

Meeting Notes	
Phoenicia Post-Flood Project	
Project AWSMP-1009T3	Related Grant(s): None

Minutes of Meeting		
Location: AWSMP Phoenicia Office	Date: 12/8/2010	Time: 4.5 hrs
Purpose: Follow-up meeting to 12/3. To discuss next steps to reduce the vulnerability of the hamlet of Phoenicia to winter and spring flooding events in 2011 and to develop a long-term strategy for reducing flood risk in Phoenicia.		
Attendees:		
Rob Stanley, Town of Shandaken Supervisor		
Eric Hoffmeister, Town of Shandaken Highway Superintendent		
Vin Bernstein, Town of Shandaken Town Board Member		
Gina Reilly, Town of Shandaken Code Enforcement Officer		
Elizabeth Higgins, CCE Ulster County		
Michael Courtney, CCE Ulster County		
Cory Ritz, UC SWCD		
Deron Davis, USDA NRCS		
Danny Davis, NYC DEP		
Beth Reichheld, NYC DEP		
Doug Dekoskie, NYC DEP		
Jim MacBroom, Milone and MacBroom		
Jim Murac, Milone and MacBroom		
Amanda LaValle, Ulster County Dept. of the Environment		
Brendan Masterson, Ulster County Highway Department		
Brian Drumm, NYS DEC Region 3		
Bill Rudge, NYS DEC Region 3		
Keith Savoury, NYS DOT Region 9		
Geovanni Barbieri, NYS DOT		
Ray Ackerman, NYS DOT		
Joe Poczciwinski, NYS DOT		
John Bonacic, New York State Senate		
Andrew Winchell, Assistant to John Bonisec		
Colleen Griffith, CCE Ulster County		

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Review of Previous Action Items

Action Item(s)	Who	When
Provide copies of 2006 Fischenich report on feasibility of reducing flood stage in Phoenicia through gravel removal. D. Davis sent them out by e-mail to those who attended 12/3 meeting and also provided copies at this meeting.	Davis	Done
Investigate DEP support for use of MMI for town. DEP Stream Management has made MMI available to provide a design and engineering support.	Davis	Done

Discussion

Item 1 – Initial office meeting regarding sediment removal on Stony Clove

The Town made the case for a rapid response to the flooding and to be allowed to get in the stream to remove sediment. Rob Stanley (supervisor), Vincent Bernstein (board member), and Eric Hofmeister (highway superintendent) repeatedly referred to sediment removal as how the Town was able to respond to flooding in the past and since they have had to stop this response the channel has filled in and flooding has gotten worse. They also stated the need to not be encumbered by a lengthy permitting process every time they need to get in the channel to clear it out.

Danny Davis (DEP) provided aerial photographs of the reach from 1959, 1967, 1980, 2001 and 2009. He said that despite the fact that there was reportedly dredging during the earlier periods, that many of the stream features and gravel deposits in the photographs are consistently present. The location of the town is on what was essentially an alluvial fan and prior to development the Stony Clove Creek channel was very prone to migrating back and forth in response to sediment filling the channel. Since the stream has been confined, the channel aggradation (filling in) makes the village vulnerable to flooding. The problem of the Esopus Creek being a “barrier” to flow of the Stony Clove during flood events was mentioned.

Stanley said that the Town needs to answer to landowners and business owners with a plan to alleviate flooding issues. He indicated there are individuals willing to risk the DEC fines to enter the stream because there is such a strong local feeling that dredging the channel will make a difference. Stanley reiterated it is important that we work collectively and quickly for a better solution.

Senator Bonacic challenged the group for a very quick turnaround and not a multi-year study before action was taken. He applied pressure on DEC, DEP and AWSMP and others to support the Town’s request. DEP and AWSMP (CCE and SWCD) staff indicated that what is being offered is not a 30 year study but an investigation to help ensure that the public funds that would be used for stream work provide some benefit and to provide information that the town will need for longer term decision making. The turn-around time on the Esopus Creek at Brown Road project was referenced to as an example of work done quickly to reduce a flood hazard. Stanley agreed that this example was a reasonable approach to a relatively rapid and informed response.

Jim MacBroom (MMI) pointed out that gravel extraction at the bridge could be detrimental if the area is over excavated as scour during storms could undercut the footings and damage the structure. It may be better to lower the channel elsewhere (upstream). Computer calculations on the recommended stream channel modification could be prepared in approximately a week or so upon receipt of existing files.

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Complete stream modeling, especially which took into account the confluence with the Esopus would take longer and would be part of a more comprehensive flood risk mitigation strategy for Phoenicia.

DEC representatives (Drumm and Rudge) were sympathetic to the Town's concerns and strongly indicated they could support a sediment removal project as long as it was informed by engineering analysis and a monitoring plan was included. Brian Drumm noted that there is all this anecdotal evidence that flooding was reduced by dredging but asked if anyone had any proof. Drumm (and others) pointed out that the sediment transport through the bridge during the flood was probably higher than residents assumed.

Higgins raised the concern that prior investigations have indicated that dredging would have limited effectiveness and would not prevent flooding during significant flood events so that the message to the residents and the businesses in the hamlet cannot be that this effort will solve flooding in Phoenicia. Higgins recommended a stream sediment maintenance plan to be coupled with more proactive measures on the part of residents and the town to incorporate flood resiliency into their infrastructure, planning and permitting. Gina Reilly (Code Enforcement Officer, Shandaken) spoke to the need for educating residents about living in an active flood plain. Stanley agreed, and said that clarification about what is the responsibility of the landowner and what is the Town's needs to be clarified (referenced concerns voiced at the public meeting for issues that were beyond the Town's control esp. flooding at Phoenicia Plaza). The Town cannot be responsible for securing people's private property in flood zones. He said that he is going to propose that the Town provide 0% loans to businesses for flood mitigation practices in their business and land. Higgins mentioned the possibility of the town looking at applying for FEMA mitigation funding for downtown businesses. Davis also mentioned that the AWSMP program is planning a conference for the public this spring and the topic will be flooding.

Stanley asked the DOT if they would be able to assist the highway dept. to retro Route 214. Keith Savoury (NYS-DOT) offered DOT's support and assistance with equipment for the project as it affects their bridge in Phoenicia. The Ulster County Highway Dept. also offered support to the town, as needed.

Doug Dekoskie (DEP) stated that he worked on the evaluation of the emergency work done in 2006 by Delaware County after the floods. That was a situation where many Towns rushed in to modify stream channels immediately after the floods. The majority of the emergency work done failed, some in a very short time, a very few were lucky and have lasted. He urged that taking time to apply some science and engineering will be better than rushing into a quick fix. He cited an example where a channel was over widened with the intention of increasing water volume capacity and instead resulted in sediment deposits that increased the flood stage such that minor rain events resulted in flooding.

Bill Rudge (DEP) said that this project must be reviewed and be a defensible project. DEC will put priority to reviewing the project but cannot say exactly how long it will take for approval until they know what is going to be proposed.

Davis pointed out that landowner permission will be needed for any access and work. Hofmeister and Stanley did not think this would be a problem.

Bonacic wanted an estimation of the cost of the temporary fix and what would be the cost for the total stream approach. (Dekoskie and MacBroom quickly calculated the cost of the temporary fix at 25-50K if the town did the work with in kind services and 100K if it was bid out to private companies). No one could estimate the cost of a more comprehensive project given that it has not been conceived of yet.

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Davis (DEP) made a point to the Town that DEP is offering technical support given the challenges the Town faces with the current situation and is not attempting to prevent their independent action if they feel they need to have a permit within a matter of a few days. Davis stated that DEP and AWSMP are not here to slow the process down or prevent action but to help ensure that whatever the Town proposes has an increased likelihood of DEC approval and success. Davis also made the case that was largely supported that we do this in the context of a more comprehensive approach to developing a flood risk mitigation/management plan for the hamlet of Phoenicia.

Ritz suggested the group determine a timeline that would be acceptable to the town. A two week window was established to design a project and a one week window was suggested for DEC permit review. It was suggested this timeline would indicate an early January start of construction. The town thought this would be acceptable. Ritz also suggested the Town work directly with MacBroom during implementation to remove any delay in communications experienced on the Brown Road project. DEP and the Town agreed this would make sense.

Item 2 – Post field visit discussion

The first part of the meeting concluded and most went to Phoenicia to review the site conditions with Jim MacBroom and discuss various alternative measures based on what was observed.

Jim MacBroom reviewed his field observations. They included:

- The stream approach to the bridge is over wide and yet also the left descending bank encroaches on the bridge opening. A more extensive channel modification in this reach to narrow up the active channel and build a low flood bench within the channel could be part of the longer-term, more sustainable improvement.
- There is some rubble underneath the overhanging building downstream of the bridge, that if removed would likely improve the efficiency of flow through the bridge
- The bridge itself is probably passing sediment adequately during high flow events – dredging in the immediate vicinity of the bridge is unlikely to lower flood stage significantly based on his initial observation. The question is: how much difference in flood impact a few inches of flood height would have? The model will help with that.
- There may be a place upstream of the bridge where sediment removal would have more of an impact on flood stage as it seems like the water is coming out before the bridge.
- Upstream sediment sources are a likely issue and should be addressed as part of a more sustainable improvement

Jim estimated a turnaround time for MMI for the plans to reach the town by end of next week (12/17) which includes coming back and doing some survey work. This is dependent on weather conditions and receipt of previous modeling study files.

The Town is going to need to get the necessary equipment to perform the job and will check to see if NYSDOT or the county can provide it.

Jim MacBroom will obtain agency data and information for measurements. DEP can provide data. MMI will provide construction supervision and will deal directly with Eric in the coordination of the project. MMI stated that if weather halts the project that it will most probably be ok at this point until spring. The plan for minimal disturbance of the tree lined banks was discussed.

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The meeting concluded with a verbal agreement that MMI and DEP would work to get some plan in place for the optimal short term temporary action that could be permitted by DEC. DEC agreed that, even though this was not likely to be an emergency permit, they would turn the review around as fast as possible.

Action Item(s)	Who	When
Town approval for MMI/DEP support	Shandaken Supervisor	Done
Get plans for DOT bridge on Rt. 28 and provide to MMI	Shandaken Highway Supervisor	ASAP
Provide MMI with other data Note minor delay in getting HEC RAS files from US Army ERDC	DEP (Davis)	12/15
MMI provide plans to town	MMI	12/17
Secure landowner permission for streamwork	Shandaken Supervisor	
Secure DEC permit based on MMI design (town will submit – DEC will turn it around quickly)	Town/DEC	
Request equipment/support from DOT and County for construction	Shandaken Highway Supervisor	
Plan informational meeting for residents in January about the proposed project.	Shandaken Supervisor/CCE	When design is completed

Next meeting

An informational meeting for residents is planned for January.