

Chapter 2 - CEM Organization

CEM is loosely organized into five tiers. Does that mean that every initiative or individual project will go through all five tiers? Not necessarily. If you were working long-term with a municipality or other group, you would most likely go through all five tiers. There may be times when only very specific issues need to be addressed through CEM and only one of two worksheets get reviewed. There may be opportunities to impact master plans, create conservation zones or assist in conservation sub-division development or there may be opportunities to provide limited technical assistance and ideas. Whatever the depth and scope of your CEM initiative / CEM involvement is, there are real opportunities to bring about positive change to the way we perceive and manage our natural resources and water quality.

There are also many potential benefits and opportunities for the group or individuals involved with a CEM initiative or project. Here is a brief listing:

- Broadened & strengthened support for the groups and individuals involved
- A chance to work on the “Big Picture”
- Broadened Potential Funding Sources
- A chance to treat the “disease” rather than fighting symptoms
- Improved visibility and credibility in municipality, watershed and/or county
- Increased on the ground efforts
- A chance to use previous developed data, protocols and strategies
- An opportunity to shift municipal, watershed and/or county’s focus and priorities on environmental issues
- Better integration of plans and actions
- A chance to have a stronger voice within the state

CEM is designed to be a “toolbox” that can assist groups/individuals with reaping some of these potential benefits by providing the rough framework, analysis, recommendations and justifications for creating environmental change. How, when, why and where these tools get used is completely up to the group(s) seeking change. There are obvious limitations to any project that should be kept in mind. Time constraints, funding, personnel and expertise too name a few. Every CEM project and initiative will have to examine these factors and plan accordingly.

2.1 State-level Organization

Initiated by NYS DEC. Under NYSSWCC until June 30, 2004.

2.2 Organization of CEM at the Local Level

A CEM initiative is most likely begin after some type of environmental issue(s) are identified. These issues may be brought before conservation districts, water quality committees, planning boards, conservation boards, consultants, watershed planners, landowners or some other groups/individuals. Depending on the size and scope of the issue, a CEM team should be assembled. This team should consist of individuals that have policy making, planning, land use, facilitating, natural resource, water quality and public outreach expertise. Without this full range of expertise many CEM goals and strategies may be hard to reach.

Many different groups and individuals can initiate the CEM process, but it is up to people at the local level to implement change. These people may be on conservation, planning, zoning, drainage, highway, recreation, land use, agricultural or other boards. Municipal leaders also need to be involved and actively support a CEM initiative since most often they are charged with making local level change to policy, planning and capital decision making.