

Message from the Chair

Love the Catskills

First, a sincere thank you to everyone, especially our co-chairs/moderators, **Hayley Carlock** and **Dan Ruzow** (also our official photographer), and our panel moderators, **Gary Bowitch** and **Dan Krainin**, who helped pull together the Fall Meeting. While our panels were heavy on water issues (WOTUS, NYC watershed, emerging contaminants, etc.), we also focused on current issues in the toxic torts realm and evolving environmental and ethical issues concerning cannabis production (which seemed appropriate as we were just a stone's throw away from Woodstock). Thank you to **Telisport Putsavage** and **Sara Payne** for pulling together a thought-provoking cannabis dialogue. We received excellent feedback both on the program's content and the picture-perfect location. This was the first time the EELS had an event at the Emerson Resort & Spa in the picturesque Catskills. By all accounts the only issues were WiFi/cell service (which we knew was an issue going in) and that the Section should have reserved a bigger block of rooms. Thankfully the foliage did not disappoint. We had sunny, seasonal weather for our side tours including the Ashokan Center (thank you, **Rosemary**), the reservoir biking challenge (Biking with Bowitch) and a challenging Catskill hike (Climbing with Carl). Thanks to **Sarah Lobe** and **Christine Leas** for organizing our interactive cocktail hour that helped to mix things up. And finally, thank you to **Lori Nicoll** and **Lisa Bataille**, the cabinet, and all the EELS who pitched in with ideas and suggestions along the way. It was truly a group effort to pull the conference together.



Our dinner speakers, **Michael Hein**, Ulster County Executive, and **Ramsay Adams**, Catskill Mountain-keeper, offered different perspectives on issues facing the Catskills and the balancing act the area has had to and continues to face. Through our programs, discussions, and off-site activities I hope that our members left with a good sense of the history, political complexities (especially in connection with the protection of the New York City watershed), and the intrinsic beauty of the area. And by the way, who knew Ulster County was the first carbon-neutral county government? Go Ulster! For more details, see: <https://ulstercountyny.gov/environment/sustainability-energy>.

Changes and Priorities

As one of the upgrades to the EELS website we recently added a Photo Gallery. Pictures from the Fall Meeting, the Environmental Insurance Conference, and from a few prior events were recently posted. If you have others you'd like posted, please send them to: Brandon Vogel, Social Media & Web Content Manager, NYSBA at bvogel@nysba.org. Older pictures are welcome, as well.

We have a long list of priorities. We are continuing to revitalize our Section committees and have recently welcomed **Sarah Lobe** and **Christine Leas** as the new co-chairs of the Diversity Committee and **Jose Almanzar** and **Marthe Ngwashi** as the new co-chairs of the Environmental Justice Committee. With their help we hope to increase our CLE offerings in the **Diversity, Inclusion & Elimination of Bias** category and pull together some timely, interesting programs and panels. Our **Minority Fellowship Award** is back on track for 2019 and if all goes well with this award we will seek to increase funding for the following year. Our **Social Media and Electronic Communications Committee** took a hit when Meaghan Colligan left for D.C., but we have found two newer members who are willing to take on the responsibility for posting, tweeting, and publicizing events and issues of import to the envi-



ronmental legal community. And while we are on the subject of social media, please join the NYSBA Environmental and Energy Law group on LinkedIn and follow the EELS on Twitter (@NYSBAEELS).

In the upcoming months we'll be further discussing our Section's support for an **Environmental Amendment to New York State Constitution**. This would involve an amendment to Article 1 of the state constitution to establish, in the Bill of Rights, a right to a clean and healthy environment. For more on what New York and other states are doing on the green-amendment front, see: <https://forthegenerations.org/resources/states-pursuing-green-amendments/>.

On the **membership** front we continue to expand our offerings in the energy sector in order to attract new members. We are also hoping to encourage more student members by offering opportunities to attend conferences and events for free and to require that they join EELS (at no charge) if they are applying for the Fellowship or participating in meetings and contests. It's then up to our members to connect with them and encourage their involvement so we can retain them after graduation.

We will continue to push forward on **rebranding, marketing**, and a creation of a Section logo in order to create better name recognition and attract new members

to the Section. We hit a bit of speedbump on our efforts as a dated, pre-social media NYSBA policy forbids the creation of individual Section logos. We'll continue to work with NYSBA on this issue in light of current realities.

And in speaking of low-hanging fruit, we have requested that **recycled paper** be used not only for *TNYEL*, but also for Section brochures, mailings, conference materials, etc. We have also begun ordering the various awards from an eco-friendly company that offers recycled glass awards, bamboo plaques, and other promotional products made from sustainable materials.

Never, Never, Never...

And lastly, but most importantly, the past two years have been a struggle for many and the current administration's policies and priorities, in one way or another, have had a significant impact on many of our members. There has been no shortage of issues for the Section's **Future of Federal Environmental Policy (FFEP) Task Force** to deal with. Please contact one of the Task Force members if you'd like to assist in the Section's efforts on this front. In the meantime, stay motivated, stay focused, and, in the immortal words of Sir Winston Churchill, never, never, never, give up.

Marla E. Wieder

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