

Greenway Ecological Standing Committee Meeting

Meeting Notes

DATE and TIME: March 6, 2014; 9 am-3 pm

LOCATION: Reinstein Woods Environmental Education Center
93 Honorine Drive Depew, NY 14043

ATTENDEES: Tim DePriest (NYSDEC); Kris Erickson (E&E); Patti Fischer (Tuscarora Nation); Dave Frazier (GSE); Kerrie Gallo, (BNR); Rachel Heckl (BSRA); Meg Janus (NYSOPRHP); Linda Logan (Tonawanda Seneca Nation); Paul McKeown (NYSDEC), Erin Redding (GSE); Jajeane Rose (WNYLC); Scott Schlueter (USFWS); Loren Smith (Buffalo Audubon Society); Nancy Smith (WNYLC); Dave Spiering (Buffalo Museum of Science); Craig Thrasher (BSRA); Pierre Wallinder (CCBCC: Sail Buffalo); Norbert Watt (Buffalo River Yacht Club); and Steve Schoenwiesner, (NYPA) via teleconference.

AGENDA

9-9:10 Welcome, Introductions – Tim DePriest, Chair, GESG

9:10 -11 New Proposal Presentations (15 minutes, 5-10 minutes for questions)

- **BSRA Buffalo Rowing Center**, *Phase II Site Development: Shoreline Stabilization and Habitat Restoration on the Buffalo River* –Rachel Heckl, BSRA
- **Niagara River Yacht Club**, *Shoreline Stabilization and Native Habitat Plantings* – John Preisler, NRYC
- **Cazenovia Community Boating Center**, *Invasive Species Control and Native Tree and Shrub Species Planting, and Park Beautification* – Pierre Wallinder, CCBC
- **Buffalo Audubon Society**, *Niagara River Birding Trail Site Evaluations and Niagara River Greenway Habitat Restoration and Protection Projects at Buckhorn State Park and North Tonawanda Audubon Preserve* – Loren Smith, BAS

BREAK (15 minutes)

11:15 -11:45 Greenway Project Updates (15 minutes, 5-10 minutes for questions)

- **Western NY Land Conservancy**, *Niagara Escarpment Legacy Project* – Nancy Smith, WNYLC

11:45-1 Habitat Enhancement and Restoration Fund Project Updates

- **SUNY College at Buffalo**, *Defining habitat use and behavior of the Common Map Turtle and Eastern Spiny Softshell Turtle in the upper Niagara River* , Dr. Ed Standora, SUNY Buffalo
- **SUNY College at Brockport**, *Status of Longear Sunfish (*Lepomis megalotis*) in Lower Tonawanda Creek, Niagara Basin*, Dr. Jim Haynes, SUNY Brockport

LUNCH BREAK

Financial Status and Update – Steve Schoenwiesner, Secretary, GESC

Discussion on New Proposals and Current Projects – GESC Members / Reps

MEETING NOTES

I. *Project Proposal Presentations*

The following project proposals were presented to the GESC:

A. Phase II Site Development: Shoreline Stabilization and Habitat Restoration on the Buffalo River

Craig Thrasher and Rachel Heckl of the Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association (BSRA) Buffalo Rowing Center presented a proposal for shoreline stabilization using a sheet pile wall and native plant restoration.

B. Shoreline Stabilization and Native Habitat Plantings

Norbert Watt of the Buffalo River Yacht Club presented a proposal for stabilization of the Club's shoreline using riprap and native shrub and herb plantings.

C. Invasive Species Control and Native Tree and Shrub Species Planting and Park Beautification

Pierre Wallinder of Cazenovia Community Boating Center and Dave Spiering of Tifft Nature Preserve presented a two-part proposal.

1. Invasive Species Removal

CCBC proposed to remove invasive buckhorn and Japanese knotweed from two riparian areas, and then replant the areas with native shrubs. The shrub species will be chosen to provide a riparian buffer area with benefits to native wildlife.

2. Park Beautification

CCBC also requested funds for removal of danger trees, planting of native canopy trees, fertilizer, lawn mowing equipment, new fencing, tree carvings, bird feeders, wind chimes, hard landscape features, and interpretive signs.

II. *Greenway Project Updates*

The following project updates were presented to the GESC:

A. Niagara Escarpment Legacy Project

Nancy Smith of the Western New York Land Conservancy gave a final presentation for the completed Niagara Escarpment Legacy Project.

1. Highlights of the Project were:

- a. Identification of rare/threatened/endanger/special concern species
 - i. NYS Threatened plant species: yellow giant hyssop (*Agastache nepetoides*) and the smooth cliff brake fern (*Pellaea glabella*).

- ii. Found 3 Species of Special Concern state listed birds were found: Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*), Vesper Sparrow (*Pooecetes gramineus*), and Grasshopper Sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum*).
- iii. 1 Species of Special Concern salamander was found: Blue-spotted salamander (*Ambystoma laterale*).
- b. Two locally rare ecological communities were identified: alvar woodland and talus cave.
- c. Quantification of present day land-use on the escarpment: agriculture, mining, recreation and parks, private residences, tourism, and the Tuscarora Nation territory.
- d. Identification of historical resources.

2. The WNYLC established conservation goals and strategies for the Niagara Escarpment. The four goals are:

- a. Conserve critical natural and cultural resources, areas of great biodiversity, and special sensitivity, and areas important to ecological connectivity.
- b. Restore ecologically significant areas
- c. Strengthen the regional economy.
- d. Provide the public access to recreation and education opportunities.

III. *Project Discussion*

The GESG reviewed the projects that were presented to them. It was decided that further discussions with the grant applicants will be necessary before funding decisions were not finalized.