

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

AWSMP Program Office, Shokan, NY 12481

**March 19, 2015 1pm-4:00pm**

**Stakeholder Council 2015**

**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.

**In Attendance:** Tim Cox, Jim Fugel, Sylvia Rozzelle, Rob Stanley, Amanda LaValle, Eric Hofmeister, Aaron Bennett, Barry Baldigo, Jason Siemion, Chet Karwatowski, Mike Reynolds, Mike Flaherty, Mary McNamara, Kerissa Battle, Scott George, Marc Holldander  
*Staff:* Leslie Zucker, Brent Gotsch, Jen Bowman, Danyelle Davis, Beth Reichheld, Adam Doan, Tiffany Runge

**Next scheduled meeting: June 2015**

**Community Updates and Event Announcements**

Attendees introduced themselves and Leslie Z. overviewed the agenda.

The two-year AWSMP Action Plan is updated annually. Updates to Action Plan are being made and will be emailed for review soon. It will incorporate some information from today's meeting.

Staffing Changes:

It was announced Danyelle Davis, Project Manager for AWSMP with NYC Department of Environmental Protection (NYC DEP) will start a new position at DEP Stream Management Program coordinating stream studies throughout the watershed. Danyelle has worked with AWSMP since 2003. She is returning to science, but will stay involved with AWSMP; much research will be done in the

Ashokan basin.

Within the past six months, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County (CCEUC) entered into an agreement with Ulster County Department of the Environment, which enabled us to add Aaron Bennett, Environmental Planner to the AWSMP staff. The parent agreement is CCEUC's contract with NYC DEP.

CCEUC's new five-year agreement with NYC DEP began on July 1, 2014 and will end June 30, 2019. We have also added Jennifer Bowman to AWSMP staff as a Watershed Educator working on community education.

Duties have shifted somewhat with the additional staff. Brent Gotsch will be able to utilize his knowledge as a Certified Floodplain Manager and focus on building a Flood Hazard Mitigation Working Group and education.

Adam D. reported that UCSWCD is about to register their new five-year contract with NYC DEP. In addition, they have been working on an update to their Engineering Services Agreement.

Adam D. announced that Deron Davis with NRCS has moved into another position. With him leaving, there will be some changes in how the agreement is structured. The result will be a full-time engineer that works very closely with our program (more closely than Deron). The changes will take effect after the registration of their new NYC DEP contract.

Also, Tiffany Runge has taken the position of Watershed Technician with UCSWCD.

**Community Updates** (*Leslie Z. shared a presentation*):

The Town of Olive has taken tremendous steps forward with stream and floodplain management in their community. They started a Flood Advisory Committee and entered into an Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with AWSMP (CCEUC and UCSWCD) that states our intent to work together on stream and floodplain management. AWSMP renewed a MOU with the Town of Shandaken as well.

The Town of Olive has started the Local Flood Analysis (LFA) process. The Town of Olive applied for a Hudson Valley Greenway grant, which they were awarded for a town-wide flood mitigation plan (with matching AWSMP funding). The award will help them score higher on FEMA's Community Rating System program.

Town officials are working with Brent G. to become Certified Floodplain Managers. Olive applied to our program for a grant to do stream assessment on the Maltby Hollow, which is a tributary to the Bush Kill. We also met with town officials to review the results of the Stream Feature Inventory of the Bush Kill. This did not include some of the tribs, so now they're working to complete the Maltby Hollow inventory.

Two culvert replacement projects underway in Town of Olive with AWSMP funding:

Town of Olive - Hillside Drive on the Dry Brook  
Ulster County - Mine Hollow

LFA process running in four communities in the Ashokan Watershed. Two are in Shandaken - Phoenicia and Mount Tremper. The Town of Shandaken partnered with MMI to complete the LFA, with the total cost at \$92,850. They began the process on the old contract with funding through a SMIP grant. Additional funds were required for completion because initial figures from MMI were estimated. The projects are over 50% complete. They are nearing the end of modeling different flood mitigation solutions and options, and comparing them to each other. We hope to hear the final report on the modeling results next week at the town flood advisory meeting. From there, the town will select the projects it wants to advance to the next steps, which are the full cost/ benefit and feasibility analysis.

There will be a public meeting in both Phoenicia and Mount Tremper to present the results of the cost/ benefit and feasibility data available. We will send out an announcement and invite you to attend at that time.

The Town of Olive is planning to do LFA in Boiceville and West Shokan. They entered into an agreement through a town resolution to have CCEUC act as their administrator of the consultant subcontract. The Flood Advisory Committee will guide the project and CCEUC will manage the paperwork. The town selected Woidt Engineering to do the project and the total cost will be \$70,995. A SMIP grant was awarded by AWSMP. The contract with Woidt should be signed by end of the week.

Olive's Flood Advisory Committee just met and is working on a timeline to implement the project. The Flood Advisory Committee will meet again April 14<sup>th</sup> at the Town Meeting Hall at 6:00pm, and the Town Board Meeting will follow at 7:00pm. Woidt Engineering will provide an overview to the Town Board just like MMI did to kickoff LFA in Shandaken.

A task area was added to the scope on Woidt's contract to allow coordination and consultation with NYC DEP's consultants to come up with a conceptual design to resize the Five Arches Bridge replacement. Both consultants will share the results of their independent hydraulic modeling. Woidt will work on the stream and flood plain management issues, but if there's any question, the issues can be discussed with DEP consultants.

AWSMP has awarded another round of SMIP grants. The Executive Council, Stakeholder Council, and Grant Review Committee were activated and reviewed all applications and recommendations, and approved all grants that were funded.

We awarded 12 applications. There are currently 23 active grants, with 18 set to expire December 2015. We hope to release another RFA in April 2015. We hope to move projects that were awarded last year for engineering and design to construction in the upcoming grant round.

- AWSMP has had success assisting our communities by sending town officials to the NYS Floodplain and Stormwater Manager's Association conference.
- A local filmmaker, Tobe Carey (non-profit organization, Willow Mixed Media), received a grant to develop a documentary film looking at the fisheries and stream conservation in the Ashokan Watershed.
- The only restoration project currently is on the Beaver Kill and Mink Hollow in the Town of Woodstock. It will likely finish up this year.
- The other projects are culvert replacements and grade control on streams affecting infrastructure.
- Shandaken has an ongoing planning project in Pine Hill to develop a trail network that has public stream access and educational signage.
- USGS has an ongoing research and monitoring project assessing suspended sediment concentrations and tributary sources in the watershed since 2010.
- Two new USGS studies just funded will continue long-term monitoring of trout species. It was requested that the research be translated to lay terms and shared with the public.
- The second study will look at the introduction of White Perch in the Esopus and its effects on Rainbow Trout growth.

**Stream Project Updates** (*Adam D. shared a presentation*):

Stream restoration projects completed in 2014:

Stony Clove Lane was constructed during the 2014 season. Stony Clove/ Warner Creek confluence spanned over the past two years of construction, the result of some site difficulties and slower than normal construction.

In addition to NYC DEP funding, a lot of funding for these projects came from the Emergency Watershed Protection Program through NRCS. We were fortunate that that funding was available after Irene and Lee floods, as it helped stretch our local funding and allowed us to accomplish more work.

A cabin at the Stony Clove Lane site is scheduled for demolition. The cabin presented a challenge for working on the site, as it was not allowed to be knocked down during construction. The large bank failure in the area above the house was the main source of turbidity.

The site was shown post-construction from last fall. There is the addition of a flood-prone bench along the left bank, as well as a stacked-rock wall, up to the 50-year water surface level. The bank was hydro-seeded.

The Stony Clove/ Warner Creek confluence post-construction was shown.

Work was done by two contractors local to the Catskills: Baker Brothers Excavating out of West Hurley, and Hubbell Brothers out of Margaretville.

Catskill Streams Buffer Initiative:

- A number of private landowner sites were completed in 2014. M
- Monitoring for Mile-a-Minute... check that contaminated stock was not propagating at previous planting sites.
- Will be doing outreach for site visits.
- Coming spring: Willow field maintenance. Last supplier's stock had high mortality rate (75%).
- Bioengineering Bush Kill project in Olive.

AWSMP issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Oliverea project with 2016 implementation. We have wrapped up the draft language on the Oliverea RFP. It should be going out soon. A diagnostic and feasibility assessment of the McKinley Hollow/ Esopus area looking at contributing sediment that is causing channel adjustments.

Stream Assessment and Monitoring:

Allison Lent, AWSMP Stream Assessment Coordinator is working to complete Stream Management Plans quickly. A plan for the Beaver Kill is going to publisher now. Plans for Bushnellsville, Bush Kill, and Warner Creek are next in line.

Also have to comply with intense monitoring requirements by Army Corps of Engineers.

**2015 Goals** (*Leslie Z. and Adam D. shared a presentation*):

Planning to continue with the programs that we have. Three new active working groups: Education and Outreach Working Group, Stream Ecosystem Working Group, and Flood Hazard Mitigation Working Group.

Includes redesigned Esopus Creek News newsletter and AWSMP logo. New logo to be reviewed by Stakeholder Council soon. An example was presented - mountain/ stream concept. The word “Management” has been excluded from the design, due to space restraints. It was asked if we should change the name of program to remove “management”. Something to consider. Chet K. asked the Council to consider what the logo will look like on social media.

Events: Ashokan Conference on April 11 at the Ashokan Center, Family Fun & Fish Day June 27 at Kenneth Wilson Campground, Little Beaver Kill Stream Walk June 6, tabling events, Ulster County Fair, and fall Warner Creek Stream Walk.

AWSMP Youth Educator Matt Savatgy enriching classroom and after-school programs with stream/watershed/water science education for most students grade 3-4 at Bennett Intermediate School in Boiceville.

Local Flood Analysis may expand. We will be talking with the Town of Shandaken and see where they want to go next.

Over the next two years, we will expand our outreach and technical assistance efforts around flood hazard mitigation to support communities as they move through LFA, and then implementation. Brent will offer trainings and send notices as they are offered.

Other communities are eligible for LFA. There is \$250,000 available to complete the analysis and planning phase of the flood mitigation program through the AWSMP. Our initial cost estimates seem to be on track.

Three to five-year picture of what communities remain for LFA: Shandaken/Allaben, Pine Hill, Big Indian, and Chichester. Ashokan and Glenford do not have as many floodplain issues as they do culvert backups, etc.

There are no eligible hamlets in the Town of Woodstock for LFA, as LFA is tied to MOA-designated communities. If Woodstock wanted to engage in similar process, they could apply for funding through our regular SMIP program.

Stream work planned for 2015:

- Wright Road project – Stony Clove Creek in Greene Co.
- Chichester II – vegetation/ bioengineering plan for hillslope.
- Sites III & IV - modify structure that transitions between the two sites

Challenges to Overcome:

Our program is growing and expanding. New DEP contracts have additional administrative requirements, so we're still adjusting to that. LFA will generate many ideas for solutions for in the communities. Millions of dollars-worth of project ideas will be generated. To implement, will need to engage in the multiple funding sources available. CWC will be a regional funding source. CWC will present at our March 23<sup>rd</sup> Flood Hazard Mitigation Working Group meeting and detail the different funding categories. All Flood Advisory Committee members and town officials are invited to attend.

The Town of Shandaken is getting ready to move LFA to implementation. Funding coordination will be a huge effort between funding partners and communities.

The voluntary floodplain buyout program will be City-funded, but will be administered by county partners and with the towns. The towns will have the key role in deciding how projects move forward. The program rules for this are still being worked out. A few key issues remain, but good progress has been made.

Adam D. said challenges remain to figure out engineering services. Landowner agreements/ private property work can be challenging due to construction work needing to be done. Monitoring is a challenge.

### **Stream Corridor Studies** (*Danyelle D. presenting*)

FAD requires the City: 1) Report on status of USGS monitoring last several years on turbidity and suspended sediment (SS) in Esopus watershed; and 2) Study effectiveness of stream projects at reducing turbidity. An opportunity to expand and enhance the research USGS is doing, will be a 10-years study now. Resume monitoring in tributary streams and Esopus mainstem.

Results of last three years showed Stony Clove Creek is greatest contributor (of SS); will study Stony Clove in greater detail, multiple monitoring points, top to bottom, in tributaries. Focus on where in watershed sediment is originating and to put effective management practices. First few years get instruments in watershed and monitor, identify sources along with stream feature inventory, and then install projects and monitor after construction. Look at before/after effects of projects.

Planned work is meaningful research to Ashokan basin, Stream Management Program and science of stream management as whole. Other projects:

- Revise regional curves for bankfull discharge.
- Develop reference reaches for natural channel designs. Coordinate across watersheds.

### **Report outs from Working Groups to the Stakeholder Council**

Last meeting there was question about the Stakeholder Council working group structure. There is a lead, and two co-leads, for each working group. The co-leads are the working group representatives on the Stakeholder Council. At least one of the co-leads attends every Stakeholder Council Meeting, so that they can do these report outs and bring the topics forward to the Stakeholder Council.

Co-leads are volunteers, and replacements for them can be chosen when they step down. If multiple people volunteer, then there would be a majority vote to select new co-leads.

Current Working Group Co-Leads:

- Stream Access and Recreation WG - Marc Hollander and Aaron Bennett. Aaron B. has taken on the new role with our program, and has stepped down. They are looking for a replacement.
- Highway Managers WG- Eric Hoffmeister and Mike Reynolds
- Flood Hazard Mitigation – Rob Stanley and Amanda LaValle

- Grant Review Committee – Chet Karwatowski and Burt Samuelson
- Education and Outreach – Kerissa Battle and TBD (looking for a second co-lead)
- Stream Ecosystem – Barry Baldigo and Mike Flaherty

This group of people form the Executive Council of the Stakeholder Council. Under the Stakeholder Council Guidelines, these are the voting members.

#### Flood Hazard Mitigation Working Group - Towns of Olive and Shandaken

Rob S.: Speaking on behalf of SAFARI, MMI has made progress on the Shandaken LFA. They had a number of studies and models they worked on over the winter, suggesting some solutions for Phoenicia. Mt. Tremper is more difficult due to the amount of water and confluences of streams. SAFARI is meeting with MMI again next week to get further updates. They are trying to work through issues with sediment transport that causes problems specifically in Phoenicia. The Route 28 bridge is causing problems for Mt. Tremper. It is not listed with DOT for replacement. Need to get DOT involved in future program (e.g. higher bridges/ safer bridges). The bridge is a pinch point. There are a number of properties set for buyout in Mt. Tremper. They should know more about that throughout the year. Relocations may be identified through the LFA process.

Sylvia R.: Speaking for the Town of Olive Flood Committee, the last year was mostly organizing. They hired Woitd Engineering as their LFA consultant and flood mitigation engineer. Aaron B. helped obtain the Hudson Greenways Grant to complete a townwide flood mitigation plan.

Community Rising update:

Olive Committee spent 10 months (2 meetings a month) deciding Plan 1: Esopus and Plan 2: Bush Kill. Their pre-app is for 1 million dollars. They hope it is approved within the next month or so. Olive can expect CR funding in the spring of 2016, according to pre-app.

Rob S.: Conceivably, CR projects were supposed to start last fall. Projects are engineered, but CR not funded yet. Because there are five bridges, there may not be enough contractors to do the projects all at once. July or August 2015 would be the earliest start date.

Aaron B. reported the county is going through an update to its five-year Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan. Aaron B. is helping as many communities that want to participate in the program. Communities need to be represented to qualify for post-presidentially declared disaster FEMA funding.

Olive and Shandaken have been really good with coming up with draft projects. They want to include information from LFAs. Each municipality has to fill out an Action Worksheet for each hazard. It requires a lot of work, and Aaron B. is happy to assist.

#### Stream Access and Recreation Working Group

Marc H., group Co-Lead proposes that the Stakeholder Council address the work to be done on Gilboa Dam via a memo. The goal is to mitigate flooding risk and improve safety of downstream Schoharie communities while preserving the habitat and recreation on the Esopus. The memo includes request to study a multi-level intake for releases to lower Schoharie Creek. A multi-level valve will allow less loss of low-level cold water during releases.

Concern is that large bottom level releases will be made to protect downstream Schoharie communities to prevent flooding during tropical storm, using low-level intake valve – the only option being built. Issue of flexibility in the system. Concern would depletion of cold water rapidly. What is potential for infrastructure to be changed? Without more capability may be destined for this situation.

Cold water in the Esopus encourages trout habitat and possibly encourages a whitewater recreational resource. Marc H. encouraged the Stakeholder Council to ask DEP to reconsider actions to preserve cold water during releases before they close the project (to make sure we are doing all we can to serve all of the interests).

The memo was presented to the Stakeholder Council for review. Modifications should be discussed or incorporated.

Due to the requests for action at hand, there was question about the role of the Stakeholder Council. It was suggested that they should invite other interest groups that are more suited to advocacy role and let them make a petition (formal request) based on that information.

Danyelle D.: Issues of advocacy have come up before (there is no charter), but has not typically been in the scope of what this group does.

There was question as to whether DEP would conduct a study based on a Stakeholder Council request. The goal is to express concerns about issue that will not go away. May be best for DEP to respond in some way. A way to frame.

Chet K.: This is not just a water quantity issue, but an ecosystem and recreation issue as well.

The mission statement of the Stakeholder Council involves providing feedback on activities related to the watershed, and sharing and extending information. The letter should be in context of mission.

Brent G.: Recommended changing the memo from an advocacy letter to an educational memo promoting awareness. Once revised, the memo would be sent to the Executive Council for review.

Stakeholder Council agreed to include Item #2 in letter revision. This is a letter of concern.

Adam D.: Does the Stakeholder Council want to have unanimous support for the requests? Need to develop a process going forward.

Amanda L. made motion to agree to send the letter back to the to Stream Access & Recreation Working Group to revise the memo with the suggestions as presented in discussion and represent it back as revised to the Stakeholder Council Executive Council for discussion and possible approval.

Chet K. seconded the motion.

No further discussion.

Unanimous approval and motion carried.

### **Next Meeting**

TBA – June 2015