

Vestal Conservation Advisory Commission
Minutes of the September 17, 2014 Meeting

Present: Curt Pueschel, Steve Appel, Michael Restuccia, Victor Lamoureux, Cynthia Stephens/Westerman, Adam Flint, Linda Green, and interns Megan Larson and Stephanie Craig

Minutes of the August meeting had been approved by e-mail. The next regular meeting of the CAC is scheduled for October 18, 2014.

Jeremy Waddell from Upper Susquehanna Coalition had been invited to the meeting, but he was unable to attend. He is generally not available during evenings but perhaps some CAC members will be able to meet with him at some of the parks site during a time that is more convenient for his schedule.

Curt showed photographs taken at Vestal Center Park, Richard Avenue Park, David Avenue Park, and the wetland next to Moore Park taken during a recent field trip with Megan and Stephanie. The possibility of creating a wetland at Vestal Center Park, which already has a few small wetland pools, was discussed. It could provide an educational resource, as well as retaining some water flow.

Curt asked that members send comment on the portions of the draft parks conservation plan that have been earlier distributed by e-mail. Although additional visits to particular parks will be necessary to assess features such as spring wildflower flora, trips by the full CAC memberships will probably not be needed. The descriptions of the remaining parks will probably be completed in two parts and at least one of those will be forthcoming soon.

Victor noted that Eurasian milfoil, an invasive aquatic plant, has been found in the Castle Garden pond. Dense growths of this plant can have significant negative effects on native aquatic communities.

Some recent information about hemlock woolly adelgids and emerald ash borers was discussed. We still do not know the status of the ash and hemlock identification guides being developed with artistic help from a Vestal High student; it is hoped that they can be recovered from a computer crash.

Adam reminded us that the 2014 NYS Conference on the Environment will take place at the Doubletree Hotel on Oct 2-4, and he asked that we spread the word. Registration is \$95. Volunteer helpers are also sought. He also noted that buses will be taking people from the local area to the People's Climate March in NYC on September 21.

Steve described his observations of natural gas drilling developments just south of Vestal. The drilling operations at two drill pads near Montrose appear to be complete for now, and the noise associated with drilling has ceased. Only a tenth of the area of one pad was used. Roads used by truck connected to the drilling operations are being maintained in good condition.

The consequences of gas leases were discussed. Although property taxes have gone up on many parcels in Vestal, the assessment apparently does not address the potential valuable of the land for gas extraction. It was noted that having a gas lease on one's property can make it difficult to get a home equity loan.