

# CC Environment & Planning

Winter 2015



## Content

New Land Use Planning Tool.....pg. 2

Graphic Design Services.....pg. 2

Tips for T&E Species Review.....pg. 3

Green Genesee/Smart Genesee Update.....pg. 4



*CC Environment & Planning helps corporations and communities balance development with natural resource conservation.*

*It is possible to achieve economic vitality while preserving a healthy environment and a high quality of life.*

Visit us [online](#)

Dear Reader:

This year swept in with some exciting changes at Conservation Connects. The most obvious change: our name! I am pleased to announce that as of February 5, 2015 Conservation Connects officially became CC Environment & Planning. Over the past few years we have expanded our services and grown our capacity. CC Environment & Planning is a name that retains our history and foundation (CC = Conservation Connects), reflects our ongoing growth and development, and describes our future direction and focus.

Our company will continue to operate in its current structure. Contact points and telephone numbers will remain unchanged. Our email addresses and website have been changed to reflect our new name ([shess@ccenvironment.com](mailto:shess@ccenvironment.com) and [www.ccevironment.com](http://www.ccevironment.com)), however our old email and web addresses will continue to be operational for the foreseeable future.

We greet 2015 with gratitude for our wonderful clients and partners, for the excellent list of projects we are working on, and with enthusiastic anticipation of our ongoing and future opportunities. Read on about our land use planning tool that supports sustainable development and resilient communities, our graphic design services, simple steps for threatened and endangered species review, and a Green Genesee/Smart Genesee update.

My very best wishes to all of you for a prosperous and exciting 2015!

~Sheila S. Hess  
Principal Ecologist/CEO

## Something to think about:

*"The great challenge of the twenty-first century is to raise people everywhere to a decent standard of living while preserving as much of the rest of life as possible."*

~ E. O. Wilson

## GREEN GENESEE LAND USE PLANNING TOOL

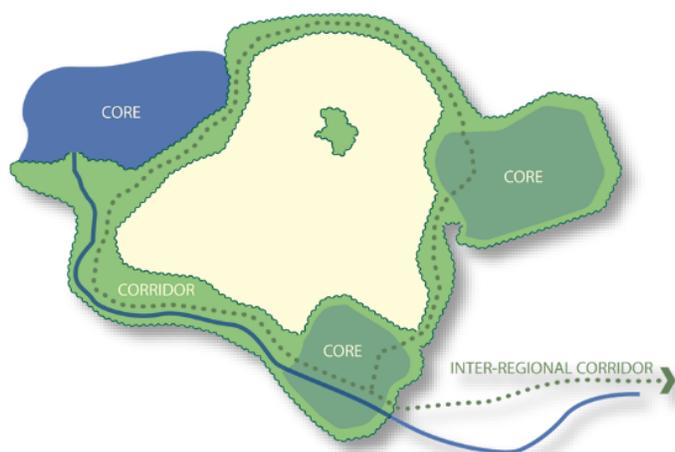
*Richard Sutherland, Environmental Planner/Operations Manager*

CC Environment & Planning has developed a land use planning tool for Genesee County that will help our communities grow in ways that support local economy and create vibrant neighborhoods while protecting our clean water, agricultural soils, recreational opportunities, and natural beauty.

Our GIS-based tool utilizes existing spatial data to identify key natural asset core areas, buffers, and connecting corridors. These landscape-level green infrastructure features are used to create ecological network maps that integrate agricultural areas and economic and community development priorities.

Effective land use planning requires science and community to work together toward land use optimization and the preservation of intact ecological networks. While it is well-known that natural assets provide ecosystem service benefits such as flood control, water filtration, nutrient regulation, and sediment control, locating and ranking these resources within an area of interest can be challenging and labor intensive. As part of the Green Genesee/Smart Genesee (GGSG) Project (see Page 4), the Green Genesee land use tool is used to locate and prioritize areas of green infrastructure value, helping communities ensure that economic and community development opportunities have long lasting benefits.

The Green Genesee land use tool is based upon the results of a green infrastructure analysis process outlined for New York State by the Green Infrastructure Institute. For more information on the land use planning tool and GGSG please contact Sheila Hess, CEO, CC Environment and Planning at [shess@ccenvironment.com](mailto:shess@ccenvironment.com).



*Photo Credit: Green Infrastructure Center, Inc.*

## FEATURED SERVICE – GRAPHIC DESIGN

*Jennifer Martino, Administrative Assistant/Graphic Designer*

Did you know CC Environment & Planning offers graphic design services? Our Graphic Designer (that's me, Jenn Martino) has over 4 years of experience developing creative designs for many kinds of projects. Our graphic design services include:

- Interpretive and educational signs
- Identity (logo and branding),
- publications (magazines, newspapers, books),
- posters, flyers, newsletters
- website graphics and elements
- Call me!

## TIPS FOR THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES REVIEW

*Liza Norment, Environmental Scientist/GIS Analyst*

Plant and animal species provide important benefits to people. Countless species provide people with food and materials for clothing, shelter, fuel, and medicine. Insects pollinate crops and control agricultural pests, and bats help control pest insects such as mosquitos. Natural communities made up of diverse plant and animal species provide us with enjoyment, recreation, and spiritual fulfillment. These communities also serve as indicators regarding the overall health of our natural environment. To that end we want to protect threatened and endangered species and prevent extinctions. Both state and federal natural resource agencies protect declining species through



*Photo Credit: Tim Vickers*

regulations and required reviews to guide our activities on the landscape. While these reviews are important, they can also be confusing. Different species are regulated in different ways and the best steps to take to ensure compliance are not always clear. Here is some information to light the way!

### **Federal IPaC**

Any project with federal involvement, whether via funding or permitting, must go through the Information, Planning, and Conservation (IPaC) process (<http://www.fws.gov/northeast/nyfo/es/section7.htm>) to determine if threatened, endangered, or candidate species are likely to occur within the area of interest. Projects without federal involvement do not require the IPaC process but it is important to note that project developers are still liable for any take that occurs due to the project. As the IPaC review process is relatively simple and fines for violations can be large, a quick species review is always recommended.

### **State Online Tools**

There are two web tools that can help you identify and locate species that might occur in your area. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) Environmental Resource Mapper (<http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/38801.html>) lets you map buffered locations of threatened and endangered plant and animal species. However, this site does not give you information regarding which species. New York Nature Explorer (<http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/57844.html>) provides the same location information as the Environmental Resource Mapper and gives you a list of threatened and endangered species that occur within a user-specified county or municipality. Using these tools can help indicate if additional review and correspondence is required.

Contact us to learn more about threatened and endangered species and ways we can help streamline your project review and ensure compliance.

# GREEN GENESEE/SMART GENESEE UPDATE

*Richard Sutherland, Environmental Planner/Operations Manager*

The Green Genesee/Smart Genesee (GGSG) project is an innovative sustainable land use and energy conservation effort supported by a partnership that includes Genesee County Planning, Genesee County Economic Development Center, New York Green, and four municipalities: Towns of Batavia, Oakfield, Alabama, and the Village of Oakfield (Partner Team).



Green Genesee Smart Genesee

In addition to the local support, a grant from New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) was obtained under their recently developed Cleaner Greener Communities grant program. There are two 'ingredients' to GGSG:

**Green Genesee:** A county-wide road map that supplies a science-based, community-based tool for making sustainable land use decision in Genesee County

**Smart Genesee:** Integrating sustainability through green infrastructure and energy conservation strategies into municipal comprehensive planning and land use regulation codes.

In August 2014, a leadership team was formed with membership from a number of stakeholder groups throughout Genesee County. The role of the Leadership Team consists of supporting the vision of GGSG, providing perspective, input and assistance to the whole project team. To assist the Leadership Team with their goals, a small but extremely valuable Resource Team has been developed to assist with the flow of information and perspective. The membership of this group contains representatives from organizations such as of Soil and Water District, US Army Corp of Engineers, Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council, Western New York Land Conservancy, and others.

A green infrastructure approach is being infused into the process to ensure the character of the county and abundant natural resources will be part of our economic prospect for current and future generations. Since mid-2014, the Consultant Team lead by CC Environment & Planning and including LaBella Associates and Human Energies has been collating a comprehensive baseline of information about natural resources and energy use within Genesee County.

The next step in the process is to utilize this information to prioritize resources and energy conservation measures. An understanding of our natural assets and the functions they provide will help us protect the ability of our environment to provide clean air, clean water, fertile soils, stormwater management and floodwater retention, outdoor recreation, biodiversity and community health. All of which support a strong economy and vital communities.