

# Annual Report

## Monroe County Environmental Management Council (EMC)



Mendon Ponds Park

2024

**Monroe County  
Environmental Management Council  
Rochester, New York**

**Executive Committee**

Thomas Dooley, MBA, EMC Chair  
Haines Lockhart, Jr., PhD  
William Santos, BSEE, EIT, LEED AP BD+C  
Caroline Kilmer  
Virginia McIntyre, County Legislator  
Susan Hughes-Smith, County Legislator  
Clement Chung, PE  
Starr O'Neil, EMC Coordinator  
Elizabeth Kaptein, Recording Secretary

Adam Bello  
County Executive

Yversha Román  
President of the Legislature

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The County Environmental Management Council (EMC) was established in 1971 and formed under New York State enabling legislation and the Monroe County Charter. The charge of the EMC is to advise on all matters affecting the preservation, conservation, and ecologically suitable use of the natural resources of the county for the benefit and enjoyment of the present and future inhabitants of the county.

The Council continues its second year operating in a basic structure for the rebuilding of the organization. The two Standing Committees (Program and Nominating) have been operating very effectively over the past year. This has provided the council with solid membership and program on which to grow. Several High School students were invited to participate with the Council for the 2024-2025 school year. This pilot program will allow the council to increase student membership and work toward establishing an active student committee. The Ad Hoc Natural Resources Committee has been working with the County GIS Division to establish a mapping of the County's natural resources. This effort will continue into 2025. Many hours of community volunteer time have been put into these efforts to rebuild and grow.

We would be remiss if we did not acknowledge the support of the County staff associated with the Council.

The Monroe County EMC would like to acknowledge that we live in the unceded territory of the Onondowa'ga or the "the people of the Great Hill". In English, the Seneca people, "the keeper of the western door." The Seneca were members of the sovereign Haudenosaunee Confederacy. Please take a moment to consider the many legacies of violence, displacement, genocide and migration that bring us to today.

## **COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES**

Each council member was appointed to at least one Standing or Ad Hoc committee.

### **Executive Committee**

In addition to meeting monthly to execute its responsibility of overseeing member activities, the Executive Committee served as a planning committee charged with reinvigorating the EMC. The beginning of the year focused on membership and a more streamlined program. With these areas addressed early on, the committee changed its focus to developing the Student Membership Pilot Program. This new program was established in September 2024 and will operate until June 2025. Three Monroe County High Schools (Gates-Chili, Churchville-Chili, and West Irondequoit) have volunteered to participate in order to increase student membership on the Council and to help plan for the intended implementation of a new student/youth EMC committee for Fall 2025.

The 2025 work plan is being established. The Executive Committee has begun working on ways to best work with nearby EMCs.

The Executive Committee also developed and proposed a small budget for the 2025 fiscal year, which was approved by the County Legislature in December 2024. These funds are intended for creating an awards program, joining the NYS Association of Conservation Committees (NYSACC), and for presenter fees.

## **Standing Committees**

### **Nominating and Community Liaison Committee**

The primary goal of the Nominating and Community Liaison Committee was to ensure all membership spots on the Council and the Executive Committee were filled. This committee has accomplished the following:

- Reached out to municipalities facilitating their membership appointments, which included developing and distributing a letter requesting EMC membership nominations.
- Increased membership activity and engaged the County’s ex-Officio members of the EMC.
- Discussed and recommended to the Executive Committee a pilot program to help create a Student/Youth EMC in order to fulfill the EMC’s At-Large Student membership requirements. Invited and engaged 6 local high school students commencing the pilot program of the Student/Youth EMC.
- Appointed one EMC member to sit on the Executive Committee and continued search for two additional appointments.
- Revised EMC Work Plan regarding the Nominating & Liaison Committee activities.
- Reviewed and updated the Liaison membership list.
- Proposed a Chair to EMC.
- Continued search for Vice Chair to EMC.
- Facilitated the elections of EMC Council Executive Committee and the various Standing Committee chairs.

### **Program and Presentation Committee**

One of the primary goals of our Programs and Presentations Committee has been to help provide EMC Members an understanding of current topics in areas of environmental management relevant to Monroe County communities. Another key goal was to introduce EMC members to subject matter experts who can serve as resources for their individual conservation board activities.

January	Joint meeting with the County’s Recycling Advisory Committee and heard an update on activities at the Ecopark.
February	Patrick Gooch from the Monroe County Planning and Development Department gave a training course on SEQR regulations. This course had been identified as a priority by EMC members in 2023.
March	Jessa Fisher, Manager of the Helmer Nature Center, gave an update on the Center and its activities associated with the solar eclipse.

April	Dr. Kristy Tyler, RIT, discussed activities at the High Acres Nature Center.
May	Brian Eshenaur from Cornell Cooperative Extension spoke about invasive species, such as the spotted lantern fly.
June-August	Summer Break (no meetings)
September	EMC members shared with us items of interest and needs in their respective town conservation boards. A number of areas of interest were suggested that can guide us in scheduling future presentations.
October	Lance Lascari from Trout Unlimited spoke on their Irondequoit Creek conservation efforts.
November	William “Rusty” Korth from the Regional Transit Service (RTS) hosted the EMC for a tour and presentation on RTS’s Zero Emission Strategies.
December	Patrick Gooch, from the Monroe County Planning and Development Department and Robert King, from MCC and Secretary to the Monroe County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board, spoke on Agriculture and Farmland Protection.

## Ad Hoc Committees

### Natural Resources Committee (developed 2/15/2023)

This Ad Hoc committee was created to address a specific task identified in Article 47 of NYS Environmental Conservation Law, which is to compile an inventory of natural resources within the county, to include wetlands, open spaces, open marsh lands, swamps, factors relating to geology, soils, slope, water resources, vegetation, wildlife habitat, unique natural areas and scenic/historic/archaeological sites. The committee’s work on this overlaps with a need of the Monroe County’s Sustainability Coordinator, who was invited and joined the committee to help the inventory’s development. The Committee has accomplished the following:

- Met a number of times with the County GIS Division to determine what GIS layers are available.
- Are working collaboratively with GIS to build an application specific to the EMC, which will include layers needed for the Natural Resources Inventory. This application could eventually be available to the public through the County’s website.
- Ways to keep this maintained and up to date going forward still needs to be determined.

## **INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS**

EMC Administrative representatives participated in the following committees:

- Environmental Health Sciences Center Community Advisory Board (CAB)
- Irondequoit Bay Technical Staff (IBTS)
- Monroe County Climate Action Plan Advisory Committee
- New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC) Standing Committee on Climate Action
- Southwest Lake Ontario Sub-Basin Work Group
- Water Education Collaborative (WEC)

EMC citizen volunteers participated in the following committees:

- Monroe County Planning Board
- Monroe County Recycling Advisory Board
- Monroe County Fishery Advisory Board

## **EMC MEMBERSHIP**

### **Municipal Representatives**

Brighton ( <i>from 1/1-5/6</i> )	Paul Johnson
Brighton ( <i>from 10/15-12/31</i> )	David Briden
Chili	Larry Lazenby
Clarkson	Jake Straub
Gates	Charles Johnson
Hamlin	Steve Rutherford
Henrietta	William Santos
Honeoye Falls (V)	Andrew Less
Irondequoit	Vacant
Mendon ( <i>from 3/22-12/31</i> )	Carol Cloen
Ogden	William Parkhurst
Penfield	Cynette Cavaliere
Perinton	Mark Gaul
Pittsford	Caroline Kilmer
Pittsford (alternate)	Jacqueline Ebner
Riga ( <i>from 1/1-6/12</i> )	Greg Adams
Riga ( <i>from 6/13-12/31</i> )	Jennifer Balonek
Rochester ( <i>from 1/1-9/12</i> )	Charles Wes Grooms
Rochester ( <i>from 9/13-12/31</i> )	Rosemary Jonientz
Rush	Beth Hoak
Rush (alternate)	Patricia Kraus
Sweden	Richard Popen
Webster	Charles Zlotkus

**Municipalities without an Active Conservation Board or Advisory Council:**

Brockport (V)	Greece (T)	Spencerport (V)
Churchville (V)	Hilton (V)	Webster (V)
East Rochester (T)	Parma (T)	Wheatland (T)
East Rochester (V)	Pittsford (V)	
Fairport (V)	Scottsville (V)	

**Members-At-Large**

Thomas P. Dooley, MBA  
Haines B. Lockhart, Ph.D.  
Deborah Muratore

**Student Pilot Program Members *(from 9/1-12/31)***

Churchville-Chili HS	Hunter Reece Dana McCarthy
Gates Chili HS	Ethan Huynh
West Irondequoit HS	Finnegan Schlaefer Jack Debes Collin Pieters

**Monroe County Administrative Representatives (Ex Officio Members)**

Deputy County Executive	Jeff McCann Adrienne Green (alternate)
Director of Planning and Development	Ana Liss Steven Olufsen (alternate)
Director of Environmental Services	Michael Garland, P.E. Clement Chung, P.E. (alternate)
Chief of Engineering and Facilities Management	Sean Murphy Yasmin Guevara (alternate)
Commissioner of Public Health	Michael Mendoza, MD <i>(from 1/1-3/19)</i> Marielena Vélez de Brown, MD <i>(from 3/20-12/31)</i> Starr O'Neil (alternate)
Recording Secretary (non-voting member)	Ryan Parra-Merrell <i>(from 1/1-8/4)</i> Elizabeth Kaptein <i>(from 8/5-12/31)</i>



## **Monroe County Legislature Representatives**

Susan Hughes-Smith  
Virginia McIntyre  
One member yet to be appointed

## **Community Liaisons**

Climate Solutions Accelerator	Bree-Ana Dukes
Color Henrietta Green	Pat Wartinger
Federation of Monroe County Environmentalists	Sally Howard
Genesee River Watch	George Thomas
Genesee Valley Audubon Society	June Summers
Livingston County EMC	Mary Underhill
Town of Parma Liaison	Michael Reinschmidt
RENEW	Elizabeth McDade
UR  Environmental Health Sciences Center	Katrina Smith Korfmacher
Water Education Collaborative	Paul Sawyko/Caroline Kilmer

## **Agency Liaisons**

City of Rochester	Shalini Beath
MC Department of Planning & Development	Patrick Gooch
MC DES Sustainability Coordinator	Madison Quinn
MC Law Department	Brian Green, Esq.
MC Parks Department	Robert Kiley
MC Soil & Water Conservation District	Kelly Emerick
NYSDEC, Division of Air Resources	Margaret LaFarr
NYSDEC, Great Lakes Coordinator	James Lehnen
NYSDEC, Western Great Lakes Watershed Coordinator	Ryan Elliott