

Watershed Agricultural Council

Agriculture ♦ Forestry ♦ Conservation Easements ♦ Economic Viability

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MINUTES OF THE WATERSHED AGRICULTURAL COUNCIL MEETING

June 23, 2026

(*via MS 'Teams')

Director's Present:

Wayland 'Bud' Gladstone, *Chair*

Kyle Clark

Karl Gockel, *Treasurer*

Fred Huneke

Steve Reed

Marilyn Wyman

Michael Vander Werff, *NYC DEP*

Jason Helmbold

Tom Hutson, *Vice Chair*

Paul Gallay

Barbara Hanselman

John Verhoeven

James Darling

Others Present:

Ryan Naatz, *Executive Director*

Carol Bishop, *Director of Finance*

Kayla Henderson, *Head of Administration*

Connor Young, *WOH Agricultural Program Manager*

Serena Orleski, *Easement Program Manager*

Kristan Morley, *Economic Viability Program Manager*

Heather Magnan, *Communications Manager*

Lillian Browne, *The Reporter*

Sara Storrer, *NYC DEP*

Patrick Palmer, *NYS DOH*

Morgan Zyzik-Tarbell, *NYS DOH*

Kristina Gutches, *NYC DEC*

Bruce Dolph, *DC SWCD Board*

Director's Absent:

Nancy Wyncoop

Jennifer Grossman, *Secretary*

I. Meeting called to order at 10:04 a.m.

II. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes of the May 26, 2026, meeting as presented.

Motion: Jim Darling

Second: Steve Reed

Approved

III. Executive Director's Report – Ryan Naatz

WAC has successfully won the Article 78 case appeal in the Colm Ryan lawsuit. Details have been e-mailed to Council for informational purposes. Additional items for the Executive Director report are deferred to executive session.

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

A. Motion to approve the Draft IT Disaster Recovery Plan Policy as presented.

Motion: Fred Huneke

Second: Tom Hutson

Approved

B. Motion to approve the Draft Records Retention Policy as presented.

Motion: John Verhoeven

Second: Steve Reed

Approved

C. Motion to approve the Draft Whistleblower Policy as presented.

Motion: Paul Gallay

Second: Karl Gockel

Approved

V. Building Committee – Karl Gockel

No meeting was held in June. Michael Vander Werff, DEP, is presently working on getting the WAC building project funded and implemented through the next 10-year NYC contract.

VI. Finance Committee – Karl Gockel

A. Motion to approve the April 30, 2026, Financial Report as presented.

Motion: Marilyn Wyman

Second: Tom Hutson

Approved

B. Motion to approve the proposed FY27 Organizational Budget as presented.

Motion: Jim Darling

Second: Tom Hutson

VII. Governance Committee – Jason Helmbold

A meeting was held this morning prior to Council with a focus on form, function, and procedures of the board as recruitment needs are taken into consideration in light of member transitions into retirement. A draft of compiled ideas will be available for review by the governance committee in July to bring to Council for discussion at the end of the month.

VIII. Agricultural Committee – Steve Reed

Highlights of the June 9 committee meeting included program updates on construction and procurement, WFP's, proposed guideline revisions and program approvals, BMP design and future conditions, and the AEIDP grant.

IX. Economic Viability Committee – Kristan Morley (*on behalf of Jennifer Grossman)

WAC was recently present at Dairy Fest as events season has kicked off. New farmers markets have been added to the schedule and updates on fun changes being made to the grants will be announced in July.

X. Easement Committee – Tom Hutson

The Easement program has applied for two grant opportunities, *TNC's Climate Resiliency Grant* and *AFT's Regional Navigator Grant*. Tom was pleased to announce that WAC's application has been accepted for the AFT grant. The grant awards \$15k towards providing staff the opportunity for education and outreach in the eastern portion of the West of Hudson watershed. Tom thanked Serena Orleski and Rebecca Morgan for all their efforts in looking for new ways to entice people in taking an interest in the program. Serena noted there were a few members of the local town planning boards in attendance, which made for a good educational opportunity for community members, in addition to interested farm and forest landowners.

XI. Forestry Committee – Marilyn Wyman

The following items were reviewed from the committee's May meeting:

- Alex Mozes has recently begun in his new position as Forester in the program May 26.
- Heather Hilson and Tom Pavlesich attended a meeting with board members from Empire State Forest Products Association and New York Logger Training (NYLT) to discuss the future of TLC certification. WAC will attend as ex officio members of the NYLT board in the future.
- East of Hudson forestry educators participated in a 'Women Owning Woods' (WOW) Easements 101 webinar which spoke on ways to conserve land in perpetuity.
- A special annual meeting will be held at the Cammer farm on July 16, which allows opportunity for discussion on a variety of areas and ideas.

XII. East of Hudson Committee – Fred Huneke

The East of Hudson Ag Program's Riverstone Equine Farm tour/luncheon in May was canceled due to limited availability of invited guests. Several interviews were conducted for the East of Hudson Program Manager position over the last few weeks, with a candidate ultimately selected. An official announcement will be sent out within the next week with details included.

XIII. NYC DEP Report – Michael Vander Werff, NYC DEP

Michael commended this year's 'Pure Catskills Guide' as one of the best editions produced to-date. Kristan Morley and her team were recognized for all their hard work and efforts with Michael confirming that a hard copy is being sent to the Commissioner and staff.

XIV. NYS DEC Report – Kristina Gutchess, NYS DEC

Kristina took this opportunity to introduce herself as a new DEC representative at our Council meetings, having taken over Tom Snow's responsibilities as DEC's NYC Watershed Coordinator as of March 2026. Kristina's been working with East of Hudson staff on the recent release of the Croton Watershed Plan and is looking forward to working more closely with WAC in her new role.

XV. NYS DOH, US EPA Reports – Patrick Palmer, NYS DOH

The DOH is continuing with stakeholder outreach in relation to the 2027 FAD and will begin to schedule public outreach meetings by summer 2026; details discussed.

XV. Executive Session

Motion to enter Executive Session at 10:34 a.m.

Motion: Marilyn Wyman

Second: Steve Reed

Approved

Motion to come out of Executive Session at 11:00 a.m.

Motion: Fred Huneke

Second: John Verhoeven

Approved

XVI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:01 a.m. by common consensus.

The next meeting of the Council is scheduled for **July 28, 2026**, at 10:00 a.m., via 'Teams'.



Wayland 'Bud' Gladstone, WAC Board Chair



Date