

Watershed Agricultural Council

Agriculture ♦ Forestry ♦ Conservation Easements ♦ Economic Viability

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MINUTES OF THE WATERSHED AGRICULTURAL COUNCIL MEETING

July 28, 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

Jennifer Grossman, *Secretary*

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*

Justin Seelaus, *EOH Agricultural Program Manager*

Emily Ordonez, *NYC DEP Program Analyst*

Director's Absent:

Barbara Hanselman

Nancy Wyncoop

I. Meeting called to order at 10:03 a.m.

II. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes of the June 23, 2026, meeting as presented.

Motion: Tom Hutson

Second: Steve Reed

Approved

III. Executive Director's Report – Ryan Naatz

There are no substantial business items to report on at present; however, if anyone has any questions on the white paper materials that were distributed recently, please notify Ryan. Justin Seelaus was introduced to the Council as WAC's new EOH Agricultural Program Manager, with some personal background and experience shared. Please ensure to welcome Justin as one of WAC's newest additions to the team.

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

Bud shared another news article with the group pertaining to a farmer declining a multi-million dollar offer for their farm in Pennsylvania that would result in the property being turned into a ‘data center’. He expressed that it becomes more important every day that we do what we can to protect the farmland.

V. Building Committee – Karl Gockel

No meeting was held in July. A few DEP-related inquiries posed to the architect are pending before moving on to the next step in the project proposal process.

VI. Finance Committee – Karl Gockel

We are still awaiting 106 and 118 payments; details discussed. There have been several recent disruptions that have affected the finance department’s RFP processing due to server-related issues that are currently being worked on by WAC IT and ‘Logically’.

VII. Governance Committee – Jason Helmbold

Discussion relating to the proposed WAC ‘white paper’ on governance re-structuring and modernization recommendations to strengthen Council engagement, oversight, and organizational effectiveness has been deferred to executive session.

VIII. Agricultural Committee – Steve Reed

The July 14 meeting had a light agenda highlighting program updates, WFP revisions, proposed guideline revisions and program approvals, and review/approval of any informational updates/guidance documents.

IX. Economic Viability Committee – Jennifer Grossman

Today’s meeting was cancelled due to lack of committee member attendance to meet quorum requirements. It is asked that members RSVP their attendance plans ahead of meetings out of respect to other members’ time.

X. Easement Committee – Tom Hutson

The July 1 committee meeting discussion items included details on program FAD stakeholder negotiations and future deliverables, LTA accreditation updates, stewardship motions and updates, violations/legal updates, and acquisition project motions/updates.

XI. Forestry Committee – Marilyn Wyman

On July 16, the committee held their annual BBQ meeting at Dave Cammer Farm. Highlights and discussion were geared around a staff feasibility initiative being worked on in collaboration with DEP. Good discussion was had on program updates and the future direction the program is heading in.

XII. East of Hudson Committee – Fred Huneke

Justin Seelaus, new EoH Agricultural Program Manager, was introduced and welcomed to the WAC team. There was no committee meeting held this month.

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

Emily Ordonez, new DEP program staff analyst, was introduced and is leading the programs data management research and evaluation. Emily will be directly supporting several of the WAP long-term management plan action items over the next several years. She will be participating in

several committee meetings, including next month's in-person Council meeting, where everyone will have the opportunity to meet her.

Additionally, Michael noted, in progression towards the next 2027 FAD, he and his team had the opportunity to meet with WAC senior leadership and program management team in recent weeks. There was great collaborative discussion had reflecting alignment in what direction DEP and WAC wish to continue, and it's felt that there's some great opportunities to incorporate feedback in DEP's long-term management plan and proposal for the 2027 FAD. Michael thanked Ryan Naatz and the WAC program management team for the great discussion and is looking forward to working together through the next year and heading into the next FAD.

XIV. NYS DEC Report – Kristina Gutches, NYS DEC

There are no updates to report for this month.

XV. NYS DOH Report – Patrick Palmer, NYS DOH

Will be looking to release DOH's FAD compliance assessment report very soon, which reflects their view on how NYC did in meeting requirements relating to the current five-year FAD period. The report will eventually be posted to the DOH website; however, in the meantime, Pat will circulate it to Ryan Naatz and Amy Faulkner to share with Council as they get it out to the other stakeholders. Additionally, conversations with NYC are continuing to progress on the development of the terms of the next FAD.

XV. Executive Session

Motion to enter Executive Session at 10:45 a.m.

Motion: Fred Huneke

Second: Jim Armstrong

Approved

Motion to come out of Executive Session at 12:10 p.m.

Motion: Jim Darling

Second: Tom Hutson

Approved

XVI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:11 p.m. by common consensus.

The next meeting of the Council will be held in-person, **August 25, 2026**, at 10:00 a.m.

Jennifer Grossman

Jennifer Grossman, WAC Secretary

09 / 12 / 2026

Date

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