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*Stakeholder Council 2016*

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**Membership**

The Ashokan Stakeholder Council is comprised of:

**The Executive Council:**

**2 representatives from each of the active AWSMP working groups.**

Both representatives of a working group should not come from the same organization or agency.

Representatives should be chosen annually by the working group.

No person can represent more than one working group on the Stakeholder Council.

**Staff: (CCE Ulster County, UC SWCD, DEP SMP Contract Manager for Ashokan Watershed)**

**Regular Members:** Membership in the Stakeholder Council is open to any interested and knowledgeable stakeholder.

**ASHOKAN WATERSHED STREAM MANAGEMENT PROGRAM  
STAKEHOLDER COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

AWSMP Program Office, Shokan, NY 12481

**May 24, 2016 1:30pm-4:30pm**

**In Attendance:** Brent Gotsch, Kirk Peters, Leslie Zucker, Chris Tran, Kathy Nolan, Beth Reichheld, Aaron Bennett, Tiffany Runge, Sylvia Rozzelle, Tim Cox, John Mathiesen; Executive Council members present: Burt Samuelson, Amanda LaValle, Mike Flaherty, Chet Karwatowski, Rob Stanley, Eric Hofmeister, Mike Reynolds

**Next scheduled meeting: November 29 at 1:30**

**Introductions and Announcements:**

Attendees introduced themselves and Leslie Z. summarized the agenda.

Trout Unlimited invited all to a showing Catskill Fly Tying: The Art of Artifice exhibit at the Kleinert/James Art Center in Woodstock through June 26, Thursday-Sunday, 12:00-6:00pm. Starting July 1, the Kleinert/James will be showing "Moving the Waters: Ashokan Fugues."

The Catskill Interpretive Center is opening a new ¼-mile loop trail with signage on National Trails Day June 4. Trail leads to a picnic area. For event information: <http://catskillinterpretivecenter.org/cic-events/>. On June 11, Dr. Michael Kudish will speak about the History of the Hemlock (a common streamside tree).

The Towns of Shandaken and Olive have received from FEMA, Letters of Final Determination stating Preliminary Flood Insurance Study (FIS) reports and Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) panels will become effective on November 18, 2016.

Ulster County personnel are attending stream-related trainings this year. The Department of Environment received a DEC grant to train staff in aquatic organism passage assessment to prepare for culvert assessment this year. DPW received an AWSMP scholarship to send County Engineer Andrew Emrich to Rosgen Level 3 Applied Geomorphology training.

CCEUC announced the hiring of Program Educator Caroline Stupple to work with AWSMP education staff part-time through fall 2016. Upcoming AWSMP events include *Family Fun & Fish Day* on June 6, in partnership with NYSDEC and volunteers from Trout Unlimited. The Bennett School Earth Day will be held Friday, June 3. A recent Stream Walk along the Mink Hollow tributary to the Beaver Kill was successful with 15 attendees and a wait list. A second Stream Walk in the Beaver Kill watershed is planned for this summer.

**AWSMP Action Plan 2016-2018:**

The Stakeholder Council reviewed the updated 2016-2018 Action Plan. Leslie Z. gave an overview of changes made to plan sections with input from Stakeholder Council working groups. Additions to the 2016 stream project list include

stabilizing a failing hillslope at Wright Rd. on the Stony Clove Creek. Two hillslope projects along Van Hoagland Rd. in the Beaver Kill watershed are planned for 2017 – assessment and engineering design are underway. The UCSWCD is also updating its stream project selection protocol. Other key projects planned for the two-year period include a streambank bioengineering project in the Bushkill watershed ,and repair of a rock structure at the Warner Creek 5 stream restoration project site.

Beth R. of NYCDEP congratulated the AWSMP for completing restoration of over 1.6 miles of stream in the Stony Clove Creek watershed over the past 6 years. The projects totaled over \$7M to complete. DEP has noted a statistically significant improvement in water clarity attributed to the projects. The projects were supported by landowners and the Towns of Shandaken and Hunter, and funded by both the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the New York City DEP.

Upon review of Appendix A of the plan, which includes a listing of all completed projects, it was noted the original Esopus Creek and Broadstreet Hollow stream demonstration projects (implemented before the AWSMP officially formed) were not included on the list. They will be added. It was also suggested a brief history of the AWSMP be added to Appendix A.

The AWSMP Executive Council voted unanimously to adopt the 2016-2018 AWSMP Action Plan with the additions mentioned above. Motioned by Rob Stanley and seconded by Mike Flaherty.

### **Local Flood Analysis Update:**

After a brief introduction of the Local Flood Analysis (LFA) process by Aaron B., the Supervisors of Shandaken and Olive gave updates on LFA progress in their towns.

Supervisor Rob Stanley reviewed the flood mitigation options modeled by Town engineering firm Milone and MacBroom, Inc. (MMI) and recommended solutions the Town intends to pursue for Phoenicia and Mt. Tremper. In Phoenicia, the Town is reviewing funding options for construction of a floodplain bench bordering the Stony Clove Creek and both banks of the Esopus Creek. The benches combined with replacement and expansion of the Bridge Street bridge won't stop flooding, but will reduce flood elevations and flood damages, and improve flood recovery times. The Town is reaching out to landowners within the project area to assess their interest in voluntary flood buyout and relocation within the hamlet, or alternatively elevation and flood-proofing. Several landowners have expressed interest in relocating businesses and homes to sites within Phoenicia but on higher ground.

In Mt. Tremper, excavation of a large floodplain bench is recommended, combined with replacement of the Route 28 bridge over Esopus Creek. Initially, neither step seemed realistic for short-term implementation. However, the NYSDOT has announced it will replace the Route 28 bridge considered scour-critical. Construction of the floodplain bench is dependent on multiple landowners being interested in relocation, perhaps to within their lots. The Town reiterated again that any and all buyouts and relocations will be voluntary.

Supervisor Sylvia Rozzelle reviewed progress on modeling and benefit-cost analysis in Boiceville. The options of a floodplain bench and construction of a berm or levee were modeled in combination with replacement of the Route 28A bridge over Esopus Creek. The Town hired Woidt Engineering to conduct the LFA. Woidt worked with engineers hired by the City to evaluate Route 28A bridge options. The Town chose to pursue a three-span bridge for its immediate flood lowering benefit. The floodplain bench and longer span bridge did not individually or combined provide enough flood reduction benefit to reduce severe losses in Boiceville.

A County planner and Olive officials met with staff from the Army Corps of Engineer (ACOE) to determine the costs associated with building a berm in Boiceville. Even if ACOE could be convinced to prioritize a berm in Boiceville, the costs are high, over \$1 million for a feasibility study alone. The Town remains concerned about maintenance costs and

liability associated with a berm. The Town is likely to pursue funding for community planning, available from the Catskill Watershed Corporation after LFA is complete, to explore relocation of the Boiceville business district to nearby areas outside the floodplain. The Town reiterated that all buyouts and relocations will be voluntary.

No projects with flood reduction benefits could be identified for West Shokan. Flood damages along the Bushkill are associated with erosion hazards. The Town has hired MMI with NY Rising Community Reconstruction funds (administered by NYSDOS) to identify erosion hazard solutions that protect West Shokan infrastructure.

The Town of Olive expects to hold final public meetings and then review and accept the LFA Final Report for Boiceville and West Shokan by September or October.

### **Stream Management Implementation Program (SMIP) Update:**

Leslie Z. gave an update on spend-down of the \$2 million regular SMIP fund and the \$1 million available through the CCEUC contract for Local Flood Analysis planning and implementation. An additional \$1 million is available through the Ulster SWCD contract for Local Flood Analysis implementation. Spending in most categories is keeping pace with the amount of time elapsed this contract period (approx. 40% through the period 2014-2019), except the research & monitoring category that was purposefully held back until completion of an updated *Research, Assessment & Monitoring Strategy for the Upper Esopus Creek and Ashokan Watershed*. The *Strategy* is to guide spending priorities. Spending in the Planning category is lower than planned, however these funds can easily be redistributed to another category.

Stakeholder Council discussion included the idea of redistributing planning funds to the Infrastructure category, which is spending down faster than other categories, and/or reserving funds in the Planning category for community planning needs beyond what the Catskill Watershed Corporation (CWC) can fund.

The SMIP Grant Review Committee met on May 10 to review two eligible applications received during the spring 2016 funding round. Committee Co-Leads Burt Samuelson and Chet Karwatowski gave an overview of the committee discussion. The committee recommends funding both eligible projects. The projects are: Construction of an expanded County Route 47 bridge opening to replace a culvert that was blocked and eroded away during Tropical Storm Irene. AWSMP previously awarded this grant to Ulster County DPW, and the bridge was subsequently installed, however delays in FEMA payout prevented disbursement before the end of the last five-year SMIP funding cycle. After reviewing the merits of the project, which include a substantial upsizing of the stream crossing, the award of \$77,300 was recommended for renewal. A second project provides up to 19 scholarships in 2017 to Town and County officials to attend stream and floodplain management trainings. CCEUC will administer disbursement of the scholarships to reduce administrative overhead. The committee recognized the value of educational opportunities and recommended the annual scholarship program be continued.

The AWSMP Executive Council voted unanimously to adopt the SMIP funding recommendations made by the Grant Review Committee. Motioned by Rob Stanley and seconded by Burt Samuelson.

Leslie Z. reported that the next SMIP application deadline will be mid-October 2016.

### **Working Group Reports:**

Highway Managers Working Group: Highway Superintendents Eric H. (Shandaken) and Mike R. (Woodstock) gave updates on summer construction plans. Shandaken is building five bridges with FEMA, NY Rising Community Reconstruction, and Town funds. One bridge ties into an AWSMP-funded grade control project. The Town would like to upsize the Peck Hollow bridge and may seek AWSMP funding for the expansion. A grade control berm installed at the Muller Rd. bridge (Fox Hollow Creek) is doing its job; project was designed by NRCS with support from AWSMP. Sediment has redistributed at the site and it looks natural. Woodstock is working on crossings as well, but outside the

Ashokan watershed (Sawkill and elsewhere). An eroding bank on Mink Hollow Rd. (Beaver Kill) just upstream of the bridge has been prioritized for treatment with NY Rising Community Reconstruction funds.

Stream Access & Recreation Working Group: Rob S. was appointed to the Ulster County Legislature Waterways Advisory Committee. He will serve as a link between the Working Group as it works to develop a woody debris and recreation management protocol.

Flood Hazard Mitigation Working Group: Aaron B. gave a presentation at the NYS Floodplain & Stormwater Manager's Conference in May. The presentation was developed by himself and Brent G. on flood hazard mitigation efforts in the Ulster County portion of the watershed. Aaron B. will submit to give the presentation at the NYWEA Watershed Science and Technical Conference, September 13 at the Diamond Mills Hotel in Saugerties.

It was reported at the NYSFSMA conference that NYS is starting to revamp flood mitigation protocols in response to the Community Risk and Resiliency Act (CRRA). CRRA requires that applicants in a number of permit and funding programs demonstrate climate consideration of sea-level rise, storm surge and flooding. AWSMP staff will work to bring more information on changes to stakeholders.

The CWC has adjusted its Flood Hazard Mitigation Implementation Program rules. Funding of property protection measures no longer requires off-site flood reduction benefits. These projects must be LFA recommended. CWC is working on a funding program to secure oil and propane tanks. Landowners in Towns with accepted LFAs will be eligible first, but a contract amendment is underway to deliver the program within the entire West of Hudson watershed.

Stream Ecosystem Working Group: Mike F. reported the group is nearing a final draft of the updated research, assessment and monitoring *Strategy*. Leslie Z. announced AWSMP will release a Research Request for Proposals (RFP) mid-summer to fund priority recommendations in the *Strategy*.

Education & Outreach Working Group: No report. Group has not met in 2016.