via Teams
Fred Huneke
Michael Vander Werff, *NYC DEP*

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

OTHERS PRESENT:

Serena Orleski, *Easement Program Manager*
Rebecca Morgan, *Land Protection Coordinator*
Mike Morales, *Easement Program Stewardship Coordinator*
Dennis Heinz, *Land Conservation Systems Specialist*
Matt Schaefer, *Land Conservation Stewardship Specialist*
Julian Motola, *Land Conservation Stewardship Specialist*
Troy Bookhout, *Easement Program Conservation Planner*
Kayla Atanasoff, *Easement Program Executive Assistant*
Ryan Naatz, *Executive Director*, via Teams
Amy Faulkner, *Director of Operations*, via Teams
Carol Bishop, *Director of Finance*, via Teams
Connor Young, *Agricultural Program Manager*, via Teams
Kristan Morley, *Economic Viability Program Manager*, via Teams
Heather Magnan, *Communications Manager*, via Teams
Cari Watkins-Bates, *NYC DEP*
Ava Gockel, *WAC Legal Fellow*, via Teams

PUBLIC ATTENDEES:

Kristin Schneider, *Delaware County Planning*, via Teams

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:03 a.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to approve the Minutes of the May 6, 2026 public meeting of the Easement Committee.

Motion: Michael Vander Werff

Second: Fred Huneke

Motion Carried

III. ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA

- A. Introduction of Cari Watkins-Bates, NYC DEP (*added as a Discussion Item*)

IV. PROGRAM MOTIONS

- A. Agricultural CE Applicant Selection Working Group

Motion to form the Agricultural CE Applicant Selection Working Group for scoring and ranking of new ACE applicants.

Motion: Tom Hutson

Second: Paul Gallay

Motion Carried

- B. Forest CE Applicant Selection Working Group

Motion to form the Forest CE Applicant Selection Working Group for scoring and ranking of new FCE applicants.

Motion: Michael Vander Werff

Second: Fred Huneke

Motion Carried

V. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- A. Introduction of Cari Watkins-Bates, NYC DEP

Cari took a moment to introduce herself as the newest Section Chief of the NYC DEP Upstate Real Property Services (formerly Land Acquisition Program). She has served in her new role for a little over six months, much of her previous professional experience being with Scenic Hudson.

She gave an update on current DEP land acquisitions and the state of transition with the recent retirement of Paul Rush, Deputy Commissioner.

VI. STEWARDSHIP MOTIONS

- A. Frank & Marc Albano (PID 6017): Stream Work Request

Julian presented this motion. He explained that this was a request that Mike had begun with the landowners and the Delaware County Soil & Water Conservation District (DCSWCD) Stream Management Program a couple of years prior. Several high-flow events on the West Branch Delaware River have eroded a stream bank on the landowners' property. The Village of Hobart has now successfully requested and received federal grant funding from The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to address streambank stabilization projects following Tropical Storm Debby in 2024. That funding will cover a majority of the estimated costs for this project. All associated permits have been submitted and approved, and the work is scheduled to begin

this summer pending stream permits.

Michael indicated that DEP is partially funding this project. He noted that DEP has reviewed the project and only had a couple of comments for DCSWCD.

Motion to approve the Frank & Marc Albano (PID# 6017) Stream Work, Bank Stabilization activity request dated May 20, 2026 and as described in staff memo and attached materials dated May 22, 2026. This approval is contingent upon all state and federal permitting.

Motion: Paul Gallay

Second: Jennifer Grossman

Motion Carried

B. Boville Farms, LLC (PID 6197): Stream Work Request

Mike presented this motion. He explained that he met with a landowner and staff from the DCSWCD Stream Management Program in April to address the restoration of two (2) existing cattle slat stream crossings. There is no record that the slats were installed as a Watershed Agricultural Program (WAP) Best Management Practice (BMP), so it is presumed that they were installed by the previous landowner. As they were not installed by the Watershed Agricultural Council (WAC), the landowner will be completing the restoration work himself in preparation for purchasing beef cows in the near future.

The slats cross a classified stream, so in addition to Easement Committee approval, the landowner will also need to obtain a NYS DEC stream work permit. The Stream Management Program is assisting the landowner in obtaining all necessary permits for this project.

Motion to approve the Boville Farms, LLC (PID# 6197) Stream Work, Bank Stabilization activity request dated April 28, 2026 and as described in staff memo and attached materials dated May 22, 2026. This approval is contingent upon DEC & Army Corps of Engineer stream permits.

Motion: Fred Huneke

Second: Michael Vander Werff

Motion Carried

C. John Giordano (PID 6037): Agricultural Structure Greater Than 5,000 sq ft Outside of the ADA

Troy presented this motion. He explained that he received a request from the landowner on May 6th to construct a round bale hay storage structure outside of the Acceptable Development Area (ADA). The proposed construction site is within a former shale pit near a farm access road. The landowner has a background in construction and therefore will be completing the work himself.

Motion to approve the request dated May 6, 2026, from John Giordano (PID# 6037) to construct a new Agricultural Building or Improvement over 5,000 sq. ft.

located within the Farm Area as presented and described in the Agricultural Building & Improvements Request Outside of the ADA Greater Than 5,000 sq ft memo dated May 22, 2026.

Motion: Jennifer Grossman

Second: Paul Gallay

Motion Carried

VII. STEWARDSHIP UPDATES

A. James Richardson (PID 6004): Forest Harvest Plan – Staff Level Approval

Matt presented this update. He explained that the harvest area is approximately 99 acres in size with an estimated harvest volume of 182,000 bdft. The harvest is scheduled to be completed this summer and will utilize a system of existing skid trails that may require 40-50 water bars to stabilize the access system upon completion.

Serena gave a quick introduction to the collaboration process between the WAC Forestry and Easement Programs in processing Forest Harvest Plan (FHP) reserved right requests for those in the meeting who may not be familiar. It is the Program's most requested reserved right under the terms of the Deed of Conservation Easement (CE).

B. The Janice C. Bowker Revocable Trust (PID 6256): Forest Harvest Plan – Staff Level Approval

Julian presented this update. He started by explaining that this landowner holds both Agricultural and Forest Conservation Easements with WAC; this particular request is for an FHP on the Forest Conservation Easement. The harvest was approved by staff as part of the landowner's 480a Forest Management Plan and is anticipated to begin this upcoming winter. There are no stream crossings, but the primary access trail runs along a classified stream. The harvest area itself is of low risk to water quality; an estimated 25-30 water bars may be required post-harvest.

There was a subsequent question and discussion about the process of informing all members of a Trust of any approved reserved right requests.

C. Breezemont Farm Holdings, LLC (PID 6082): Stream Work BMP – Staff Level Approval

Troy presented this update. He explained that staff approved a standard BMP for stream crossing improvement on Thunderview Farms in Sullivan County. Troy asked if there were any questions about the project; there were none.

D. Salvatore & Christina Grasso (PID 6158): Stream Work BMP – Staff Level Approval

Matt presented this update. He explained that staff approved a stream work request to address limited flow of a watercourse on the property from shrub overgrowth blocking a culvert. NYS DEC stream permitting will be necessary for this project and will be facilitated by the

Watershed Agricultural Program. Matt asked if there were any questions about the project; there were none.

VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION (IX-XI)

Motion at 10:42 a.m. to go into Executive Session to discuss Violations/Legal Updates, Acquisition Project Motions/Updates, and Other Business.

Motion: Fred Huneke

Second: Michael Vander Werff

Motion Carried

Motion at 11:41 a.m. to come out of Executive Session.

Motion: Fred Huneke

Second: Michael Vander Werff

Motion Carried

IX. VIOLATIONS/LEGAL UPDATES

- A. (PID 6105): Commercial Timber Harvest Violation
- B. (PID 6105): Forest Harvest Plan – Staff Level Approval
- C. (PID 6600): Amendment Update

X. ACQUISITION PROJECT MOTIONS/UPDATES (*MOTIONS IN PUBLIC MEETING*)

ACE Project Motions

- A. (PID 6315): Approval of Final Documents

Motion to approve final easement, BDR, title insurance, survey, and ESA for PID 6315 conservation easement project, contingent upon receipt of COFA.

Motion: Tom Hutson

Second: Fred Huneke

Motion Carried

- B. (PID 6316): Appraisal Approval, Offer Authorization, and Purchase & Sale Contract Execution

Motion to approve appraisal, authorize offer, and execute contract for the purchase and sale of an Agricultural Conservation Easement for PID 6316, encompassing +/- 122.83 acres, at the full easement value of \$1,894 per acre.

Motion: Michael Vander Werff

Second: Jennifer Grossman

Motion Carried

FCE Project Motions

None

Updates

None

XI. DISCUSSION/OTHER BUSINESS

- A. Land Trust Alliance Accreditation Inquiry
- B. Program FAD Stakeholder Negotiations/Future Deliverables

XII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:42 a.m.

The next meeting will be held on **Wednesday, July 1, 2026 at 10:00 a.m., via Teams**