

NEWS from the Catskill Watershed Corp

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CWC holds 19th Annual Meeting

MARGARETVILLE, N.Y., April 11, 2016– The Catskill Watershed Corporation (CWC) held its 19th Annual Meeting of member towns April 5 when results of Director elections were announced and 2015 achievements were recounted.

Re-elected to four-year terms on the Board of Directors were Town Supervisors Robert Pelham of Windham in Greene County and three Supervisors from Delaware County: Tina Mole of Bovina, Wayne Marshfield of Hamden and Michael Triolo of Stamford.

Officers of the Board for 2016-17 remain the same. They are President Triolo, First Vice President Berndt Leifeld of Olive, Second Vice President Pelham, Treasurer James Eisel of Harpersfield and Secretary Donald “Mike” Brandow of Gilboa.

The Board paused to recognize Jeffrey Graf, Chief of Watershed Lands and Community Planning with the NYC DEP’s Bureau of Water Supply. Graf was a frequent occupant of the New York City seat on the Board and is retiring after 23 years with the agency. He was lauded by several Directors for his fairness, honesty and for being “a stand-up guy” in a difficult role.

“I would like to think I played a small part in the good work done here at CWC,” Graf said, “It has been an honor to work with so many people of character.”

The Board also once again thanked Deborah DeWan, who stepped down from the environmental seat in January.

Program achievements

At the Annual Meeting, staff members provided an overview of CWC activities during 2015.

- 276 failed residential septic systems were repaired or replaced. Another 274 homeowners were reimbursed half the cost of pumping and inspecting their on-site systems through the CWC’s Septic Maintenance Program.
- A special project conducted under the Septic Program involved tying four properties on Washington Avenue in Prattsville in to that community’s wastewater treatment plant.
- Significant progress was made in constructing community wastewater treatment systems in Lexington and South Kortright where a total of 110 homes, institutions and businesses are expected to be served by municipal systems by the end of 2016. Solutions for the last five communities to be addressed by this program are under study.
- Funding was approved for seven stormwater control projects throughout the Watershed.
- 27 Watershed education grants totaling \$161,000 were awarded to schools and organizations serving students, teachers and the general public
- The first application to the Flood Hazard Mitigation Implementation Program came from the Town of Walton which was awarded funds to study the feasibility of relocating a communications tower out of the flood plain.

Total program expenditures in 2015 came to more than \$16.2 million, most of which was circulated among contractors, suppliers, engineering firms and community organizations.

Economic Development

Thirteen low-interest REDI Loans from the Catskill Fund for the Future (CFF) were approved for Watershed enterprises. The loans totaled more than \$5 million, supporting projects that ranged from installation of new water treatment units at a historic art colony, to the expansion of broadband service to more rural dwellers.

The CWC supported several special projects and activities in 2015:

It matched a state grant to erect wayfinding signs for recreational resources in the Catskill Park. The CWC is coordinating that project, one of eight Smart Growth Implementation Grants announced in a ceremony at the CWC in June.

CWC celebrated the July opening of the Maurice D. Hinchey Catskill Interpretive Center whose operations it is helping to subsidize.

The CWC continued its support of the Central Catskills Collaborative, which in 2015 successfully argued for official legislative designation of more than 50 miles of NYS Route 28 as the Catskill Mountains Scenic Byway.

The CWC also provided racks, portable toilets, promotional materials and other support for the Reservoir Recreational Boating program in partnership with the NYC DEP. Boat rental and cleaning vendors reported 1,463 visits by boaters to the reservoirs in 2015.

Seminars for engineers, septic designers, contractors, and municipal planners were sponsored by the CWC in collaboration with the NYS Department of State and other entities.

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. Its Annual Report may be found at www.cwconline.org. Hard copies may be obtained by calling 845-586-1400, or emailing galusha@cwconline.org.

