

Town of Canandaigua

Environmental Conservation Board

2015 Annual Report

Purpose: Town Code (Chapter 18-6) and New York State General Municipal Law (GMU Article 12 F Section 239-X Paragraph 1 Subparagraph f) both require that the Environmental Conservation Board (ECB) submit to the Town Board a year end annual report on the work and activities of the ECB. The State law additionally requires that the Town Board forward a copy of the annual report to the Commissioner of Environmental Conservation.

Open Space Preservation: In 2015 the Town received five landowner applications to participate in the Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program. The ECB held a special meeting with the landowners and the Finger Lakes Land Trust to review and rank each application. The ranking was reported to the Town Board with a recommendation to pursue as many applications as can be funded. It should be noted that the quality of the applications was very high this year with everyone having learned from the review process in 2014.

The Town Board reviewed the ranking and determined that they would assist the Finger Lakes Land Trust with one application and pursue one more through the Town. As of this report, these applications have not yet been submitted to the state pending the Department of Agriculture and Markets opening the submission of proposals window for our region.

Open Space Index: The ECB is charged with maintaining an up to date inventory and map of lands of conservation interest in the Town. The index was mapped with other environmentally significant features in 2011 as the Natural Resources Inventory. In 2015 the ECB made no changes to the Open Space Index portion of the Natural Resources Inventory.

Open Space Index Referrals: In 2015 the Town received one application for development of land adjacent to one of the ranked scenic views listed in the Open Space Index. The ECB provided comments to the Planning Board related to mitigating negative impact to the scenic view.

Other Referrals: In 2015 dozens of applications for development in locations of potential environmental significance were referred to the ECB for review. These were often locations adjacent to Canandaigua Lake or in the Canandaigua Lake Watershed. The ECB provided comments to the Planning Board and Zoning Board related to mitigating potential negative impacts.

Natural Resources Inventory: In 2015 representatives from the ECB served on the Town's Comprehensive Plan Citizens Implementation Committee and the Natural Resources Inventory sub-committee. Work to strengthen Town Code related to the Natural Resources Inventory is ongoing.

Public Education: In 2015 the ECB continued work on environment related public education initiatives and this work is ongoing. Pamphlet and web site information was developed on invasive species and on recycling. Also in 2015, the Town worked with the Canandaigua Lake Watershed Association to develop and implement an invasive species removal demonstration project on Town owned open space land adjacent to Sucker Brook and the Olde Brookside subdivision.

Comprehensive Plan Citizens Implementation Committee: In December 2015 the ECB approved a resolution of support of the work of the CIC as detailed in a December report to the Town Board.

- The Agriculture Team is working to develop and implement a Farmland Enhancement Program.
- The Natural Resources Inventory Team is working to develop protections for steep slopes, ridgelines, and shorelines.
- The Conservation Easement Team has made recommendations to the Town Board of ways to encourage more landowners to enter into conservation easements. They've further recommended the establishment of an annual appropriation from any General Fund unexpended fund balance to the Open Space Reserve Fund and consideration of the establishment of an Open Space Preservation Fee to be levied on any new construction in the town.
- The Sewer Master Plan Team is working to develop a comprehensive master plan identifying where sanitary sewers should be developed in the town.
- The Mixed Use Overlay Team is working to develop town code updates to encourage appropriate commercial development in the Mixed Use Overlay zones.

Proposed ECB projects for 2016: The ECB is considering the following projects for 2016.

1. Continue to work with the Town Board and Planning Board to develop alternatives to the Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) for open space preservation.
2. Continue to establish connections with outside agencies and others with a similar mission.
3. Continue to assist the Development Office with development of the Natural Resources Inventory and Guide.
4. Continue to develop environment related public education opportunities.
 - a. The Hemlock Woolly Adelgid is an invasive species threatening the hemlock trees that are vital to maintaining soil stability in the gullies of our town..
5. Continue to work with the Citizens Implementation Committee to strengthen Town Code for the protection of natural resources.

Submitted by Kevin Reynolds, Chairman – on behalf of the Environmental Conservation Board
December 11, 2015