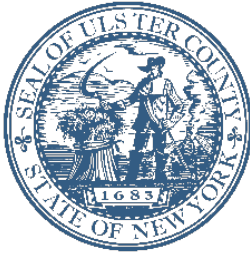


ULSTER COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Kristen Schara, Chair
Victoria Lucarini, Vice-Chair
Neil Rindlaub, Secretary



Meeting Minutes
Regular Monthly Meeting *May 27, 2026 6:30 PM*
Hybrid Meeting Via Zoom and in-person at SUNY Ulster Kingston Center, 94 St.
Mary's Ave

"The purpose of the Council shall be to review and advise the county and local governments on present and proposed methods of using, protecting and conserving the environment for the benefit of all the people."

With a quorum present, the regular meeting of the Ulster County Environmental Council was convened at 6:31 p.m.

Municipal Members Present	Kristen Schara (Chair; Hurley) Victoria Lucarini (Vice-Chair; Town of Ulster) Mark Ellison (Esopus) Jim Easley (Rochester) Emilie Hauser (City of Kingston) Dave Haldeman (Shawangunk) Carole Furman (Saugerties) Penny Coleman (Rosendale) Alan Newman (Marbletown) Ken Panza (Woodstock)
At-Large Members Present	Manna Jo Greene William More
Members Present via Videoconference	Roberta Clements (Gardiner) Rob Ferri (New Paltz)
Ulster County Staff	Andy Bicking, UC Dept. of the Environment Misha Kuznetsov (UCDOE)
Guests	Ann Peters (Saugerties County Legislator) Evelyn Laferriere (Hudson Valley Regional Council)

A link to the meeting agenda can be found here: <https://ulstercountyny.gov/environmental-management-council/emc-meeting-dates-minutes>

Ulster County Environmental Management Council

May 27, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Discussion/Approval of Minutes

The previous meeting minutes were presented for approval.

Motion to approve the minutes; second received; approved unanimously.

Department of the Environment Announcements

ULSTER COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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- **Department staffing.** Heidi Emrich is leaving Ulster County to join the New York City Department of Environmental Protection.
- **Municipal outreach.** Department staff have recently attended local CAC and environmental board meetings, including meetings in Rochester and Saugerties.
- **Climate Smart Communities Silver certification.** Ulster County submitted its Silver certification application with 420 points.
- **Municipal Energy Technical Assistance contract with HVRC.** The Hudson Valley Regional Council has identified 21 municipal energy projects in Ulster County, with 12 currently receiving technical assistance. Work during the second half of the year will prioritize projects with significant greenhouse-gas reduction benefits and projects serving under-resourced communities.
- **County air-quality monitoring network.** Brendan Walsh completed the installation of air-quality monitors at 17 sites throughout the County in partnership with Bard College and JustAir. A press release will be issued by the County Executive's Office.
- **2027 Department planning.** The Department has begun planning its 2027 work program and budget. Municipalities and community organizations were encouraged to contact the Department with potential project or partnership ideas.
- **Green the Scene contract.** A vendor has been selected, and the contract is in the final stages of approval. The contractor will provide zero-waste technical assistance at approximately four to six municipal or nonprofit community events.

CONTINUING BUSINESS

2026 EMC Roundtable

The 2026 EMC Roundtable will focus on natural resources, flooding, wetlands, intermunicipal collaboration, and mutual aid.

Discussion points included:

- Each municipality will be asked to select one representative from a municipal board, CAC, Climate Smart Communities Task Force, or similar group.
- The municipal discussion may focus on each community's greatest environmental challenge or a recent environmental accomplishment.
- The Roundtable portion of the event will be held near the beginning of the program to encourage focused municipal discussion.
- The event will be held on Wednesday, August 26, 2026, at the Rosendale Community Center.
- Arrival and networking will begin at approximately 4:30 p.m.
- The formal Roundtable will begin at 5:30 p.m.

Ulster County Legislative Update

A summary of recent Environmental, Sustainability and Solid Waste Committee activities and County legislative items was provided.

Members were referred to the accompanying ESS Committee notes for additional information.

Cornell Cooperative Extension Update

Anna Harrod-McGrew reported that Cornell Cooperative Extension is working with several municipalities on planning-tool updates and climate vulnerability assessments.

Participating municipalities include:

- Hurley
- Saugerties

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- Esopus
- Olive
- Gardiner

CCE is also assisting with a County planning-tool update. Community vulnerability workshops are expected to take place later in the year.

Roundtable Updates

Town of Hurley

- The Climate Smart Communities Task Force is updating the Town's climate vulnerability assessment tool.
- The next phase will include completing a municipal climate vulnerability assessment.
- The Town is updating its government operations greenhouse-gas inventory.
- The CAC is exploring opportunities to improve stream health through riparian-buffer restoration along the Lower Esopus Creek.
- Potential funding through the Hudson River Foundation is being considered.
- The Town may coordinate with private landowners and the Hudson Valley Farm Hub on riparian restoration work.
- The Town is exploring opportunities to create recreational access to the Esopus Creek for activities such as fishing and kayaking.
- Work on the comprehensive plan is continuing.

Town of Rosendale

- Continuing efforts to restart the food-scrap separation program in the Rondout Valley Central School District.

Town of Saugerties

- The Community Climate Action Plan has been completed and is moving through the municipal approval process.
- A proposed tree ordinance would establish a process requiring developers to evaluate existing trees before removing them.
- The proposed ordinance has encountered resistance and has not yet been adopted.
- County and Cornell Cooperative Extension staff attended a recent local environmental meeting and provided support on ongoing projects.

Town of Marbletown

- A Clean Power Picnic is being planned for July 12 in partnership with Sustainable Hudson Valley.
- Marbletown's Climate Smart Communities Bronze certification was renewed with 177 points.
- The Town is beginning to plan for Silver certification.
- The Wetlands Alliance submitted a proposed resolution to the Town Board.
- The Town plans to solicit bids for a solar parking canopy at the Rondout Municipal Center, which is jointly used with Rosendale.
- The Town investigated automated solar permitting for residential buildings.
- State permitting requirements for electrical connections and equipment attached to buildings appear to limit the streamlined permitting process primarily to plug-in solar systems.

Town and Village of New Paltz

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- The Town and Village are working toward combining their environmental advisory groups.
- Work on a tree ordinance is continuing.

Town of Olive

- The comprehensive plan is nearing completion and Town Board approval.
- An Open Space Committee has been appointed and has begun work on an Open Space Inventory.
- The Town is exploring the use of a Community Preservation Fund to conserve priority lands identified through the inventory.
- Olive's Climate Smart Communities Bronze certification was renewed.
- The Town is beginning to work toward Silver certification.
- Recommended zoning updates have been submitted to address the visual impacts of high-impact mountainside development.
- The Town is working with Central Hudson to evaluate municipal electric vehicles and charging infrastructure.
- Olive may coordinate with neighboring municipalities on electric-vehicle planning.
- Local laws and best practices for large-scale solar and battery energy storage systems are being reviewed.
- The Town is participating in climate vulnerability assessment work coordinated by Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Town of Woodstock

- The Town Board passed a resolution to begin remediation of the Shady Dump property and remove contaminated construction debris deposited over the Town aquifer.
- Approximately 20 potentially affected downstream properties were notified about the County's free PFAS well-testing program.
- The testing program was temporarily paused because of the volume of applications.
- Several properties near the site had already been selected for testing.
- The Woodstock Land Conservancy and local environmental partners launched a Stream Stewards Program focused on mapping and assessing the Saw Kill.
- The program will combine classroom instruction with field assessments.
- The Climate Smart Communities Task Force submitted its Bronze certification renewal application.
- The Town completed a Community Climate Action Plan with Town Board approval.
- A Flood Advisory Council has been established to conduct a local flood analysis in the Lake Hill and Willow areas.
- The Town is identifying unmapped infrastructure and undersized culverts that may contribute to flooding.
- The Climate Smart Communities Task Force has been helping troubleshoot municipal renewable-energy systems.
- The Task Force recently restored operation of the Town Hall solar installation.

Town of Ulster

- Members discussed a new solar development near the New York State Thruway.
- The Town received a \$20,000 Greenway grant to support an update of its comprehensive plan.
- The Town is contributing an additional \$20,000 toward the comprehensive plan update.
- The Town is also awaiting a decision on a Consolidated Funding Application.

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- The Town received \$6,000 from the Ulster County Soil and Water Conservation District to plant trees and shrubs along the Lower Esopus Creek near Buckley Street.
- The Town is working with the Hudson Valley Regional Council to prepare an RFP for solar installations at the sewer department and transfer station.

Town of Rochester – Jim Easley

- Watershed Coordinator Ella Cattabiani attended a recent Town meeting to discuss water quality in the Rondout Creek.
- Concerns included elevated bacteria levels during the swimming season.
- The Town is also considering groundwater protection, riparian buffers, invasive-species management, and potential restoration work on Town-owned land along the Rondout Creek.
- The annual Tire Brigade will be held June 20 at 10:00 a.m.
- The event will launch from the park at 1801 Berm Road.
- Volunteers removed more than 90 tires from the Rondout Creek during the previous year's event.

MS4 Mapping Grant

- The Department of the Environment is conducting outreach to municipalities located within the County's regulated MS4 area regarding participation in the upcoming MS4 Mapping Grant application.
- The proposed project would help participating municipalities meet intermediate mapping requirements under the MS4 permit.
- The project would improve the mapping of stormwater infrastructure and municipal interconnections.
- The County hopes to develop a coordinated, countywide stormwater mapping system rather than separate municipal systems.
- EMC members may be asked to help connect the Department with municipal supervisors or MS4 contacts who have not responded to outreach.

Natural Resources Inventories

- The Town of Ulster expressed interest in grant opportunities to complete a Natural Resources Inventory.
- Potential funding may be available through the Hudson River Estuary Program.
- The Department of the Environment will follow up with EMC members and municipalities to determine whether there is broader interest in coordinated County support for local Natural Resources Inventories.

Climate Smart Communities Grants

Climate Smart Communities grant funding, which is typically announced in the spring, has reportedly been delayed until fall 2026.

Action Items / Follow-Ups

- Municipalities to select a representative for the August 26 EMC Roundtable.
- Department of the Environment to continue outreach regarding the MS4 Mapping Grant.
- EMC members to assist with municipal MS4 contacts where appropriate.
- Department of the Environment to follow up regarding municipal interest in Natural Resources Inventories.

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- Members and municipalities were encouraged to submit potential 2027 project and partnership ideas to the Department of the Environment.

The meeting was adjourned.

The next regular meeting will be held June 24, 2026, at 6:30 p.m.

The EMC does not typically meet in July.

The following meeting will be the EMC Roundtable on August 26, 2026, at the Rosendale Community Center.

Respectfully submitted,

Misha Kuznetsov

Ulster County Department of the Environment