

SUSSEX COUNTY WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT

POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

DECEMBER 11, 2014

The meeting was opened at 7:30 p.m. by Vice Chairman Howard Baker. The meeting was held in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-1 of 1975, as amended, and notice has been forwarded to the newspapers and posted on the bulletin board maintained at the Sussex County Administrative Center for public announcement.

**ROLL CALL:**

MEMBERS PRESENT: James Landrith, Andover Borough  
Carrine Kaufer, Hardyston Township  
Howard Baker, Hopatcong Borough, Vice Chair  
David Muscalo, Lafayette Township  
Eric Powell, Sparta Township  
Michael Furrey, Vernon Township  
Denise Webb, Wantage Township  
Richard Gottemoller, At-Large  
Ernie Hofer, At-Large  
Kathy Little, At-Large  
John Nugent, At-Large

EXCUSED MEMBERS: George Green, Fredon Township  
Eleanor Mensonides, At-Large, Chair

STAFF MEMBERS: Eric Snyder, Planning Director  
Alice Brees, Principal Planner  
Antoinette Wasiewicz, Recording Secretary

ALSO PRESENT: Nathaniel Sajdak, Walkkill Watershed Group  
Jim Hutzelman, Highlands Council  
Christine Danis, Highlands Council  
Casey Ezyske, Highlands Council  
Joe Retz

Howard Baker advised the PAC that Eleanor Mensonides had a fairly significant stroke and is in the ICU at Overlook Hospital. There is a card that is being passed around for best wishes, prayers and a speedy recovery.

**FLAG SALUTE:** Mr. Baker asked for a moment of silence to honor the men and women in uniform who protect our way of life and freedom.

**PRESENTATION:**

A. WATER CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT IN NJ HIGHLANDS –  
HIGHLANDS COUNCIL STAFF:

Chairman Baker said representatives from the Highlands Council are here this evening to make a presentation on Water Conservation and Management in the New Jersey Highlands.

Christine Danis, Director of Science and Planning for Highlands Council, said she knows some of the PAC members, but not all and asked the PAC members to introduce themselves. Ms. Danis gave an overview of this evening's presentation. The Highlands Council is focusing on a water quality amendment for a portion of Sussex County and Morris County. They are currently working with Hamburg and Franklin Boroughs and Sparta, Vernon and Hardyston Townships as part of this amendment, which was prepared by Sussex County and reviewed by DEP. The Highlands Council reviews Statement of Consents if they are not preparing the Wastewater Management Plan for the community working with them. In relation to the Water Supply Management Act, the Highlands Council serves as the water supply management planning agency for the entire Highlands region.

Within Highlands Act and the Regional Master Plan, there is Executive Order 114. It deals with the Water Quality Management Plan Amendments as well as DEP Water Allocation Permits for a specific set of conditions that were identified in that Executive Order. Those conditions involve land use capability map zones and net water availability. This is done at a HUC-14 watershed level.

Ms. Danis said they are currently in the process of updating the Highlands Regional Master Plan, as required by law every six years. This is called the monitoring program and it is an opportunity to provide comment on the Regional Master Plan. Then to make plan changes, they can do the studies and analysis to make those changes. There will be a stakeholder meeting for Sussex County on January 14, 7:00-9:00 p.m. at Sussex County Vo-Tech. At this meeting there will be an Open Public Outreach Session regarding the Regional Master Plan Update. She will send a link regarding this meeting to Alice and Eric so they can share it with PAC. Ms. Danis said they are starting Technical Advisory Committees this spring and they are accepting resumes. Some PAC members may wish to serve on the committees.

When looking at the Sussex County WQMP Amendment, they took the County's maps and data on a parcel level to compare them to the Regional Master Plan. They look at the growth for future sewer service areas to see what that implication may be on water supply. As a result of that, they may determine that water supply, based on the Regional Master Plan, would benefit from a Water Use and Conservation Management Plan.

Casey Ezyske said that Byram, Hopatcong and Stanhope are in the Plan Conformance process and the Highlands Council staff will be working with them directly on their Wastewater Management Plan Chapters.

In order to do a region-wide analysis for the non-conforming areas in the Highlands Region of Sussex County, they set up parameters to compare the sewer service area to what Sussex County submitted to DEP in their G.I.S. data layers. They took out all the existing sewer service areas and the current permits. The parcels had to be developable, non-exempt, greater than a half-acre and representing greater than 50% conflict with the Highlands excluded area. Evaluation includes proximity to existing community zone, lake community zone, existing areas served, transportation, open water buffers, right-of-ways and local zoning.

As a result of the analysis, they identified 13 sub-watersheds that are in deficit across eight municipalities in the Sussex County WQMP area. (The Sussex County WQMP area also covers a portion of Morris County.) In Sussex County there are a total of 63 parcels, 8 HUC-14 sub-watersheds in five municipalities. They are Sparta, Vernon, Hardyston, Franklin and Hamburg. Ms. Ezyske pointed out the five HUC-14 watersheds in the Sussex Count WQMP area on a map.

Jim Hutzelman said he is the Water Resource Engineer at the Highlands Council. The Highlands Council's approach to resource management is through a science-based planning effort to attract and examine the best available information and methods. The methods and information was done at a regional scale with the hope to do site specific analysis. The resources and analyses were put into their technical reports.

Mr. Hutzelman said the State is divided up into four physiographic regions, one of which is the Highlands. The Highlands has four major basins in this area and 183 HUC-14 sub-watersheds. Their technical reports were to answer the question, "How much water is in the Highlands and how much of that is available for human use?" Highlands' aquifers tend to be unconfined or semi-confined aquifers; they tend to be sub-regional or local in scale; and they tend to follow sub-watershed boundaries. There is also a significant surface water supply in the Highlands. One of the major charges of the Highlands Act was to protect stream eco-systems and aquatic ecology, which are primarily dependent on low base flows during periods of drought.

The Highlands Council's approach to water availability emphasized base flows. The Highlands region itself is primarily dependent on groundwater sources from unconfined aquifers. They laid out a natural carrying capacity for water in the region. A certain portion of that is available for human use in addition to maintaining water quality from down-stream discharges of sewer treatment plants. This is called

groundwater availability. Net water availability is how much groundwater is available now minus what's currently being used. (This method is the same one DEP is using in their Statewide Water Supply Master Plan.) The DEP looks at HUC-11 watersheds and the Highlands looks at HUC-14 sub-watersheds. The Highlands Council also has different thresholds for groundwater availability than the State. Both DEP and the Highlands use a Low Flow Margin. It defines groundwater capacity based on hydrologic statistical data from gauging stations that are not downstream of reservoirs or major transfers.

For the Highlands, given its bedrock and topography, the month where they experience the lowest median flows is September. This gives them a low flow margin. They've averaged monthly flows for every September and then they deduct the 7Q10 (the average weekly low flow that occurs every 10 years.) This was done for each HUC-14. They had about 96 gauging stations in the region. The period of records ranged from ten to 30-40 years. For groundwater diversions, they look at June, July and August. For surface water diversions, they look at September. They also look at wastewater flows in September. This is because research has shown when there is groundwater diversion; there is a lag in magnitude and timing. For every gallon that is diverted out of the ground, there is a 0.9 impact on the stream and it tends to occur anywhere from 0-90 days after that diversion occurs. If there are concerns about September's flows, the concern is actually about water diversions occurring in June, July and August. With surface water diversions, that water is taken directly out of the stream and it has immediate impact; so they look at September withdrawals for those types of diversions.

Mr. Hutzleman said that "consumptive use" is that portion coming out of the ground that is not returned directly into the ground. He pointed to a map showing wells in a HUC-14 boundary. They get their data from DEP's Water Allocation program and track the diversions in terms of gallons per day, where it goes and where it is ultimately discharged. If the water went to a septic system or a wastewater treatment plant in the sub-watershed, that return would be measured. The amount that is not returned is called the consumptive use. If water is transferred out of the basin, as with a public water supply system, it is called a "depletive use". They track consumptive and depletive uses against groundwater availability.

Mr. Hutzleman said they do not look at the major surface water diversions that are coming out of the reservoir because these are permitted facilities that have safe yields. The reservoirs tend to be filled with excess flows (flood flows.) They look at net water availability, ground water availability, consumptive and depletive uses and the difference is net water availability. When there is more groundwater availability than is used, it is called a surplus; when there is more water being used than what is available, it is called a deficit.

The 2008 Analysis showed that of the 183 sub-watersheds in the Highlands, 114 were found to be in deficit. (He pointed out the various areas on a PowerPoint map.) He said there were six or seven sub-watersheds that had a deficit of greater than 1 million gallons per day. Most of the deficits tend to be in the 100,000 gallon to 500,000 gallons a day range.

The net water availability analysis led to the management tool, the Water Use and Conservation Management Plan. This was done for all sub-watersheds, whether they are in surplus or deficit; however, they are focusing on deficits first. They are trying to inventory the water, where the sources are, where the discharges are, where it is being used and how much.

Mr. Hutzleman said although the analysis is done at the HUC-14 sub-watershed level, and sub-watershed boundaries don't usually follow municipal boundaries, it will be the municipalities and the Highlands Council that adopt these plans. In addition to that, some strategies would be implemented by utilities.

A Pilot Program was started for the Water Conservation Management Plans in 2011. The Highlands Council funded the program to those towns who participated. It initially included 16 towns in 17 sub-watersheds, including Sparta Township.

The basic elements of the Water Use Conservation Management Plan are to identify water sources and uses; verify and update net water availability; deficit reduction/elimination approaches; funding opportunities; operation and monitoring; and deficit reduction and elimination strategy.

Deficit mitigation strategies are based on feasibility, effectiveness, cost, schedule and resiliency. As part of the Pilot Program, different strategies were presented to different stakeholders and the strategies were ultimately ranked and selected by the stakeholders drafting the plan.

Mr. Hutzleman said as part of the plan, they now have water use data from Years 2000 to 2009. The Highlands Regional Master Plan analysis was based on 2003 data only. The question then was, "What year(s) to use?" Do they use the most recent, highest use, trending or rolling average? They looked to see what is the most representative of the water profile in the area. Through their analysis, they discovered that many factors influence specific diversions from year to year: growth, anomalies, changes in utility operation, asset management and precipitation.

As part of the Pilot Program, the Highlands Council revised some of their methods to calculate net water availability and how it is examined in their plans. They only look at groundwater diversions now during June, July and August. Previously they took the highest maximum month of any given year. This tends to be the highest months for many utilities/sources because water use tends to increase in the summer. Now they only look at September diversions for surface water and wastewater returns. They also look at the linkages between adjacent sub-watersheds, recognizing that the sub-watersheds tend to be connected by either public sewer or public utilities. They do a better accounting now of wastewater returns, particularly as it relates to septic systems. They did not have that data from DEP from their NJPDES Program; they tended to assume that there was not a discharge there. Looking at a closer scale, they recognize that many of these developments have ground water discharges. They are now bringing those wastewater returns into the equation to better account for what net water availability really is.

Mr. Hutzleman said the Pilot Plans are in the final draft. They have gotten comments from their stakeholders. The plans are serving as model documents for other municipalities that are going through the Water Use Conservation Management Plans. The Highlands Council gets involved when it relates to water supply. They are also developing some model ordinances relating to stormwater management and water conservation.

All of the conforming municipalities will eventually adopt a Water Use Conservation Management Plan as an element of Plan Conformance. Other towns will deal with the Highlands Council because they have a pending regulatory issue with DEP. Some of those issues may be Water Allocation permit modifications, Water Main Extension master permits, WMP Approvals or WQMP Amendments.

Christine Danis said that the Highlands Council is working with Sparta, Vernon and Hardyston via Plan Conformance to develop a municipal-wide plan. Franklin and Hamburg are entirely Planning Area towns. However, the Highlands Council will work with them to develop a Water Use and Conservation Management Plan. The Sussex County Planning Division is part of their working group. Ms. Danis said when the Highlands Council has an approved Scope of Work in place, they let DEP know and this meets the DEP criteria for the WQMP Amendment.

There was a period of questions and answers.

Ernie Hofer asked if the Highlands developed a list of mitigation approaches. Mr. Hutzleman said it will ultimately be the stakeholders who prioritize those deficit strategies. As they developed the program, the Highlands Council came up with a list of strategies but they follow what they think are feasible and what the stakeholders are willing to do.

Howard Baker asked if there is an assessment of the resiliency of the eco-systems to the temporary deficit in September. Mr. Hutzleman said groundwater capacity comes from the low flow margin. There was another statistical method which became an intermediate point from the low flow margin to get to net water availability---the NJ Hydrologic Assessment Tool. It looks at certain stream statistics: floods, frequency of floods, duration of floods and components of low flow, how often droughts occur, how long they last, etc. A model run by USGS took water out of the stream and seeing which of those statistics is sensitive and which varies outside of some given threshold. That becomes the critical statistic and that's where those percentages of groundwater capacity are set. This is the best tool they have to use hydrologic data to put it to an ecologic sensitivity. There are better ways to accomplish this but not at a regional level. Ms. Danis said they would not need to do as much modeling of stream conditions and flows if they had more gauging stations where they could get real time data instead of using a model to fill in the gaps.

Howard Baker said if there is some consequence for low streams that people can relate to, it would easier to get support for the plan. David Muscalo agreed and also asked why the Highlands Council exists. Mr. Baker said there is a public perception that the Water Quality Management Plan was done to protect water available for Newark and

Paterson. Ms. Danis said that is partly true. The reason there are 114 deficit areas is because there is a lot of water leaving the Highlands. The Highlands area is the water supply for five million people in New Jersey. The Highlands Act is not going to change that, they are going to make sure that the water supply is there for those five million people. Jim Landrith asked if there is a program for the users at the other end of the pipe. Ms. Danis said there is a study going on that will be launched over the next year that will look at the 2040 water use trends across the state and look at land use conditions. It will answer the question, "Are the cities wasting water?" Mr. Baker said there is an impact to Sussex County for dealing with water conservation: the economy, property values, etc. If nobody is paying attention to it downstream, then that's a problem. Eric Powell asked about returning some of that exported water. Vernon is doing this with the SCMUA. The concept is there; it is a matter of how you design and engineer it. If they returned 25% of what is being taken out, it changes a lot of that data.

Jim Landrith asked if the groundwater is being monitored. Are the aquifers being diminished? Mr. Hutzleman said they are planning so they don't get to that point. The USGS does measure aquifers and water table levels in certain select spots. They also measure stream flows and reservoir levels. The Highlands Council is trying to make sure that in the Highlands region, we're not over allocating the water supply.

Ernie Hofer said that when a deficit has been identified, a mitigation plan is prepared and approaches are identified: How do you verify or certify that you've met the objective? Is it 10 years later, or 20 years later? Mr. Hutzleman said one of the components of every plan is an operation monitoring plan. They want to see those trends going down. They recognize these deficit mitigation plans may not eliminate deficits. They can see that groundwater diversions decrease. If they see population stabilize or increase and water use decreases or stay level, then they know some of those measures may be working. They would like to see per capita water use go down, particularly outdoor water use in summer. This has the greatest impact on their target of concern.

Eric Snyder said one of the things that needs to be addressed is the end user and that it should be addressed in the plan. If you apply a cost to wasting water, then presumably you waste less. There hasn't been anything like that. Mr. Snyder said to increase the comprehensiveness of the plan; they really need to address these issues. Mr. Baker said you are going to get diminishing returns on what's going on in the Highlands pretty quickly. There's only so much conservation that is going to have an effect. Ms. Danis said the ongoing study is to look at the demand and the change in demand related to land use and per capita. Mr. Baker said the Highlands Commission has the opportunity to lobby to the State to deal with some of the downstream use which makes the whole equation a bit fairer. At this point, it is perceived as unfair. Ms. Danis said they are hearing this from their stakeholders and that's why they will do whatever they can from the inside pushing out. She stressed the importance of people submitting comments on the website. Mr. Hutzleman said the public's sentiments are well considered and they do have a voice on the Council. Ms. Danis said that they are seeing towns pass Resolutions that are in support of a water user fee and setting conservation measures statewide.

Nathaniel Sajdak stressed the importance of education and outreach. Ms. Danis said the Water Use and Conservation Management Plan component and funding includes education and outreach as part of its scope. Ernie Hofer asked if there were grants available for non- profits. Ms. Danis said if they give money to a private non-profit directly, it would be a contract and it would be out of their operating budget. If a municipality, a group of municipalities or a county decides to work with a non-profit as part of an approved Scope of Work under their grant, they can choose whomever they want. Mr. Sajdak asked what projects they would pay for. Ms. Danis said a Water Use and Conservation Management Plan Scope of Work could include the development of an education and outreach component to a community. It says we're going to do these things within this timeframe and this is the budget for doing that. Mr. Hofer said there are 5,000 people in Lake Mohawk and they are talking about implementing some of the mitigation approaches that they've discussed this evening. He asked if there was some kind of advisory/financial support available to them. Mr. Hutzleman said the municipality should look at this as a larger issue such as lake health, water conservation or some combination of that. The municipality should look at their grant funding to see if they can redirect some of their dollars toward the lake. Ms. Danis said they could even issue a separate grant out of water use that might actually be a study specific to lakes and communities. Eric Powell said it would be a partnered approach because there are three municipalities that the private reservation of Lake Mohawk is in. Ms. Danis said moving forward as part of this WQMP Amendment and moving forward with the towns that they're working with, they welcome that, however they may want to develop that Scope of Work and create partnerships. She added that Sussex County is also eligible for funding dollars to assist through this process.

Mr. Baker said Sussex County has taken Water Quality Planning seriously for a long time, even before there was a Highlands Commission. He thanked them for their presentation and said PAC can use this as a foundation for moving forward more productively.

**MINUTES CORRECTION/APPROVAL:**

A motion was made by David Muscalo to approve the Minutes of September 11, 2014. The motion was seconded by Denise Webb. All were in favor, with abstentions from Eric Powell, Michael Furrey, Richard Gottemoller and Ernie Hofer. Motion carried.

A motion was made by David Muscalo to approve the Minutes of October 9, 2014. The motion was seconded by Denise Webb. All were in favor, with abstentions from Richard Gottemoller, Ernie Hofer and Kathy Little.

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

Alice Brees reviewed the correspondence listed on the attached sheet. No questions were raised.

**PLANNER'S REPORT:**

Ms. Brees said most of her work this month was on the municipal chapters. She received the Resolution of Endorsement from the County MUA for the Plan Amendment for Wantage Plaza. She will try to get this on the Freeholder Agenda for their final approval and then it will go to the DEP. Ms. Brees said that today she sent an e-mail to Wantage and Sussex to remind them that they need to revise their inter-local service agreement for use of the force main along Route 23 owned by Sussex Borough.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

A. MUNICIPAL CHAPTERS – REVIEW AND COMMENTS BY JANUARY 28, 2015:

The Municipal Chapters will be part of the County Wastewater Plan. Most towns have received theirs. Ms. Brees said she hopes to send the plan to the Freeholders in February and asked that the towns look at their chapter and submit their comments and additions to her by the end of January. She hopes to have the Wastewater Plan on the February 5 PAC Agenda.

B. COUNTY WMP DRAFT, EXISTING AND FUTURE SEWER AREA MAPS:

Ms. Brees said she was hoping that these maps would be posted online by now. There have only been a few changes to the future sewer area map. These should be posted on the website and will be available at the January PAC meeting. Eric Snyder said he told Dave Kunz that there is money in the grant to do it and that it has to get done this month because the grant runs out. Ms. Brees said besides the existing and future sewer maps, there are a few other maps in the County plan for environmental features, steep slopes and HUC-11 watersheds. She hopes to have these maps posted on the website and available at the January meeting as well.

C. WATERSHED UPDATES: UPPER DELAWARE, WALLKILL:

Nathaniel Sajdak said The Nature Conservancy has chosen to highlight the restoration project on the Paulins Kill for the front cover of their Newsletter. He said there are now four miles of contiguous corridor with restoration activities. He handed out copies of the newsletter to PAC. The newsletter shows pictures of the projects, quotes, a summary of the project and lists all the partners that are involved.

Mr. Sajdak said they did receive an approval to initiate restoration activities on the next parcel downstream on the Paulins Kill corridor. This State- owned parcel starts at Ross' Corner and goes to Augusta Hill Road. He said he has 600 5-8' trees being delivered on Monday and that all 600 trees will be planted next week between Monday and Thursday. This property now gives them the ability to extend this corridor close to five miles of contiguous restoration work.

This month they initiated work on another section of the Paulins Kill corridor, Newton Memory Park. They are working with the Town of Newton to implement this community watershed restoration initiative which is going to include stormwater management, and riparian restoration. This month they initiated a half mile of restoration work along the Moores Brook, starting at the Park and continuing all the way towards Hyper Humus. In two days they planted close to 200 trees along that corridor. With the Paulins Kill corridor on Decker Road and the work at Memory Park in Newton, they are getting close to six miles of a restoration corridor in this watershed.

Mr. Sajdak also passed out a flyer regarding a Workshop sponsored by The Nature Conservancy to be held at the Fairgrounds on January 28. The workshop will highlight the work that is going on in the Paulins Kill. Partners for the workshop include the NJ Audubon, The Nature Conservancy, the Wallkill Watershed Group, North Jersey RC&D, NRCS, US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Sussex County Chamber of Commerce. Some of the students from the McKeown School will give the keynote speech at lunch about why they are involved in the Paulins Kill Watershed.

D. DEP APPROVAL OF WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT PROCEDURES:

Ms. Brees said she covered a lot of this earlier in the meeting.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

A. EPA LIST OF POLLUTED WATERS IN NJ, 2012:

Nathaniel Sajdak said there was an article in the paper regarding the EPA's approval of the 2012 integrated list of polluted waters. The list identifies every water body in the State that is impaired for some parameter, such as total phosphorus or arsenic. With that identification of impairment, there is a strategy to deal with that impairment. They also identify the site location that is impacted by that impairment and then they identify the data source that was used to define that impairment. DEP is required to produce this list every two years to submit to EPA and then EPA approves it.

There was some criticism issued in a newspaper article about whether or not the State is doing a good job in meeting the demands of the EPA and getting streams off of this list. Mr. Sajdak said this list defines streams, it defines their impairment and in theory it says what we need to fix within the waterways in our State.

The Wallkill River is on the list. It identifies a section of the Wallkill River from Sparta Station in Sparta to Ogdensburg. It is impaired for temperature as well as aquatic life. They say a potential source of this impairment is upstream. The Paulins Kill has sections that are identified as impaired for total phosphorus. It also has sections that are identified as being impaired for aquatic life and fecal coliform. DEP then provides grants to implement projects. Mr. Sajdak said the DEP has done a tremendous job of funneling money to get projects on the ground that are going to make a difference in

the watershed. The restoration projects are a perfect example of that. However, the restoration projects are not going to achieve results overnight that are going to get the stream off the list. It is much greater to get a project on the ground, to get members of the community going and to get partners together to implement the projects. He said that is a major success story and why watershed management in New Jersey has been successful. Even though the impaired stream list might not be changing, we are still making a difference.

Mr. Sajdak said the heart of the problems in Sussex County for water quality is non-point source pollution. A project was put on the ground in Wantage which allowed a farmer to put a large manure collection system on his farm. It completely improved his operation and took a source of potential fecal coliform and e-coli out of the stream. This one project by itself will not get the stream off the list. We need all the pieces of the puzzle to work together to improve the conditions of the stream ten years from now. The Trout Research Center just released a paper this summer chronicling in a scientific journal the importance of reforesting stream corridors. Data showed that it has taken 10-20 years to get improvements. Mr. Hofer said the restoration work on stream borders generated by plants, trees, etc. will eventually filter stormwater running into the stream. So, over ten, twenty years, pollutants will be removed before getting into the streams. David Muscalo said that other non-point sources are parking lots. The organics from the parking lots that get into streams are absorbed by plants.

Mr. Hofer said the reality is that the impairment list is going to grow. No matter how much is done under normal conditions, that list will grow because there are new chemicals being identified that will show up on the list. Mr. Baker said that citing something on the EPA list of polluted waters is probably a good resource for looking for grant money. Mr. Sajdak agreed and said when they want to submit a project to DEP, the first thing they do is look at that integrated list and tie it to a water quality impairment. Mr. Sajdak said the topic of, "How are the streams in Sussex County doing?" will be a great discussion for future meetings.

B. RUTGERS "WATER PAGES" E-NEWS LETTER AND GRANTS AVAILABLE TO MUNICIPALITIES:

Ms. Brees said this was part of the mailing and it was for information purposes. Rutgers has a number of good programs and grants available to municipalities.

C. DEP NO-NET LOSS HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN STUDY:

Eric Snyder said DEP has been offering funding to the County to work with Rutgers on quantifying habitat value for threatened and endangered species. The object is to be able to improve some existing habitat as mitigation to offset any loss of habitat from development. It takes a lot of the arbitrariness out of the discussion.

Mr. Snyder said he expects the contract and grant will be approved at the next Freeholder meeting. The study will probably take about a year and will involve some municipal partners as well. This will also allow municipalities to put together a

Habitat Management Conservation Plan that will talk about how they will handle development proposals.

D. SCHEDULE OF MEETING DATES FOR 2015:

A Schedule of Meeting dates for 2015 was provided to PAC. The meetings will be held on the second Thursday of the month throughout the year, except for February. The meeting in February will be held on the first Thursday of the month (February 5) because the County will be closed on the second Thursday for Lincoln's birthday.

**MOTION:**

A motion was made by Ernie Hofer to approve the PAC meeting dates for 2015 as presented. The motion was seconded by Denise Webb and carried unanimously.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

None

**ADJOURNMENT:**

All business having been completed, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Richard Gottemoller. The motion was seconded by David Muscalo and carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.