

Short Environmental Assessment Form

Part 1 - Project Information

Instructions for Completing

Part 1 – Project Information. The applicant or project sponsor is responsible for the completion of Part 1. Responses become part of the application for approval or funding, are subject to public review, and may be subject to further verification. Complete Part 1 based on information currently available. If additional research or investigation would be needed to fully respond to any item, please answer as thoroughly as possible based on current information.

Complete all items in Part 1. You may also provide any additional information which you believe will be needed by or useful to the lead agency; attach additional pages as necessary to supplement any item.

Part 1 – Project and Sponsor Information			
Name of Action or Project: Pacama Vly Watershed Critical Environmental Area			
Project Location (describe, and attach a location map): The ca. 179-acre Pacama Vly watershed in south corner of Olive, east of Lower Sahler Mill Road.			
Brief Description of Proposed Action: The Town of Olive Conservation Advisory Council wishes to establish a Critical Environmental Area encompassing the Olive portion of the Pacama Vly watershed, to draw attention to the unusual, high-quality wetland and the upland area that supports the wetland.			
Name of Applicant or Sponsor: Dan White, Co-chair of the Town of Olive CAC		Telephone: 917-902-7466	
		E-Mail: dwdiscover@aol.com	
Address:			
City/PO:		State: NY	Zip Code:
1. Does the proposed action only involve the legislative adoption of a plan, local law, ordinance, administrative rule, or regulation? If Yes, attach a narrative description of the intent of the proposed action and the environmental resources that may be affected in the municipality and proceed to Part 2. If no, continue to question 2.			NO <input type="checkbox"/>
			YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. Does the proposed action require a permit, approval or funding from any other government Agency? If Yes, list agency(s) name and permit or approval:			NO <input type="checkbox"/>
			YES <input type="checkbox"/>
3. a. Total acreage of the site of the proposed action? _____ acres			
b. Total acreage to be physically disturbed? _____ acres			
c. Total acreage (project site and any contiguous properties) owned or controlled by the applicant or project sponsor? _____ acres			
4. Check all land uses that occur on, are adjoining or near the proposed action:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Urban <input type="checkbox"/> Rural (non-agriculture) <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Residential (suburban)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Forest <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> Aquatic <input type="checkbox"/> Other(Specify):			
<input type="checkbox"/> Parkland			

5. Is the proposed action,	NO	YES	N/A
a. A permitted use under the zoning regulations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Consistent with the adopted comprehensive plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Is the proposed action consistent with the predominant character of the existing built or natural landscape?	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	
7. Is the site of the proposed action located in, or does it adjoin, a state listed Critical Environmental Area? If Yes, identify: _____	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	
8. a. Will the proposed action result in a substantial increase in traffic above present levels?	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	
b. Are public transportation services available at or near the site of the proposed action?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
c. Are any pedestrian accommodations or bicycle routes available on or near the site of the proposed action?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9. Does the proposed action meet or exceed the state energy code requirements? If the proposed action will exceed requirements, describe design features and technologies: _____ _____	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	
10. Will the proposed action connect to an existing public/private water supply? If No, describe method for providing potable water: _____ _____	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	
11. Will the proposed action connect to existing wastewater utilities? If No, describe method for providing wastewater treatment: _____ _____	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	
12. a. Does the project site contain, or is it substantially contiguous to, a building, archaeological site, or district which is listed on the National or State Register of Historic Places, or that has been determined by the Commissioner of the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation to be eligible for listing on the State Register of Historic Places? b. Is the project site, or any portion of it, located in or adjacent to an area designated as sensitive for archaeological sites on the NY State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) archaeological site inventory?	NO <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	YES <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
13. a. Does any portion of the site of the proposed action, or lands adjoining the proposed action, contain wetlands or other waterbodies regulated by a federal, state or local agency? b. Would the proposed action physically alter, or encroach into, any existing wetland or waterbody? If Yes, identify the wetland or waterbody and extent of alterations in square feet or acres: _____ _____ _____	NO <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	YES <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	

14. Identify the typical habitat types that occur on, or are likely to be found on the project site. Check all that apply: <input type="checkbox"/> Shoreline <input type="checkbox"/> Forest <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural/grasslands <input type="checkbox"/> Early mid-successional <input type="checkbox"/> Wetland <input type="checkbox"/> Urban <input type="checkbox"/> Suburban		
15. Does the site of the proposed action contain any species of animal, or associated habitats, listed by the State or Federal government as threatened or endangered?	NO	YES
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Is the project site located in the 100-year flood plan?	NO	YES
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. Will the proposed action create storm water discharge, either from point or non-point sources? If Yes, a. Will storm water discharges flow to adjacent properties? b. Will storm water discharges be directed to established conveyance systems (runoff and storm drains)? If Yes, briefly describe: _____ _____	NO	YES
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Does the proposed action include construction or other activities that would result in the impoundment of water or other liquids (e.g., retention pond, waste lagoon, dam)? If Yes, explain the purpose and size of the impoundment: _____ _____	NO	YES
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. Has the site of the proposed action or an adjoining property been the location of an active or closed solid waste management facility? If Yes, describe: _____ _____	NO	YES
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. Has the site of the proposed action or an adjoining property been the subject of remediation (ongoing or completed) for hazardous waste? If Yes, describe: _____ _____	NO	YES
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I CERTIFY THAT THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ABOVE IS TRUE AND ACCURATE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE Applicant/sponsor/name: <u>Dan White</u> Date: _____ Signature: _____ Title: <u>Co-chair, Olive Conservation Advisory Council</u>		

Project:

Date:

Short Environmental Assessment Form

Part 2 - Impact Assessment

Part 2 is to be completed by the Lead Agency.

Answer all of the following questions in Part 2 using the information contained in Part 1 and other materials submitted by the project sponsor or otherwise available to the reviewer. When answering the questions the reviewer should be guided by the concept “Have my responses been reasonable considering the scale and context of the proposed action?”

	No, or small impact may occur	Moderate to large impact may occur
1. Will the proposed action create a material conflict with an adopted land use plan or zoning regulations?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Will the proposed action result in a change in the use or intensity of use of land?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Will the proposed action impair the character or quality of the existing community?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Will the proposed action have an impact on the environmental characteristics that caused the establishment of a Critical Environmental Area (CEA)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Will the proposed action result in an adverse change in the existing level of traffic or affect existing infrastructure for mass transit, biking or walkway?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Will the proposed action cause an increase in the use of energy and it fails to incorporate reasonably available energy conservation or renewable energy opportunities?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Will the proposed action impact existing:		
a. public / private water supplies?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. public / private wastewater treatment utilities?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Will the proposed action impair the character or quality of important historic, archaeological, architectural or aesthetic resources?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Will the proposed action result in an adverse change to natural resources (e.g., wetlands, waterbodies, groundwater, air quality, flora and fauna)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Will the proposed action result in an increase in the potential for erosion, flooding or drainage problems?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Will the proposed action create a hazard to environmental resources or human health?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Project:

Date:

Short Environmental Assessment Form Part 3 Determination of Significance

For every question in Part 2 that was answered “moderate to large impact may occur”, or if there is a need to explain why a particular element of the proposed action may or will not result in a significant adverse environmental impact, please complete Part 3. Part 3 should, in sufficient detail, identify the impact, including any measures or design elements that have been included by the project sponsor to avoid or reduce impacts. Part 3 should also explain how the lead agency determined that the impact may or will not be significant. Each potential impact should be assessed considering its setting, probability of occurring, duration, irreversibility, geographic scope and magnitude. Also consider the potential for short-term, long-term and cumulative impacts.

2. Will the proposed action result in a change in the use or intensity of use of land.

This is answered "no" because there would be no direct effect of the CEA on future land uses or land use intensity. The purpose of the CEA designation is simply to inform people about the resources of conservation concern. The information could affect how a landowner decides to use their land within the CEA, or how a landowner or developer designs a subdivision or a new development project, or the recommendations or decisions of the Olive Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, or Town Board about future proposed projects within or next to the CEA. The existence of the CEA, however, would not dictate any aspects of those decisions; it would merely inform everyone about the sensitive natural resources in the vicinity.

- Check this box if you have determined, based on the information and analysis above, and any supporting documentation, that the proposed action may result in one or more potentially large or significant adverse impacts and an environmental impact statement is required.
- Check this box if you have determined, based on the information and analysis above, and any supporting documentation, that the proposed action will not result in any significant adverse environmental impacts.

Town Board, Town of Olive, NY	
Name of Lead Agency	Date
Jim Sofranko	Town Supervisor
Print or Type Name of Responsible Officer in Lead Agency	Title of Responsible Officer
Signature of Responsible Officer in Lead Agency	Signature of Preparer (if different from Responsible Officer)

Pacama Vly Watershed Critical Environmental Area

Town of Olive, Ulster County, New York

Description

A Town of Olive working group—including members of the Olive Conservation Advisory Council, staff of an environmental consulting firm, and a local cultural NGO—proposed the establishment of the Pacama Vly Watershed Critical Environmental Area (CEA) to promote the protection of the unusual wetland community of the Vly.

The Pacama Vly is an approximately 187-acre wetland that straddles the boundaries of the towns of Marbletown, Rochester, and Olive in Ulster County, New York. It is fed and drained by the Vly Brook which joins Rochester Creek ca. 0.4 miles below the wetland outlet. The Vly Brook is classified “A” by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), signifying that the best use is for drinking water supply. The segment of the brook that feeds the Vly is also classified as a trout stream (“T”), indicating that it has the clear, cool conditions needed to support trout. The entire watershed of the Pacama Vly is 1576 acres spanning the three towns, but within Olive the wetland and its watershed cover a 179-acre area east of Lower Sahler Mill Road. This is the area of the proposed CEA, as shown on the map on last page of this document.

The Pacama Vly has been recognized by New York State for its significant contributions to regional biodiversity and other natural resource services. It is part of a 3600-acre forested area that, in an analysis carried out by the New York Natural Heritage Program (NYNHP), ranks in the 95th- 99th percentile of forests in the Hudson Valley on measures of size, fragmentation, connectivity, stressors, habitat value, and carbon sequestration. The NYNHP has also identified exemplary occurrences of two significant ecological communities in the Olive portion of the Vly: hemlock-northern hardwood swamp and red maple-tamarack peat swamp. The latter is rare in the Hudson Valley region, usually occurring in areas of calcareous soils. The Vly is underlain by Catden muck, an organic soil with peat layers measuring over 80 inches deep. Deep peat deposits, if left undrained and undisturbed, are long-term carbon repositories. A rare dragonfly and two rare mosses have been found in the Vly.

The Vly is a disjunct part of the Catskills Mountains Significant Biodiversity Area identified by NYSDEC and recognized for the importance for large forests, headwater streams, rare plants, and exemplary ecological communities. A 49-acre portion of the Vly in the Town of Rochester is owned and managed by NYSDEC as a Wild Forest, but no part of the wetland or its watershed in Marbletown or Olive has any formal protection apart from that offered by the federal, state, and local (Rochester) wetland regulatory programs.

The upland forest surrounding the Vly serves not only to buffer the wetland from human disturbances, but also helps to maintain the water resources that feed the Vly, and supports wildlife species that use both wetland and upland habitats. Maintaining the forest intact will help to protect the special attributes of the wetland.

Threats

- **Tree removal:** Intact forests with undisturbed vegetation and soils in the watershed of a wetland help to maintain cool water temperatures, promote groundwater recharge, moderate surface runoff, capture sediments, and process and transform pollutants, in addition to providing valuable habitat for terrestrial and amphibious wildlife. Disruption of forest vegetation or disturbance of the forest floor can reduce the capability of the forest to provide these services.
- **Cutting of trees and shrubs** during the nesting season (e.g., spring through mid-summer) disrupts the activities of nesting songbirds, raptors, and other tree-dependent wildlife, and cutting during the period April through October can disrupt roosting bats.
- **Forest fragmentation** by roads, driveways, yards, utility corridors, and buildings divides the forests into smaller blocks that may be unsuitable for area-sensitive wildlife species—such as nesting songbirds that require large habitat areas and are sensitive to human contact or disturbances. Smaller patches of forest have more forest “edge” habitat with higher light and noise levels and infestations of non-native plant species. Forest fragmentation makes the formerly deep interior forest areas newly accessible to songbird nest predators (such as raccoons and domestic cats) and to brood parasites (such as the brown-headed cowbird) whose activities are ordinarily confined to open areas and forest edges. Roads and other developed areas dividing forests can also act as significant barriers and hazards to wildlife movement, and many animals avoid breeding near human activities.
- **Compaction and other disturbance of the forest floor** (as by large equipment) damages the soil structure, and reduces the capability of the soils to absorb rainwater and snowmelt. It can also harm amphibians, small mammals, and the diverse soil invertebrates and microbes that are fundamental to the forest ecology.
- **Infestations of the hemlock woolly adelgid** in the coming years may kill most of the hemlocks in and at the edge of the Vly and dramatically affect the habitat conditions of the wetland and the upland forest.
- **Infestations of the emerald ash borer** may kill most or all of the ash trees in the Vly and its watershed—white ash in the upland forests, and black and green ashes in the wetland. The consequences to the biota of these areas are difficult to predict, but may be significant.
- **Impervious surfaces:** Roads, driveways, parking lots, roofs, and other impervious surfaces (including compacted soils) prevent infiltration of rainwater and snowmelt to the soils;

promote rapid runoff of surface water, soil erosion, siltation of wetlands, elevated water temperatures, and reduced groundwater recharge; and are often sources of water contamination—e.g., from de-icing salts, petroleum hydrocarbons, and heavy metals.

- **Other forms of pollution** can arrive as direct discharge or in sheet or channelized runoff from agricultural fields or lawns carrying fertilizers and pesticides that degrade the quality of wetland habitats.
- **Recreational use** or other kinds of repeated and frequent uses of the Vly can lead to trampling of the sensitive wetland soils, littering, soil erosion, and noise disturbance to nesting or roosting birds and other wildlife.

Recommendations

Below are recommendations for actions that will help to protect the Pacama Vly and the habitats in its watershed.

- **Avoid direct disturbance of the wetland and a 200-ft upland zone around the wetland.**
- **Avoid activities that would cause siltation, warming, or other forms of pollution in the wetland.**
- **Avoid applications of fertilizers and pesticides** (insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, algicides) within a 200-ft zone around the wetland. Those substances can degrade the water quality, alter the chemistry of the wetland water and soils, and harm non-target plants, animals, fungi, and soil microbes that support the unusual wetland community.
- **Maintain intact forests** as much as possible. Minimize disturbance of soils and vegetation, and especially within 200 feet of the wetland to help maintain shade, water volumes, and cool water temperatures, prevent erosion, and protect wildlife habitat.
- **Avoid fragmenting the forests** with new roads, driveways, yards, utility corridors, and other developed features. Locate new development near forest edges to leave the forest interiors intact wherever possible.
- **If recreational access points and trails are developed, locate and design them carefully** to shield the wetland from human disturbance as much as possible.

Pacama Vly Watershed Critical Environmental Area

