

**MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC HEARING OF
THE TOWN BOARD OF THE TOWN OF NEW LEBANON
ON COOL RAVINE CEA DESIGNATION
HELD ON MAY 10, 2022**

Present: Tistrya Houghtling, Supervisor
Britt Buckenroth, Councilmember
Deborah Gordon, Councilmember
John Trainor, Councilmember (online)

Absent: Marianna Anthonisen, Councilmember

Recording Secretary: Ashley Saviano, Deputy Town Clerk

Others Present: Steve Powers, CAC Member & CSC Chair (Online)
David Farren, CAC Chair
Peg Munves, CAC, CSC & BEDC Member (Online)
Ted Salem, ZBA & ZRC Chair
Bruce Shenker, NL Rep to CC Env Mgmt Council & CSC
Member
Christine Vanderlan, Hudson River Estuary Program
(Online)
Mary Young, NL Rep to CC Office for the Aging & Traffic
Safety
Steve Houghtling, LVPA Chief
Cory Bevans, LVPA
Eugenia Browning, LVPA
Gretchen Stevens, Hudsonia (Online)
Members of the Public

CALL TO ORDER:

The Public Hearing was called to order at 6:52 pm by Supervisor Houghtling. The meeting was held in person at the New Lebanon Town Hall, 14755 State Route 22 North, New Lebanon, NY 12125 with members of the public also being able to view the meeting at the following link: https://townhallstreams.com/towns/new_lebanon_ny

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE:

Supervisor Houghtling waived the reading of the Public Hearing Notice and asked that the Town Clerk enter it into the minutes:

**PUBLIC NOTICE and NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
PROPOSED COOL RAVINE CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL AREA
TOWN OF NEW LEBANON**

COUNTY OF COLUMBIA

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE, that, pursuant to 6 NYCRR § 617.14 (g), the Town Board of the Town of New Lebanon is considering designation of a critical environmental area within the Town of New Lebanon, to be known as the Cool Ravine Critical Environmental Area, comprising four cool ravines and adjoining buffer zones, as shown on maps available for inspection in the office of the Town Clerk and on the town website at <https://www.townofnewlebanon.com/>; and

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE, that the specific environmental characteristics warranting the designation are as follows:

A “cool ravine” is a narrow ravine with steep, high, rocky walls flanking a rocky stream. The ravine walls are commonly forested with a mixture of hardwoods and conifers, usually including eastern hemlock. The steep ravine walls and conifer canopy create an unusually shady, cool, moist microclimate that often supports plants of more northern affinities or higher elevations, and a cool haven for other plants and animals. The four ravines of the proposed critical environmental area (the “CEA”) are along tributaries or sub-tributaries to Wyomanock and Kinderhook creeks. The CEA boundaries are drawn generally at 200 feet beyond the rim of each ravine to encompass the area most important to maintaining the habitat conditions of the ravine. Ravines are a common occurrence in New Lebanon and the region in general, but the special habitat known as a “cool ravine” is rare. These places where air temperatures are markedly cooler than those of the surrounding landscape provide habitat for unusual plants and animals, and may offer critical refuge for wildlife and plants stressed by the advance of global warming. In this region, cool ravines often have plants such as mountain maple, fly honeysuckle, hobblebush, American yew, and red-berried elder. Mosses, liverworts, and ferns are often abundant on the moist rocky walls. Because the steepness and rockiness of the ravine walls may have protected some ravines from past logging, some may retain older trees than are found in adjacent forests on gentler slopes. Northern slimy salamander and small-footed bat may use talus (loose rock) areas of the rocky ravine walls, and northern dusky salamander and perhaps even the regionally rare spring salamander may use the streams and associated seeps of cool ravine habitats. Uncommon birds such as Blackburnian warbler, black-throated green warbler, and winter wren sometimes nest in the trees clinging to the steep walls and forested rims of cool ravines. Barred owl and saw whet owl may use the hemlocks for daytime roosts. These places are important contributors to regional biological diversity, providing cool, moist habitats for wildlife and plants requiring those conditions. They serve both as long-term habitats that anchor certain populations and as local temporary refuges that allow other organisms to withstand immediate stresses. All four streams that run through these ravines have been identified by the New York Natural Heritage Program as Areas of Known Importance for their sensitive coldwater stream habitats, and one is classified as a trout spawning stream by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. Cool stream temperatures in all these streams also help to maintain the coolwater conditions of the Wyomanock and Kinderhook Creeks, both of which are classified as trout streams in their New Lebanon reaches. All of the ravines in the proposed CEA are embedded in forested areas of 200+ acres that serve to protect the ravine habitats, in addition to providing other important habitat themselves, and allowing safe movement of plants and animals between larger forest blocks—migrations that may be increasingly important for the persistence of populations in this era of a warming climate. Two ravines are within the Taconic Mountain Significant Biodiversity Area, an area recognized by NYSDEC for its large areas of contiguous, high-quality forests, its support of regionally rare and state-listed rare and uncommon plants and animals, and its importance as a water resource for wetlands, streams, and

groundwater of the lowlands to the west.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE, that the Town Board of the Town of New Lebanon will hold a public hearing on the proposed designation of the Cool Ravine Critical Environmental Area on May 10, 2022, at 6:50 p.m., at the Town of New Lebanon Town Hall, 14755 N.Y. Route 22, New Lebanon, New York, 12125, at which all interested persons will have an opportunity to be heard. Participation by the public will be in person at the New Lebanon Town Hall.

Dated: April 12, 2022

By order of the Town of Board of the Town of New Lebanon.

Marcie Robertson

New Lebanon Town Clerk

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Supervisor Houghtling opened the floor to public comment and asked if there was anyone that wished to speak regarding the CEA designation for Cool Ravines.

Supervisor Houghtling asked if there were any online attendees that wished to speak regarding the CEA designation for Cool Ravines.

Nobody spoke in favor of or opposed to the CEA designation for Cool Ravines.

CLOSING OF PUBLIC HEARING:

All persons desiring to be heard, having been heard, hearing none a motion was made by Supervisor Houghtling, to close the Public Hearing and adjourn at 6:57pm. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Buckenroth.

Roll Call Vote:

Councilmember Buckenroth-	Aye
Councilmember Gordon-	Aye
Supervisor Houghtling-	Aye
Councilmember Trainor-	Aye
Councilmember Anthonisen-	Absent

Respectfully submitted,

Marcie Robertson

New Lebanon Town Clerk