



# EMC News

May 1, 2001

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## ***Chair's Report***

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and Cornell University will do a presentation at our May meeting on the Radiation Disposal Site's Proposed Remedial Action Plan. The EMC has been following this issue for quite some time and we welcome the opportunity to have DEC and Cornell meet with the EMC.

Your mailing includes information on open burning of solid waste. Current state law permits open burning in municipalities with populations under 20,000. State Senator Maziarz has submitted proposed legislation to prohibit open burning everywhere. The new law would not apply to the burning of certain agricultural materials or yard waste. In 1995 and 1997, the EMC submitted to the Governor and state legislature memoranda in support of proposed legislation similar to what is being proposed now. The EMC has been asked by Senator Maziarz's office to send an updated memorandum of support now that the legislation has been reintroduced this legislative session. We will discuss this issue at our May meeting and vote on whether to send an updated memorandum.

*Submitted by Susan Brock*

## ***Environmental Review Committee***

The Environmental Review Committee met on March 27, 2001, and discussed several matters. Under old business the committee heard a report from Barbara Ebert on the Lansing Water Districts indicating that UNAs were located close to the boundaries of two of the proposed water districts. Mr. Herrick, Lansing Town Engineer, (T. G. Miller Engineering) assured Barbara that the construction will not occur outside of existing streets and will likely have no impact on the UNAs. A letter will be sent to Mr. Herrick stating this information as our understanding of the situation; a map of Tompkins County's UNAs should accompany the letter. The committee requested that Barbara Ebert attend the next meeting of the City of Ithaca Common Council in order to read to Council a letter (sent earlier) concerning the Southwest Natural Area Master Plan.

New Business during March 2001 focused on the Cornell University Veterinary Medicine Waste Management Facility Draft Air Sampling and Analysis Plan for Alkaline Hydrolysis Technology. The comment time period had ended prior to our meeting, but the committee had several questions to forward to Cornell's consultants, Malcolm

Pirnie: Is the test waste similar to Cornell's waste stream? Specifically, will the load reflect Cornell's operations and intended practices? Will the test contain diseased organisms? Has the test protocol been approved by the New York State Department of Health?



The committee also discussed the proposed Dog Park at Allen Treman State Marine Park, and asked that a letter be drafted to the City of Ithaca's Common Council indicating our ongoing interest in this proposal and our desire to have an opportunity to review additional information during an environmental review of the proposal. The committee asked that this letter be read to the Common Council at their April 4<sup>th</sup> meeting.

The meeting of April 24, 2001, began with a report from John Kiefer on the West Campus Residential Initiative at Cornell University. After John's presentation the committee discussed the proposal and asked questions. Barbara Ebert indicated that she had received a copy of the City of Ithaca's request for comments on the Draft Scope for the environmental review of this project and it was dated March 30, 2001, but was not received until April 20, 2001, the date on which comments were due. John Kiefer indicated that he believed that the City's Planning Board was going to vote on the proposed Draft Scope at its meeting that evening (April 24). The committee requested that a formal letter of complaint be sent to the city and copied to the Board of Representatives concerning the timing of this request for comment. This is not the first time that the EMC has received such an unusually late request for comment, making it impossible to provide an adequate or timely review.

John Kiefer also reported on his ongoing efforts to persuade Cornell University to strive for compliance with the U.S. Green Building Council standards for "green" design. He will be working on this as part of the West Campus Residential Initiative.

The Proposed Remedial Action Plan (PRAP) for Cornell's Radioactive Disposal Site (RDS) was distributed to the committee members. Donna Connery from Cornell's Compliance Office attended the meeting and asked for ideas on what information to cover at the May 9<sup>th</sup> EMC meeting, when she and Martin Brand from NYSDEC will speak to the full EMC. The committee indicated that, as we have some new EMC members, an initial overview of the project and alternatives is desirable; the committee also will review the PRAP and provide additional ideas to Barbara Ebert by

May 1st. Barbara will forward these comments to Donna and Martin to guide their presentations.

*Submitted by Barbara Ebert*

### ***Education Committee***

Earth Day 2001 was a success. Unlike last year, it was a beautiful sunny day and a good crowd gathered at DeWitt Park. Our table featured the Unique Natural Areas, including new EMC publications on Land Protection Options and FAQ's. We also displayed several county maps that are available through the Planning Department and West Nile Virus prevention strategy handouts from the county Health Department. The highlight for everyone was the hybrid Honda Insight, which Kenny had borrowed from Honda of Ithaca. Soon a Toyota Prius appeared, and people really enjoyed comparing these two fuel-efficient vehicles.

This summer we are hoping to sponsor a trash clean up of a specific site in each Municipality. Municipal representatives are encouraged to bring this matter to their Town Boards, so that we can get feedback from Supervisors and Highway Departments as to sites recommended, and possible scheduling. The EMC will provide publicity, some of the volunteers, and help to coordinate this effort with the Solid Waste Division.

A Solar Celebration to dedicate the 150 kW photovoltaic system on the roof of the TCPL will occur on Friday, June 8, at 12:00 Noon. This will be followed by a tour, and then a free, two day solar symposium with exhibits, panel discussion, music and refreshments.



*Submitted by Steve Nicholson*

### ***Energy Saving Tip of the Month***



#### Tankless Hot Water Heaters

Because they heat water only on demand, installing a tankless heater can cut your water-heating bill in half. Water heating is the second largest consumer of energy in a typical home, and this can save you hundreds of dollars a year. Featuring unlimited hot water, no tank to rust, and paying for itself within two years, why doesn't everyone have one? They are in widespread use in Europe and Asia. Americans, with our cheap energy prices, are only just beginning to be concerned about efficiency. Finite resources and the pollution in our environment suggest that it would be good manners to become as energy efficient as possible.

*Submitted by Steve Nicholson*

### ***Announcements***

#### Burn Barrel Ban Heating Up

New information published by the EPA shows that backyard burn barrels account for about 20% of annual dioxin emissions. Household burn barrels produce low temperature fires. They receive very little oxygen and produce a lot of

smoke. Today's trash contains a number of materials which, when burned, give off toxic by-products. Those presenting the greatest challenge for safe combustion include materials containing chlorine, such as PVC plastics, vinyls, clear food wrap, and bleached papers. Under no condition can household burning of trash be considered a safe health risk for your family. The EPA's dioxin reassessment has revised the cancer risk from dioxin from earlier reports. The increased lifetime risk of cancer of the general US population from exposure to dioxin could be in the range from 1 in 1000 to 1 in 100, in comparison with the "acceptable" level of 1 in a million generally adopted by US EPA. Ironically, recent news from Britain indicates that in the effort to burn over 500,000 animals to control foot and mouth disease, 63 grams of deadly dioxins have been emitted. This amount, produced by the pyres, is enough to deliver a dangerous dose to more than 2 billion people. We will be discussing this issue at the next meeting.

*Submitted by Steve Nicholson*

### ***Intern's Report***



Since this is that last EMC News I will be preparing, I thought I should submit a report. As some of you know, I will be graduating at the end of this month. After graduation I am moving back to Oregon where I will live in Portland and look for a city planning job. I've really enjoyed my internship for the EMC, and I appreciate all of the work you put into this community. Good luck with all of the ongoing and future projects!

*Submitted by Erin Wilson*

*No Reports Submitted*

Coordinators Report

County Towers

Pesticide Neighbor Notification

Water Resources

Executive Committee

### ***Reminder!!!***

The EMC's tour of Cornell's Lake Source Cooling facility is on **Saturday, May 5 at 10:00 AM**. The tour should last about an hour and a half. You can park at the facility (which is on East Shore Drive) or across the street.

