

Conservation Advisory Commission  
Minutes of March 17, 2011 Meeting

Present: Steve Appel, Curt Pueschel, Linda Green, Shepard Bennett, Richard Pastore, Michael Restuccia, Cynthia Stephens/Westerman

Minutes of the February 17, 2011 meeting were approved pending revisions. The next meeting is scheduled for April 21.

Discussion of Middendorf Park and Rock Road Glen resumed. The condition of the abandoned road bed in Rock Road Glen was discussed, and it was decided that the CAC should consider what could be done to preserve the site's scenic value. To become more familiar with both the Rock Road area and Middendorf Park, a field trip is tentatively planned for noon, Saturday, May 7. We will meet at the West Sheedy (formerly Juneberry) Road entrance to Middendorf Park. In the interim, Steve will get information about the boundaries of the Middendorf Park addition. David Marnicki will be invited to join us.

Cindy called the attention of the CAC to the Broome County GIS website which can be found at the following address: <http://broomegis.co.broome.ny.us/website/gisweb/gisappswarning.htm>

According to Town Board minutes, the forester hired by the Town has assessed the forest in Middendorf Park. The CAC hopes that other features beside timber will be included in the forester's final assessment. For example, Dr. Julian Shepherd, who is examining natural areas throughout the county, has stated that the recent addition to Middendorf Park is the richest site in Vestal for native wildflowers. Seasonal components of the forest community, such as the wildflowers, cannot be assessed except during the appropriate season.

Curt and Cindy attended the Cornell Cooperative Extension session on the emerald ash borer. The borer has been found to the west in Bath and to the east in the Catskills. Once they are in the area, it will take several years for the infestation to become established and for mortality to begin. Several issues will have to be addressed by all the local municipalities, including what to do about ash trees on street right-of-ways. Should the Town cut the trees out preemptively for cash value and for more efficient removal? Because dead wood is more difficult to take down safely, removal in developed areas should occur before the tree dies. Pesticide applications can preserve individual trees but at a cost of as much as \$100 per tree per year. If homeowners are willing to pay for insecticide treatments to maintain trees on the right-of-way in front of their homes, should they be allowed to do so?

Cindy observed that the county legislature has a forestry firm examining Broome County lands and has allowed the firm to study the potential of logging Hawkins Pond Park and Aquaterra Park. The most likely goal of this study would be to harvest ash and possibly other trees. Curt noted that timber is being cut in the French Tract.

Cindy reported on a recent meeting about the westward extension of the Vestal Rail Trail. Most of the funds required for the extension will go to installing a bridge over Choconut Creek. The project will go to bid shortly. The new section will extend from the existing eastern portion

along Main Street and Pumphouse Road, and the new western end will be located next to the Freihoffer's Bakery.

Cindy also noted that the Susquehanna Sojourn, a three-day canoe trip to promote use of the river, has lost the Susquehanna River Basin Commission as a sponsor, but the Upper Susquehanna Coalition will support the event. Local groups may add support by hosting specific events during the sojourn.

Steve pointed out that some news reports indicate that federal budget cuts may result in the loss of planned river monitoring stations.