
Stakeholder Council 2014

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, Phoenicia, NY 12464

July 22, 2014 1pm-4:00pm

In Attendance: Tim C., Nate H., Sylvia R., Rob S., Amanda L., Eric H., Andrew E., Kirk P., Barry B., Burt S., Jason S., Steve P., Chet K., Mike R., John H., Mike F., Mary M.

Staff: Leslie Z., Brent G., Heather E., Danyelle D.; Beth R.; Adam D.

Next scheduled meeting: TBD - 2014

Community Updates and Event Announcements

Attendees introduced themselves and Leslie Z. overviewed the agenda. Steve P. announced that Ulster County Emergency Management Director Art Snyder has retired. Steve P. will now be acting as the Director.

Barry B. gave an update on USGS work sampling fish communities in the Esopus. USGS is going into their sixth year with funding from DEC, CCE, USGS, and NYSERDA. Survey at seven out of nine sites is nearly done this year. They developed a fish database covering the first three years of research. They finished a survey at 18 locations before Irene hit, and they were able to obtain funding for an additional three years to evaluate the impact of the storm.

Several papers and reports on the USGS research will be coming out soon. In particular, Barry and Scott George wrote a paper that has been accepted with minor revisions for publication in Freshwater Biology on data covering the first two years post-Irene. Also, a paper covering fish information during the first three years of research will be published in Northeastern Naturalist.

Irene appears to have had minor effects on fish populations in general. USGS has determined that most invertebrate communities recovered within 12 months post-Irene. The lack of Rainbow Trout recovery is still being investigated.

Research is ongoing, but populations this year are comparable to last year's. Fish biomass and density are slightly less this year, but that is possibly due to streams being significantly higher than last year.

Project Updates

CCEUC Project Updates

Brent G. overviewed CCEUC upcoming events:

7/27 Family Fun and Fish Day

7/28-8/3 Ulster County Fair – AWSMP will be there on Friday 8/1 with the stream table

8/23 Shandaken Day

9/6 Olive Day

9/13-9/20 Ulster County Creek Walk – Danyelle D. will host a stream walk along Warner Creek

9/20-9/21 Hudson Valley Harvest Festival

10/23-10/24 CERM (Catskill Environmental Research and Monitoring conference) – will be held at Belleayre

Brent G. will be proctoring a CFM (Certified Floodplain Manager) exam on August 20th at CCE in Kingston. If you're interested in taking the exam, contact the Association of State Floodplain Managers and send in an application.

Leslie Z. gave an update on CCE projects and publications. Video has become a popular format for people to obtain information, including education. CCE hired videographer Jessica Vecchione to record footage that will be used to produce a series of stream best-management practices videos. CCE will also produce videos on stream restoration, and will showcase projects at Warner Creek and Chichester. These videos will move to production later this year. There are many video options available, such as animation and more dynamic action field shots that we may incorporate later on, funding permitting.

CCE also had the videographer record the morning presentations at the Ashokan Watershed Conference earlier this year. We produced several condensed videos from those sessions, links to which are available now on the AshokanStreams.org website. Full-length videos are available as well under the “Conferences & Training” section of the website.

CCE maintains a blog on the AWSMP website, which updates the public on our program events, publications, and projects. Stakeholders are encouraged to share the link to our website: www.ashokanstreams.org

Leslie Z. gave an update on CCE AWSMP staffing. A position for a second educator with CCE has been posted. Chet K. and Amanda L. will represent the Stakeholder Council on the search committee. Applications for the position are due by August 8th. The anticipated hire date will be October 15th. The new educator will focus on community education and volunteer training.

We have renewed our lease on the Phoenicia office. The new lease includes improvements and expansions of the space due by spring 2015. A larger meeting room with its own entrance is in the new plan.

CCE is close to finalizing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Ulster County Department of Environment (DoE) to help formalize our relationship with them. With DEP funding assistance and support, we will have a DoE planner working from the AWSMP office who will offer coordination and technical assistance to towns. We hope to have the position filled by the end of the year.

We are working with a local designer (Stephanie Blackman Design) to reformat our Esopus Creek Newsletter. We are developing a new format for the full-length newsletter, as well as a shorter version for the summer edition. The shorter version will go out as an E-newsletter in addition to a print version. The shorter summer edition should be available in the next several weeks.

UCSWCD Project Updates

Adam D. gave stream project updates. The confluence project is back underway. Baker Brothers Excavating started construction again about four weeks ago. Things have been moving a little slow due to water control issues. In part, there was a thermal expansion issue with a large pipe on the site. The issue has now been addressed.

Wright Road in Greene County and Stony Clove Lane in Shandaken are both out for permitting. They are still navigating some landowner issues on both sites.

CSBI – Bobby Taylor has been working on two bioengineering projects. One in Oliverea, which is being handled in-house by our staff and with support from Highland. The other is a multi-phased project along the Bush Kill in Olive being engineered by a design firm in the Hudson Valley called One Nature.

Assessment crews have been out the last several weeks. They are mostly focusing on projects constructed last year. We are required to meet certain monitoring criteria by the Army Corps, and currently we are going above and beyond those requirements. For our own purposes, we are interested in the functionality of the structures installed, among other things, to inform future design processes. The data being collected will also be used to create topographic surveys for the sites.

Assessment crews started at projects on the Stony Clove and will move to Warner Creek 5. They are currently working on Chichester 1, and will finish sites 2,3, and 4 over the next few weeks. The monitoring reports will be finalized and made available to anyone who is interested in them (and possibly posted on the website).

We need to start looking to the future and pinpoint new sites for surveying and monitoring.

DEP Project Updates

Danyelle D. gave an overview of contract status. A new five-year contract with CCE for \$6.3 million is about to begin. That contract has allocated funds to cover hiring new staff, \$1 million to Flood Hazard Mitigation, and \$2 million to SMIP.

The next five-year agreement with UCSWCD has been negotiated for \$7.5 million beginning in February 2015. These funds will cover District staffing, \$3.5 million for projects, \$1 million for Flood Hazard Mitigation, \$300k for CSBI, and money to hire a new full-time engineer.

Beth R. identified the two entities in addition to DEP Stream Management helping to create the Flood Hazard Mitigation program – CWC and DEP Land Acquisition. Local Flood Analysis (LFA) will help identify projects with flood hazard mitigation benefits, and DEP's Land Acquisition Program is developing a tool to help communities restore floodplains and get people out of harm's way. Program rules are being developed, and good progress is being made by the three partners.

Working Group Report Out

Rob S., Sylvia R., and Amanda L. (co-lead of FHM) to give any updates on Flood Advisory Committee progress.

Flood Hazard Mitigation

SAFARI

Rob S. reported that Shandaken's Local Flood Analysis (LFA) is about to get started. SAFARI is working on an annual update to the Town's Flood Mitigation Plan adopted in July 2013, and hoping to wrap up review by September. Proposed funding of several projects was to be through FEMA or NY Rising. The NY Rising Program has been difficult to follow. Originally, it was thought the State would hire engineers for the towns to implement projects quickly; however, the towns are now being classified as sub-recipients. As such, the funding mechanism is unclear, and it could take months to implement projects depending.

After two and a half months, Rob was contacted by the NY Rising representative. They are supposed to meet this week. Cost/ benefit analysis and other factors will determine priorities by NY Rising. Sylvia R. had not heard from NY Rising since June 16th.

LFA Study Areas

Shandaken finalized their contract with MMI, which will be handling the LFAs for both Phoenicia and Mt. Tremper. Rob S. is not sure if the studies will be handled concurrently or individually. Both areas need attention.

There will be a Town Board meeting in August or September where MMI will explain the LFA procedure with a presentation. They will define terminology so people will understand that this is not just another study, but a process for implementation.

There will be a televised Town Board meeting to explain the proposals. There will be more specific localized meetings after the Board meeting to obtain local property owners (landowners and business owners) input. The Phoenicia meeting will be held at the Parish Hall on Main Street.

The goal is to have projects that can be implemented by next spring, possibly funded in conjunction with NY Rising or FEMA money.

Shandaken Study Sites 1 & 2 (Phoenicia and Mt. Tremper, respectively) were presented to the Stakeholder Council.

Rob explained that the study area for Phoenicia starts at a rock outcropping at the top of Stony Clove, just past the Phoenicia School. The bedrock there is a good basis to begin the study area from. The elevation there is carried around Phoenicia and into western Phoenicia (Woodland Valley Bridge). Phoenicia study area connects to Mt. Tremper, so no areas are unchecked between them. They wanted to cover the entire 500-year floodplain (not much larger than 100-year floodplain), so that they can get the best analysis possible. The southern border goes to the Interpretive Center. It was originally thought that relocations could only occur within study boundaries, but we now know that is not true.

Rob is looking into flood buyout programs. There will likely be structures that have to be relocated or removed. There have been criticisms of buyouts, but Rob is supportive so long as the Town Board has control over them.

Olive

Sylvia R. reported that Olive had a flood committee meeting, which was mostly introductions. There was good turnout, and she is still recruiting members. They have two engineers, a surveyor, a building inspector, several local people, and a zoning officer so far.

Nice job was done explaining LFA. They discussed what they know needs attention at this point: Bush Kill in West Shokan and Boiceville. NFIP data sheets from Bill Nechamen were received. Boiceville is the primary issue, but it was agreed that West Shokan is a “disaster waiting to happen”, and also needs ample attention.

Next flood committee meeting is August 7th at 6:30pm. Sylvia invited anyone who is interested. The latest rainstorm did some damage on Bostock Road and Trib 8. They want to plot problem areas on map at next meeting. Leslie Z. mentioned that AWSMP’s flood assessment knowledge combined with town knowledge can translate into a scope of services to help consultants/ engineers.

Also, the Olive Conservation Advisory Council needs five members. Let Sylvia know if you are interested.

FHM Working Group

The Flood Hazard Mitigation Working Group had their kick-off meeting a few months ago, and will have another one soon. The purpose of the basin-wide meeting is to offer towns networking opportunities with each other and also a chance

to meet agency staff. Additionally, AWSMP has offered several trainings on reading flood maps, LFA, cost/ benefit analysis, and hydraulics/ hydrology.

Concern over a City-funded community flood buyout program has been mentioned. At the August 6th (10:00am – noon, place TBD) meeting, we have invited Dave Tobias of DEP Land Acquisition to dispel misconceptions and explain what the program actually does. Stakeholder members are welcome to attend.

Stream Access and Recreation

Issues being addressed by the Stream Access and Recreation Committee currently include directional signage within the watershed, assisting Shandaken with the Pine Hill trail and stream crossings, and involving the local business community in environmental projects (white water, angling, etc.).

AWSMP funded a grant to the Phoenicia Library to update their website. The Jerry Bartlett Angling Collection has received national press. It is a beautiful website and excellent fly-fishing resource. The website is: www.catskillanglingcollection.org

LFA Funding and Grant Program Development

The AWSMP Stakeholder Council Grant Review Committee met last fall. Their recommendations were approved by the Stakeholder Council in January to spend the remaining grant funds in the ending CCE contract with DEP. A new contract is set to commence on September 1st. At that time, new grant funding will become available. There will be two funding streams: regular SMIP (the same as in the past five years) and SMIP LFA. The SMIP LFA funds will be available on a rolling basis. That means the Stakeholder Council Grant Review Committee may be activated at any time to review LFA grant requests over the next five years.

\$3 million has been allocated in the contract for SMIP from September 1, 2014 through June 30, 2019. The funding allocation categories correspond to the Action Plan.

To be compliant with DEP funding rules, separate Capital and Expense budgets are now necessary in our contract. Capital expenses are defined as permanent projects (construction projects). Most other items are classified as Expense, including education and outreach, engineering and design (planning), and research and monitoring.

Budgeting is very important. Money in the Expense category should be spent on an annual time frame. Annual budget estimates have been taken roughly from spending done over the past five years. Adjustments may be necessary. Excess Expense funds can move to Capital, but excess Capital funds cannot move to Expense.

SMIP program is more competitive now. What is spent will be largely determined by the Stakeholder Council. We want to receive RFAs earlier in the year for budgeting purposes. Generally, grants are contracted on a two-year basis.

SMIP money in Expense category needs to be granted out by mid-2017 so that we can give DEP our expense budget for 2019. We propose that LFA funds for eligible population centers should be allocated by July 31, 2017. That way, everyone will get the money they need in enough time to complete their projects, and there is also time to reallocate excess funds if necessary.

We have committed to getting LFA done. However, until we receive anticipated costs from consulting firms, we only have estimated figures.

Next Meeting

TBD – October 2014