

Vestal Conservation Advisory Commission  
Minutes of the August 18, 2016 meeting

Present: Curt Pueschel, Cindy Stephens-Westerman, Victor Lamoureux, Steve Appel

In lieu of our regular July CAC meeting, the CAC met on July 14 for a field trip at the Shoppes at Vestal wetland site, which is just north of the Vestal Parkway and west of the Shoppes parking lot. Cindy, Linda, Steve, Victor, and Curt attended. What had been conceived of as a wetland to mitigate flow from Willow Run Creek after it passes through culverts under the Vestal Parkway and the Shoppes parking lot is now a densely wooded area through which the flow has scoured a cobble-lined stream bed. The present condition would appear to do little to reduce the stream volume by infiltration nor does it do much to diminish the velocity of flow. The stream cuts diagonally across the parcel and then flows westward along the south side of the Vestal Rail Trail. It feeds into a constructed pool that also receives drainage running from the opposite direction. This pool drains through a culvert to the north side of the Rail Trail, where the stream eventually passes under Old Vestal Road and into the Susquehanna. It was the view of all those who viewed the site that it would take very extensive work to create a functional wetland; however, if left unattended, erosion along the Rail Trail will eventually pose a concern.

Victor noted that the Town of Chenango is now spraying for hemlock woolly adelgid, joining the Ross Park, the Binghamton University Nature Preserve, Waterman Nature Preserve, and other local entities that are working to preserve their hemlock trees and avoid the erosion that would result from the loss of hemlocks along steep stream corridors. Curt found information that chemical treatments for emerald borers are also available (though application is more frequent than the once in seven years needed for woolly adelgids). Treating selected ash trees might be well advised in some Town parks, such as Barlow Park, in which a large ash tree is one of the most prominent and inviting features of the park. However, there appears to have been a die off of ash trees in the area that began before the EABs arrived; these trees do not show the characteristics of EAB-infestation, such as D-shaped emergence holes, bark loss, and extensive trunk shoots. Ash yellows disease, which is caused by a bacterium, is more likely the cause of this mortality.

The controversy regarding tax exemptions for solar installations was discussed briefly. Some puzzlement was expressed over the opposition of those who support natural gas leasing to solar development. It is not obvious why the installation of solar panels would, except for the drill platform itself, impair the exercising of mineral rights; which would allow the landowner double benefits should fracking eventually be permitted.

At the Shoppes meeting, Linda Green indicated that she has decided to not request reappointment to the CAC when her term ends in December owing to other commitments. We already have some vacant spots. It was agreed that we should define our goals for the coming year to better inform prospective members what issues they would be considering should they join.

Our next meeting is scheduled for September 15<sup>th</sup>.