



**MINUTES OF THE PARK ECOLOGY COMMITTEE MEETING
May 13, 2016**

The Committee meeting convened at approximately 9:00 a.m.

Park Ecology Committee Members Present:

Dan Wilt, Bradley Austin, Robert Stegemann, and Acting Chair, Arthur Lussi.

Other Members and Designees Present:

Richard Booth, Sherman Craig, Karen Feldman, Dierdre Scozzafava, William Thomas, and Agency Chairwoman Lani Ulrich.

Local Government Review Board:

Fred Monroe.

Agency Staff Present:

Terry Martino, James Townsend, Ed Snizek.

Approval of Draft Committee Minutes for March 2016

A motion to approve the draft committee minutes was made by Mr. Austin and was seconded by Mr. Wilt. All were in favor.

Park Ecology Report (Ed Snizek)

Mr. Snizek discussed the NYS Aquatic Invasive Species grants, of which 11 were awarded to Adirondack communities for spread prevention measures such as boat launch stewards, decontamination stations, etc.

Mr. Craig noted that both the APA and DEC have made major advances in responding to the invasive species issues within the Park and the State overall.

Mr. Snizek reviewed upcoming conferences that RASS staff will likely be involved with.

Ms. Ulrich asked Mr. Snizek if he might know the cause of the severe fires that are raging in Canada. Mr. Stegemann responded that his understanding of the fire situation in Canada is that very dry conditions existed and lightning strikes ignited the fires. Ms. Ulrich noted that her understanding was that there were invasive pests involved in killing a mass number of trees which created ideal conditions for such a situation.

Mr. Snizek reported on the EPA grant and noted that three of the four citizen scientist training sessions have been completed. The fourth session will be done by the end of the month. He added that Steve Langdon has been the organizer of all of the trainings

Wild Center Youth Climate Change Summit (Jen Kretser, Wild Center)

Jen Kretser provided an overview of the program, including updates of Youth Climate Summit events. Last year the Summit was held at the Wild Center for the 8th year and included students from 35 schools. Teachers and students introduced themselves and noted what school district they represented.

The students each presented projects that they are independently undertaking to reduce waste and promote recycling of various landfill items that eventually become useful items such as recycled tee-shirts converted to shopping bags to replace plastic shopping bags, biodiesel from used cooking oil, and glycerin for soap, etc. They also discussed how heat and electricity could be generated from the decomposition of organic waste in an anaerobic digester.

Solar projects were also discussed as part of their program. An example of a cellular phone charging station was given as part of their success stories. Other examples provided by the students was a carbon neutral prom and participation in the carbon program offered through the Nature Conservancy. They also discussed highlights of their involvement with the Climate Reality Project, I Am Pro Snow, Finland Summit, and Paris, UN COP 21.

Ms. Kretser talked about the various awards given to the Youth Climate Summit as well as projected goals they have to engage youth and communities around the world. The next summit has been scheduled for November 3 and 4, 2016.

Mr. Lussi asked the students what they do in their personal lives to affect climate change. Various answers were given including solar panels, recycling, turning off lights, composting, recycle and reuse as much as possible, biking, and communicating the importance of recycling to others.

Ms. Ulrich asked what the Agency can do as leaders in the Adirondacks to improve or contribute to protecting the climate. Ms. Katie Morgan replied that continued support of the programs is essential to their success.

Additional suggestions from the students included taxing plastic bottles and bags, and/or incentivizing local businesses to eliminate use of plastic bags, and place a ban on organics in landfills.

Mr. Craig encouraged students to continue spreading the word particularly to local governments about the programs they have been involved with and the projects that they have developed to promote recycling.

Mr. Booth presented three challenges to the students: get grounded in science and economics – having a basic knowledge of the science behind how things work is important as is the rules of economics; America is a wealthy nation however many places in the world are economically and environmentally challenged and drinking water out of a plastic bottle is a necessity as the water in many parts of the world is undrinkable; climate change will likely change many of the rules as to how nature works so therefore adaptability will be key and foreseeability may become more limited in the future.

Ms. Ulrich encouraged the students to find ways to inspire local governments to spend tax dollars in ways that help to promote sustainable programs to reduce impacts on climate change.

Ms. Ulrich presented Ms. Kretser and her team with a plaque recognizing their efforts.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:45.