

Esopus Creek News

Esopus Creek Management Plan Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 4

Fall/Winter 2006

The Latest on Esopus Creek Management Plan

As the calendar rolls into December, we wish you a happy upcoming holiday season and hope you enjoy the enclosed free copy of "Catskill Streams" as an early holiday gift. This publication was developed by a collaborative group of local community and public agencies as a guide for good streamside stewardship. Look for even more detailed streamside stewardship information this spring online at: www.catskillstreams.org.

Thank you to those of you who have participated in our focus groups and community meetings. We especially appreciate the 46% of streamside households who

took the time to complete and return our survey. The high survey return rate will help us provide better programs and assistance in 2007. For instance, we now know that most of you would like to see more "how to" programs and direct technical assistance for streamside issues. We also learned that many of you care about protecting stream habitat as well as protecting your own property from flooding and erosion.

Using your input and stream study data, a draft version of the Esopus Creek Management Plan will be completed by January 2007 and made available in print and online at:

www.esopuscreek.org. A more user-friendly summary version of the plan will also be produced in early 2007.

Our Association has been contracted by the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to coordinate writing the Esopus Creek Management Plan. The Draft Esopus Creek Management Plan will be presented to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) by the DEP at the end of 2006 to meet requirements for New York City's Filtration

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Group Training Kicks Off Volunteer Stream Team

At a Leaf-Pack Training on October 21, a group of intrepid volunteers spent a fun Saturday together looking at bugs! Not just any bugs – these bugs, called "benthic macroinvertebrates," live on the bottom of streams and are used to measure the health of stream habitat. Mayflies, stoneflies and caddisflies are some of the nymph-stage insects commonly monitored because they are easy to collect and identify, are sensitive to changes in habitat, and have a relatively long life cycle.

The training, led by the Catskill



Stream Team Training

Center for Conservation and Development in partnership with Extension, showed how to take insect samples by anchoring a small mesh bag of tree leaves on the stream bottom for about a month.

By changing sample locations or types of leaves, participants compare habitats.

Samples taken by this and other groups, can be viewed online at www.stroudcenter.org. Follow the leaf pack network link then select "view data by watershed" and select "Esopus Creek" under **Hudson River**. We hope some of you will join the Stream Team and have fun monitoring the Esopus Creek! For more information contact Michael Courtney: (845) 340-3990 or mcc55@cornell.edu.

Project Advisory Council (PAC) Members

Broadstreet Hollow Landowners Association

Catskill Center for Conservation & Development

Catskill Mountain Rail Road

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We're on the web!
www.esopuscreek.org

Meeting Engages Community in Planning

More than 60 people participated in the October 5th Esopus Creek Management Plan Community Meeting hosted by Cornell

Cooperative Extension at the Phoenicia Fish and Game Club.

Consultant Craig Fischenich with the U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center spoke about

some of the basic characteristics of the watershed and fielded questions about the stream. Among the points Dr. Fischenich covered were that about 10% of the banks of the upper Esopus Creek are actively eroding (about normal for a healthy stream) and that local flood magnitude and frequency show no apparent trends. These

and other studies help rule out systemic erosion problems and shift the focus to identifying solutions for specific reaches



where as much as 75% of the banks are eroding. He also described the difficulties in managing the widely distributed fine glacial clay sediments that are easily suspended in stream flows and increase turbidity.

After presentations on the project, people separated

into interactive break-out groups to discuss, map out, and write down specific issues they would like to see addressed on the stream.

This interactive public meeting was a taste of future “stream neighborhood” and community meetings we are planning for the spring 2007. These will be sit-down-with-maps sessions to help ensure accuracy of our plan recommendations and to build community stream stewardship.



The Latest On the Plan (con.)

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Avoidance Determination or “FAD.”

The “FAD,” (scheduled for renewal by spring, 2007), encourages management of water quality by managing the health of the watershed rather than through expensive filtration of the City’s drinking water. Fortunately, actions that protect water quality can accomplish other outcomes. In fact, the Esopus Creek Management Plan addresses four goals: 1.) Erosion and flooding; 2.) Recreation; 3.) Water Quality; and 4.) Aquatic Habitat, and it provides overall coordination of public agencies and other organizations. The plan

recommendations include actions like working with landowners to restore streamside vegetation to prevent further erosion while also improving habitat and water quality. Other recommendations may include coordinating with public agencies to address specific maintenance issues for existing flood protection structures. Each location on the stream is unique and requires consideration of the hydrology, sediment loads, floodplain condition, channel stability, adjacent structures and other variables. While we can’t provide the resources to solve everyone’s problems on the Creek, the plan will provide a tool to prioritize and coordinate solutions with the community

actively engaged in the process. Completing the stream management plan also makes the project more competitive for additional funding sources.

