



# Department of Planning & Sustainability

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April 11, 2023

John Zepko, Director of Planning  
Town of Lansing  
29 Auburn Road  
Lansing, NY 14882

**Re: Review Pursuant to §239 -l, -m and -n of New York State General Municipal Law**

**Proposed Action: East Shore Circle Major Subdivision, Tax Parcel #37.1-7-12.2, Jesse Young,  
Owner and Applicant.**

Dear Mr. Zepko:

This letter acknowledges your referral of the proposed action identified above for review by the Tompkins County Department of Planning and Sustainability pursuant to §239 -l, -m and -n of the New York State General Municipal Law.

We have determined the proposed action will have a significant county-wide or inter-community impact. Therefore, we recommend modification of the proposed action. If the decision-making body does not incorporate the recommended modification(s), such approval will require a vote of a majority plus one of all members of the decision-making body.

**Recommended Modifications**

To preserve and protect the distinct properties of the Tompkins County Environmental Management Council-designated Unique Natural Area (UNA)-63, Shurger Glen (information attached), we have the following recommendations:

- We recommend that the Town require the applicant to identify building envelopes on proposed lots 4 and 5 so as to exclude lands that contain UNA-63, Shurger Glen, so as to not disturb the UNA.
- We recommend that the Town require the applicant to redesign the proposed permanent stormwater management facilities so that elements of that system exclude lands that contain UNA-63, Shurger Glen, so as to not disturb the UNA.
- If these recommended modifications are not possible, we recommend that the applicant document that the factors contributing to the designation of UNA-63 were considered by an experienced professional and elaborate on how the proposal will not negatively impact the resources located within the UNA.

We look forward to receiving notification on the final action taken by your municipality within 30 days of decision, as required by State law.

Sincerely,

Katherine Borgella, AICP  
Commissioner of Planning and Sustainability

cc: Mike Sigler, Tompkins County Legislator, District 6

Attachment: Description of UNA-63, Shurger Glen

*Creating and implementing plans that position Tompkins County communities to thrive.*

**SITE NAME:** Shurger Glen  
**DATA LAST UPDATED:** 1/31/2017

**SITE CODE:** UNA-63  
**OLD SITE CODE:** LA-06

## LOCATION

**Municipality:** Town of Lansing

**Latitude:** 42 31 30 N

**USGS Quad:** Ludlowville

**Longitude:** 76 31 43 W

### Tax Parcel Numbers Included in this Site:

*Tax parcel data is accurate as of 2014. For up-to-date information on tax parcel descriptions and ownership, contact the Tompkins County Assessment Department. When a UNA covered less than 0.025 ac. of a parcel, the parcel was excluded from this list.*

IT-36.-1-1	IT-36.-1-103	IT-36.-1-104	IT-36.-1-11.5	IT-36.-1-15.22	IT-36.-1-8.1	IT-36.-1-9.2
IT-37.1-6-2.2	IT-37.1-7-10.3	IT-37.1-7-10.5	IT-37.1-7-12.2	IT-37.1-7-2.2	IT-37.1-7-20	IT-37.1-7-23.2
IT-37.1-7-24	IT-37.1-7-27	IT-37.1-7-3.11	IT-37.1-7-3.21	IT-37.1-7-3.22	IT-37.1-7-3.23	IT-37.1-7-3.8
IT-37.1-9-1	IT-37.1-9-3	IT-37.1-9-4.2				

## SITE AND VEGETATION DESCRIPTION

Shurger Glen is a forested gorge valley with water falls. The forested slopes were logged, probably a long time ago, but on these rocky slopes it has taken a long time for the forest to recover. Mixed oak forest is found on the dry crests of the gorge, especially on the south-facing gorge wall. There, one finds pitch pine (*Pinus rigida*), scarlet oak (*Quercus coccinea*), and smooth sumac (*Rhus glabra*). Other rare species are reported for this glen, and the upper gorge should be inventoried more carefully. The steep-sided gorge, and gorge bottom, is shady and cool. Hemlock-beech forests are found on the steep north-facing slopes with yellow birch also present. Sugar-maple basswood forests are found on the south-facing lower slopes. Sycamore-cottonwood forest is found along the creek in the lower glen with American elm also present. The herb layer on the flats on the bottom are intact and diverse. On alluvial islands, willow thickets are found. Rough-winged swallows (*Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*) are found nesting in cavities on the gorge walls. The cliffs at the lower end of the gorge are noted fossil sites.

## REASONS FOR SELECTION

- Area of geologic importance
- Rare or scarce plants
- Cultural/historic/archeological site

## SPECIAL LAND-USE INFORMATION

### Special Land-Use Designations and Features

- Some or all of this site lies in an agricultural district, certified pursuant to NYS Agriculture and Markets Law.
- The Tompkins County Greenway Coalition has identified a biological corridor which includes this site.
- The Tompkins County Greenway Coalition has identified a possible multi-use trail on this site.

### Water Resources

- A stream runs through this site.
- A NYS protected stream runs through this site.

## CONSERVATION OF THE SITE

### **Adjacent Land-Use:**

Residential and gravel mining.

### **Sensitivity of Site to Visitors:**

The site is considered very vulnerable to disturbance by visitors. The rocky glen sides are very fragile and are eroding.

### **Evidence of Disturbance and Threats to Site:**

The forested areas were logged some time ago and are making a very slow recovery; the trees are 3-12" dbh on average. Trash has been dumped over the north side of the gorge. The main threats are from the building of houses and continued sub-division activity on the top of the glen.

### **Special Conservation/Management Needs:**

The trash should be removed. The site does not have an adequate protective buffer.

### **Other Comments:**

The best public use of the site seems to be providing a view of the glen. The site has historical connections to the early central New York plaster and cement industries.

## PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE

**Size (acres):** 197.01    **Elevation (ft.):** 393 to 847    **Aspect:** not recorded

### **Topographic Features**

Gorge and a waterfall.

### **Geological Features**

The upper Ludlowville shale member of the Hamilton is the floor rock and extends up the ravine walls to the Portland Point limestone layer that caps the first falls. Above this, there occurs the three shale members of the Moscow. The entire Hamilton section exposed here is fossiliferous. Tully limestone crops out along the lower gorge rim and approximately 0.45 miles upstream from the cement plant bridge in the caprock falls. Above this, there are outcrops of Genesee group shales and sandstones. Concretions and iron pyrites are common in the lower Hamilton shales. There is an old quarry along the creek. This UNA contains some fossils and has evidence of old quarry operations. It is possible that the geological features of this site were substantially destroyed by fill activities in the winter of 1999.

### **Soils Present on the Site**

*Soil characteristics of the site were determined manually and are approximate. In the future, digital soil data will provide more accurate information.*

### Soil Name

Rock outcrop

### Hydric (Wet)

Non-hydric

### Erodibility

Not applicable

### Drainage

Not applicable

### Slope %

- Flat  
 3 to 15  
 15 to 25  
 Over 25

### Topographic Position

- Crest  
 Upper Slope  
 Mid Slope  
 Lower Slope  
 Bottom

Howard and Palmyra soils, 25 to 35 percent slopes

Non-hydric

Highly erodible

Well drained

## BIOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE

### General Cover Types

Upland forest  
 Rock outcrops and gravel banks  
 Open water  
 Upland shrub thicket

### Ecological Communities

Detailed information regarding each community type's rareness may be found in Appendix F. For up-to-date information on ecological communities, contact the NY Natural Heritage Program (518-783-3932).

**Rarity:** ( Key: No checkmarks indicate that no communities fall within those categories.)

- Global - At least one community designated as rare or scarce at the global level by The Nature Conservancy is found on this site.  
 State - At least one community designated as rare or scarce at the state level by The Nature Conservancy and the New York Natural Heritage Program is found on this site.  
 Local - At least one community designated as rare or scarce at the local level by the Tompkins County EMC and the Cornell Plantations is found on this site.

### Ecological Communities Inventoried on this Site:

<u>Community Name</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Global/State/Local Rarity</u>		
Cliff and talus communities on limestone	Open communities with less than 25% trees on a limestone or dolomite substrate. The Calcareous cliff community and Calcareous talus slope woodland communities are often found together. The woodland community is structurally intermediate between forests and open canopy upland of the cliff community.	G5	S4	L3
Calcareous cliff community	A community with sparse vegetation that occurs on vertical exposures, cliffs, and talus slopes of resistant bedrock such as limestone or dolomite or consolidated materials. There is little soil. Characteristic species include purple cliff brake, bulb fern, early saxifrage, and eastern red cedar	G4	S3S4	L3
Calcareous talus slope woodland	A woodland on calcareous talus slopes of limestone or dolomite, sometimes with numerous outcrops. Soils are usually moist and loamy. Characteristic trees include sugar maple, white ash, hop hornbeam, white oak, and eastern red cedar. Shrubs may be abundant if the canopy is open; characteristic shrubs include round-leaved dogwood, downy arrowwood, prickly ash, and bladdernut. Herbaceous vegetation may be diverse and includes bulb fern, lady fern, bottlebrush grass, white baneberry, early meadow rue, bluestem goldenrod, and white wood aster.	G3G4	S3	L3
Successional shrubland	A shrubland with at least 50% cover of shrubs that occurs on agricultural fields 10 - 25 years after abandonment, following other disturbance, and especially on sites with restricted drainage. Characteristic shrubs include gray dogwood, raspberries, hawthorn, serviceberries, chokecherry, sumac, nannyberry, arrowwood and buckthorn. Herbs are those of old-fields. Seedlings of white pine, red maple and white ash are usually present.	G4	S4	L4
Midreach stream	The aquatic community of a stream that has a well-defined pattern of alternating pool, riffle, and run sections. Waterfalls and springs may be present. Typical aquatic macrophytes include waterweed and pondweeds. Persistent emergent vegetation is lacking.	G4	S4	L4
Mixed oak forest	A forest dominated by oaks found on steep south and west facing slopes. Soils may have calcareous materials at depth. Dominants are red, black, and white oak, and white pine. Black oak is an indicator of this ecological community type. Pignut hickory and red maple are usually present. Flowering dogwood and choke cherry are often abundant in the understory.	G4G5	S4	L4
Hemlock-northern hardwood forest	A forest that typically occurs on lower slopes of ravines, on cool, mid-elevation slopes, and at the edges of drainage divide swamps. Hemlock is a co-dominant species with one to three others: beech, sugar maple, red maple, black cherry, white pine, yellow birch, black birch, red oak, and basswood. Shrubs have low abundance, but striped maple may be present. Herbs characteristic of northern and montane areas are common.	G4G5	S4	L4
Rocky headwater stream	The aquatic community of a small to moderate sized rocky stream with a moderate to steep gradient that lacks persistent emergent vegetation. The cold water stream flows over eroded bedrock near the stream origin and contains alternating riffle and pool sections. These streams typically have mosses and algae present, but few larger rooted plants.	G4	S4	L4

### Plant Species

Although substantial effort was made to identify significant plant species on this site, it is possible that additional rare or scarce species exist that do not show up in this report. A field check is always recommended prior to modifying the landscape. Detailed information regarding each species' rareness and status may be found in Appendix D. For up-to-date information on species, contact the NY Natural Heritage Program (518-783-3932).

**Rarity** ( Key: No checkmarks indicate that no species fall within those categories.)

- Global - At least one plant species designated as rare or scarce at the global level by The Nature Conservancy is found on this site.  
 State - At least one plant species designated as rare or scarce at the state level by The Nature Conservancy and the New York Natural Heritage Program is found on this site.  
 Local - At least one plant species designated as rare or scarce at the local level by the Tompkins County EMC and the Cornell Plantations is found on this site.

### Legal Status:

- Federal - At least one plant species designated as threatened or endangered by the U.S. Department of the Interior is found on this site.  
 State - At least one plant species designated in New York State as endangered, threatened, rare or exploitably vulnerable is found on this site.

**Significant Plant Species Inventoried on this Site:**

<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Global/State/Local Rarity</u>	<u>Local Comments</u>	<u>State Legal Status</u>
Viburnum rafinesquianum	downy arrowwood	L3	Scarce	None
Athyrium pycnocarpon	glade fern	L3	Scarce	Exploitably vulnerable
Pinus rigida	pitch pine	L3	Scarce	None
Oryzopsis racemosa	rice grass	L3	Scarce	None
Quercus coccinea	scarlet oak	L3	Scarce	None
Asplenium rhizophyllum	walking fern	L3	Scarce	Exploitably vulnerable

**Animal Species**

*Some UNAs contain much more information on animal species than others based on the availability of data. A field check is always recommended prior to modifying the landscape. Detailed information regarding each species' rareness and status may be found in Appendix E. For up-to-date information on species, contact the NY Natural Heritage Program (www.nynhp.org/).*

**Animal Description:** The animal species found on this site are considered normal for the area.

**Rarity:** ( Key: No checkmarks indicate that no species fall within those categories.)

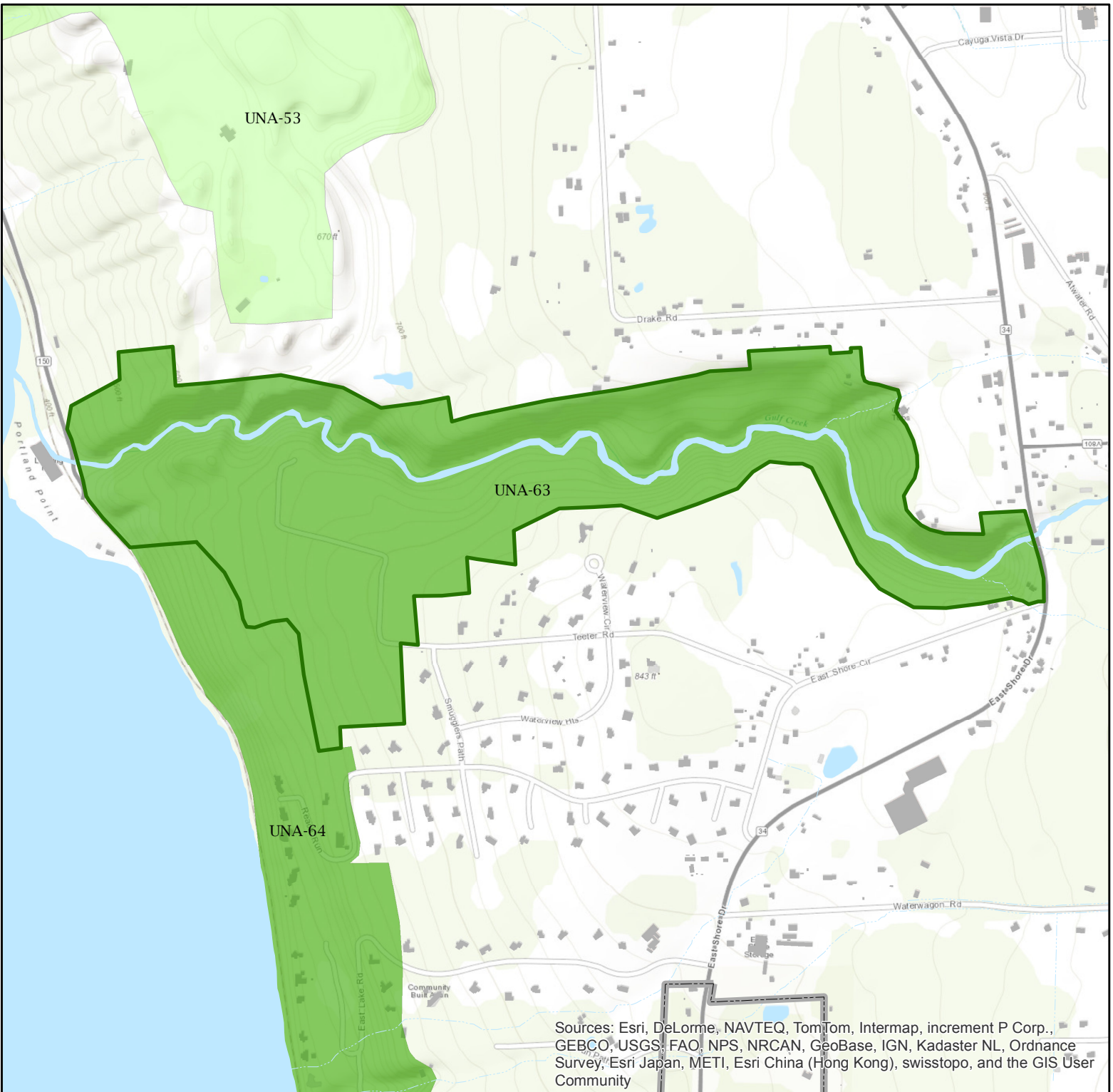
- Global - At least one animal species designated as rare or scarce at the global level by The Nature Conservancy is found on this site.  
 State - At least one animal species designated as rare or scarce at the state level by The Nature Conservancy and the New York Natural Heritage Program is found on this site.

**Legal Status:**

- Federal - At least one animal species designated as threatened or endangered by the U.S. Department of the Interior is found on this site.  
 State - At least one animal species designated by NYS as threatened or endangered is found on this site.

**Animal Species Inventoried on this Site:**

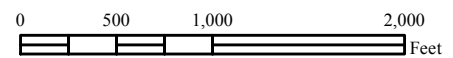
<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Global/State Rarity</u>	<u>Federal/State Legal Status</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Gavia immer	Common Loon	G5 S4	MBTA SUn S	Special Concern
Accipiter cooperii	Cooper's Hawk	G5 S4	MBTA SUn	PIF Species of Concern
Vermivora chrysoptera	Golden-winged Warbler	G4 S3	MBTA SUn	PIF Species of Concern, Special Concern
Eremophila alpestris	Horned Lark	G5 S3S4	MBTA SUn	PIF Species of Concern, Special Concern
Pandion haliaetus	Osprey	G5 S4B	MBTA ST	Special Concern
Buteo lineatus	Red-shouldered Hawk	G5 S4B	MBTA ST	PIF Species of Concern
Accipiter striatus	Sharp-shinned Hawk	G5 S4	MBTA SUn	PIF Species of Concern
Vermivora cyanoptera	Blue-winged warbler			
Carellina canadensis	Canada Warbler	G5 S5		Special Concern
Setophaga discolor	Prrairie Warbler	G5 S5		
Euphagus carolinus	Rusty Blackbird	G4 S2	MBTA SUn	Audubon Watch List
Empidonax traillii	Willow Flycatcher	G5 S5	MBTA SUn	Audubon Watch List
Haliaeetus leucocephalus	Bald Eagle	G5 S2, S3B, S2N	MBTA SE	Threatened



# UNA-63 Shurger Glen

Tompkins County Environmental Management Council  
 Inventory of Unique Natural Areas in Tompkins County.  
 Last Updated 2014

UNA boundaries were delineated by field biologists based on a review of air photographs, digital GIS base map data (roads, building footprints, 20 foot contours and streams) and field visits. UNA boundaries are approximate and should be used for general planning purposes only. As a practical matter the County does not warrant the accuracy or completeness of the information portrayed. The end use of this map agrees to accept the data "as is" with full knowledge that errors and omissions may exist, and to hold harmless the County for any damages that may result from an inappropriate use of this map.



- Revised Unique Natural Areas
- Other Unique Natural Areas
- Municipal Boundaries