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# NEWS from the CWC

## CWC votes to support Belleayre Resort project

MARGARETVILE, June 6, 2013 – At its regular monthly meeting June 4, the Catskill Watershed Corporation (CWC) Board of Directors adopted a resolution supporting the proposed Belleayre Resort project in Highmount, citing its alignment with both the recommendations put forward in an economic development study conducted for the CWC, as well as the CWC’s corporate purpose of reducing adult unemployment in the Watershed.

The HR&A (Hamilton, Rabinowitz and Alschuler) report was conducted in 1999 and was intended to guide the use of the Catskill Fund for the Future economic development fund administered by the CWC.

The report identified a “shortage of well-located and modern tourist facilities” as detrimental to economic growth in the region, and recommended that the CWC “support entrepreneurial endeavors that will provide job opportunities” and “act as a catalyst for stimulating public and private investment and economic activity.”

Since 1998 the CFF has distributed more than \$54 million in low-interest loans to environmentally friendly businesses, many of them in the hospitality industry. The resolution backing the proposed Belleayre Resort does not provide financial support, but will be sent to federal, state, regional and local regulatory agencies, municipalities and other parties that have been involved in the environmental review of the project.

Twelve members of the CWC voted in favor of the resolution; two board members were absent, and the New York City representative abstained from voting because the environmental review process is not yet complete.

In other action, the CWC Board

- Authorized up to \$1.3 million for a stormwater retrofit project on Lake Street in Roxbury, where hillside runoff has created persistent problems with flooding and stormwater pollution.
- Approved reimbursement of up to \$40,000 to help pay for a septic system at Onteora Mountain House in the Town of Olive. The Small Business Septic Program pays for 75% (up to \$40,000) of the cost of repairing/replacing failed commercial septic systems.
- Approved reimbursement to five homeowners whose septic system replacements cost more than \$20,000. Systems costing less than that do not need individual approval by the Board. Forty-eight systems were repaired or replaced in the first five months of 2013, bringing to 4,129 the total number of septic systems paid for by the CWC since 1998.

### Gilboa Dam update

The Board also heard a status report on the multi-phased Gilboa Dam project from John Vickers, chief of West of Hudson Operations for the NYC Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The dam, which impounds the Schoharie Creek to form Schoharie Reservoir, is currently being rebuilt at a cost of \$150 million. The dam work will extend through the fall of 2015.

In subsequent phases of the project, a tunnel will be driven to allow emergency release of water to the creek downstream of the dam, and improvements will be made to the intake chamber of the Shandaken Tunnel. The tunnel carries Schoharie water 18 miles to the Esopus Creek in Ulster County, and thence to the Ashokan Reservoir before heading to the Big Apple via the Catskill Aqueduct.

The entire Schoharie rehabilitation project, costing more than \$200 million, will be completed in 2023.

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Bob Miller, proprietor of EnviroEnergy LLC of Unadilla, NY also addressed the Board. The grass pelletizing firm has been involved in a CWC-funded study of the viability of using agricultural biomass for heating homes and businesses.

The study, conducted by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Delaware County, “is the biggest and best research in the world on grass energy,” said Miller, who expressed his appreciation to the Board for its support of this fledgling industry. He noted that his business has expanded into other product lines, including pelletizing organic fertilizer, and producing biochar as a soil enhancement.

The CWC is a non-profit, local development corporation responsible for several environmental protection, economic development and education programs in the New York City Watershed West of the Hudson River. For more information, go to [www.cwconline.org](http://www.cwconline.org), or call toll-free 877-928-7433.