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**Stakeholder Council 2018  
Membership**

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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

**April 23, 2019 from 1:30pm-4:00pm**

**In Attendance:** Andrew Emrich, Chris Tran, Aaron Bennett, Justine McNeilly, Tim Koch, Chester Karwatowski, Kathy Nolan, Scott George, Brent Gotsch, Adam Doan, Leslie Zucker; **Executive Council members present:** Barry Baldigo, Burt Samuelson, Amanda LaValle, Mike Flaherty, Rob Stanley, Mark Loete

**Next scheduled meeting:** November 13, 2019

**Introductions and Stakeholders Announcements**

Frank Almquist will present historic photos of the Ashokan Reservoir at the April meeting of the Ashokan-Pepacton Watershed Chapter of Trout Unlimited (TU). The Chapter meets on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month at the Boiceville Inn at 7:30 pm.

Kathy Nolan is the new legislative liaison on the Ulster County Soil and Water Conservation District Board.

The Ashokan Watershed Stream Management Program is holding its annual 'Family, Fun and Fish Day' event on Sunday, May 19 from 1:00-3:30 pm at the Kenneth Wilson State Campground, Mt. Tremper. AWSMP is seeking volunteers to help teach participants

how to fish. The event is delivered in collaboration with DEC Region 3 and TU. Contact Brent Gotsch at [bwg37@cornell.edu](mailto:bwg37@cornell.edu) to volunteer.

New York City will continue work on the Schoharie Reservoir Shandaken Intake Chamber and the work will affect water releases to the Esopus Creek through mid-May. Releases will be limited depending on the mode of operation. The work may not be completed this spring and may continue in the fall. DEC anticipates enough water will be available to cool the Esopus Creek, but recreational releases may be reduced (e.g., one-half usual flows). DEC approves releases as the requested dates approach. Requested releases are at: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/80682.html>.

A source of turbidity was noticed on Birch Creek below the DEP treatment plant. SWCD will be assessing the situation over the next few weeks.

The Ashokan Release Working Group anticipates a June release of the draft Environmental Impact Statement for modification of the Catalum SPDES Permit affecting the lower Esopus Creek. The EIS has been in development for two years.

## AWSMP Updates

A new five-year agreement between Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) and NYC Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to fund administration and implementation of the AWSMP from 2019-2024 is working its way through the NYC government toward signature. Approval is expected to take at least two more months. Spending on the new contract may begin in fall 2019.

A new five-year agreement between the Ulster County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and DEP is similarly in development. The current SWCD agreement expires in March 2020.

The AWSMP and hired consulting firm Ducky Johnson Home Elevations out of Harahan, LA delivered a flood hazard mitigation training on elevation and floodproofing on March 26-27. The workshop was attended by 44 local code enforcement and other municipal officials working in the NYC watershed. The program included classroom instruction and a bus tour organized to visit examples in the Phoenicia area. Local business and homeowners shared their experiences and the program thanks them for participation. Workshop evaluation and feedback were positive.

Watershed educator Brent Gotsch trained several code enforcement officers and others to take the Certified Floodplain Manager's exam at the 2019 NYS Floodplain and Stormwater Managers Conference. Exam results have not been released.

AWSMP is organizing three large events:

- 1) Stream Explorers Youth Adventure, AWSMP's annual youth conference at the Ashokan Center for youth grades 3-6. New activities are planned.
- 2) A 3-day training on how to use HEC-RAS hydraulic modeling software for evaluating bridges and culverts to be held in August or September. A consulting firm will be hired to provide field and classroom instruction. The primary audience is local highway departments in the NYC Watershed.
- 3) Ashokan Watershed Month is planned for September 2019. Instead of a one-day conference, the program is trying a series of events held throughout September, similar to Schoharie Watershed Month. Events will be advertised on a webpage, online and with a mailer to watershed residents. Activities being discussed include a stream paddle and stream peddle with staff providing stream education and interpretation. A plein air painting class focused on stream features. A watershed scavenger hunt at stream locations. And a series of guided walks and talks. Topics for walks/talks include: a reprise presentation of "Demystifying the Ashokan Reservoir" with new information from DEP, paleoclimate, forests, and wetlands of the watershed. If available, the Ashokan Rail Trail may be used for walks. Another idea is to work with TU and DEC to hold a fly fishing excursion to learn more about the fishery and ongoing research.

AWSMP stakeholder can help to make the first ever Ashokan Watershed Month a success. The program was encouraged to involve town environmental commissions that in the past contributed to Ulster County Creek Week, which used to be held in September.

CCE will be participating in local school Earth Day events. SWCD is planning an Earth Day riparian buffer planting and invasive plant removal with Girl Scouts at the Catskill Interpretive Center.

This summer, the SWCD-led stream assessment crew will survey the upper Esopus Creek in the Oliverea reach to Big Indian (with possible small extension along Creekside Drive). Several upper Esopus Creek tributaries, including the Elk Bushkill, McKenley Hollow, and Little Peck Hollow will be surveyed in 2020.

Two field interns from the Ulster County Community College (made possible with DEP funding) will join the assessment crew this summer, along with Student Conservation Association intern Amanda Cabanillas, who was on staff last year assisting with road-stream crossing assessment.

SWCD revegetated stream restoration sites near Van Hoagland Road on the Beaver Kill (T/Woodstock) and in Woodland Creek Valley (T/Shandaken) last fall, completing those projects. SWCD observed close to 80% establishment of last fall's plantings.

SWCD is overseeing field investigation and design of stream restoration projects at two new sites both in Warner Creek. Construction is scheduled for 2020. Both sites were identified through tributary monitoring, but have been known as significant sources of turbidity for some time; both contain "textbook" lacustrine clay deposits. The two sites are separate, but will be designed simultaneously.

DEP is interacting with a National Academies of Sciences Expert Panel review of the NYC watershed protection program required in the most recent Filtration Avoidance Determination. The 16-member ad-hoc committee has been meeting regularly, some meetings are open to stakeholders. The next meeting will be May 13-15 at the Kaatskill Mountain Club (see <https://www8.nationalacademies.org/pa/projectview.aspx?key=49938>).

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

The Stream Management Implementation Program fund dedicated to implementation of stream management and flood hazard mitigation plan recommendations will be renewed in the next CCE-DEP contract.

Under the current fund, 34 projects have been awarded totaling \$1,836,085 out of \$2,000,000 available to municipalities, education institutions, and non-profits for stream implementation projects. An additional four Local Flood Analysis projects were funded for \$484,105 out of \$1,250,000 available.

Recently completed projects include several USGS fish studies, with one featured in the Winter Edition of the [Esopus Creek News](#) and on WAMC radio station. The Ulster County Dept. of Public Works completed design, engineering, and construction of the Watson Hollow Slope Stabilization and Stream Restoration Project in the Town of Olive, where one lane of Watson Hollow Rd. had eroded away. The road is now open and repaved. Also, Olive completed a town-wide flood mitigation plan that provides recommendations outside the LFA study areas covered in *Local Flood Analysis for Boiceville and West Shokan*, also funded through SMIP.

SMIP funds remaining to distribute total \$163,915 and are available on an ongoing basis. Projects must be completed by August 30, 2019 when CCE's agreement with DEP ends.

AWSMP staff identified a project for additional SMIP funding and presented its goals to the Stakeholder Council. The *BANCS Model Calibration and Validation: Ashokan Watershed Predictive Regional Curve* was originally funded in 2017. A new proposal is to extend the study for three additional months from June-August 2019. After the prior SMIP award, CCE hired Stantec Engineering and Consulting to complete the study. Stantec successfully completed the original project scope of work, including bank surveys from 2017-2018 and analysis. The study was done to quantify background rates of streambank erosion in the Ashokan watershed. Banks were divided into different categories depending on their susceptibility to erosion and erosive pressure. However, several bank categories are difficult to locate within the watershed and were under-represented in the original survey. This lack of data skewed results in several streambank categories. AWSMP staff have determined an expanded search effort and survey of additional streambanks in these categories is needed to complete the erosion curves and make them available for immediate use.

Stantec submitted a proposal totaling \$77,956 for survey of up to 11 new study banks. AWSMP staff reviewed the proposal for cost-effectiveness and appropriateness of methods and recommend the project for funding. Stantec will update the curves and issue a new report of findings by August 30, 2019.

Staff were asked how the curves will be used. SWCD answered that curves will be used to evaluate bank erosion potential where erosion is observed, such as at sites recommended for the flood buyout program. Also, curves can be used to quantify loading from streambank erosion. Bank erosion rates can be linked with stream assessment observations to partition out the amount of sediment load generated by streambanks. These data can be used to quantify potential load from a reach and help to prioritize banks for treatment.

Based on AWSMP staff recommendation and scientific justification, the Executive Council voted on the funding request as follows:

Burt Samuelson moved to fund additional funding of \$77,956 for the project *BANCS Model Calibration and Validation: Ashokan Watershed Predictive Regional Curve*. Chet Karwatowski seconded the motion. The motion carried with all Executive Council members present in favor. None opposed.

#### **AWSMP Action Plan Update:**

AWSMP staff reviewed proposed changes to the AWSMP Action Plan for the period 2019-2021. Suggested changes were identified by staff and Stakeholder Council working groups at recent meetings. The Stakeholder Council revised several action recommendations.

The Council suggested to scan other stream management program Action Plans for comparison and ideas to consider next year. Additional discussion focused on how to sustain the Ashokan Watershed Stream Management Program for the benefit of watershed communities and the resource beyond the next five-year planning horizon. A suggestion was made to track outcomes and articulate why the program is important to the communities and which outcomes provide the greatest benefit.

The Executive Council voted to approve the 2019-2021 AWSMP Action Plan as follows:

Barry Baldigo moved to approve the AWSMP Action Plan as finalized at the meeting. Mike Flaherty seconded the motion. The motion carried with all Executive Council members present in favor. None opposed.

The dedication of the AWSMP stakeholders in contributing to Action Plan review was acknowledged.

#### **Stakeholder Council Working Group Reports**

No reports were delivered at this meeting.

The meeting was adjourned. The AWSMP Stakeholder Council will meet again on November 13 from 1:30-4:00 pm at the AWSMP office in Shokan.