

Ashokan Watershed Stream Management Program

Education and Outreach Committee

Meeting Minutes

September 11, 2012, Ashokan Center, Olivebridge, NY

In attendance:

Brent Gotsch, CCE Ulster County
Gretchen Rae, CCE Ulster County
Dany Davis, NYC DEP
Mark Vian, NYC DEP
Diane Galusha, Catskill Watershed Corporation
Aaron Bennett, Ulster County Department of the Environment
Kerissa Fuccillo, Ashokan Center
Mary McNamara, Lower Esopus Watershed Partnership

Welcome and Check-in

AWSMP would like to give a big thank you to K. Fuccillo for allowing us to utilize the Ashokan Center facilities for this meeting.

Stakeholders' Council Representation

Committee agreed that M. McNamara would be the best candidate for Education and Outreach Committee representation on the AWSMP Stakeholders' Council. An alternate for M. McNamara can be determined at a future meeting.

Progress on 2012 Work Plan

AWSMP staff believe that while all the programs done this summer season were successful the ones we are most proud of include:

The Oliverea Stream Cleanup (May 5, 2012)
Arm-of-the-Sea Play (July 14, 2012)
Family Fun and Fish Day (July 28, 2012)

There is concern that while we want the programs to be fun and well-attended, we also want to have clear educational goals for each program. It was suggested that we consider assisting with a watershed-wide 1 page abstract that can be used for each program. The abstract would identify the program audience, message and the expected outcome. This will help determine if a program is worthwhile to do and if clear program objectives are being met.

D. Galusha wanted to inform the group that if we wanted to bring Arm-of-the-Sea back again we would need to apply for a CWC grant. Applications would be available in Mid-November and the deadline would be February 21. The event would have to be held after late September because that is how CWC's financial year is run.

There was discussion about another artistic person/group (such as a musician, storyteller, etc.) that could be used for similar type programs if Arm-of-the-Sea does not work out. K. Fuccillo has offered to get in touch with some of her connections for artistic programs.

Aaron Bennett informed the group that Michael Koegel, who manages Mama's Boy in Phoenicia, is also in charge of programming for the Shandaken Theatrical Society and has put out a call for ideas on artistic/theatrical programs. This may be a resource that we can utilize for artistic type pursuits.

K. Fuccillo made mention that one of the new buildings at the Ashokan Center would house a stage which could be used for artistic programs.

Due to the popularity of Stream Walks that have been given and the upcoming Stream Walk on Birch Creek as part of Ulster County Creek Week festivities we may want to make this or similar event something that we do a few times a year. D. Davis has stated that she would be interested in leading a walk on Warner Creek this spring. M. Vian suggested that we frame the event in terms of "animal tracking" in that as you walk the stream you can tell if the stream is under stress, in a natural state, etc. similar to how animals move.

Winter Workshop

At the AWSMP Stream Access and Recreation Committee meeting held last week, topics related to debris removal on Esopus Creek and white water recreational releases were brought up. Given the intense level of interest in these topics D. Davis suggested that we consider holding a workshop this winter where stakeholders and those knowledgeable about whitewater/debris topics are invited and discussions about these topics are made. The Workshop could also be used as a possible avenue toward policy changes.

Before this would occur, D. Davis would need a clear proposal including costs that she could use to justify holding such a workshop given the sensitive nature of the topic as well as the potential conflict of interest with NYC.

It was raised that CCE Greene-Columbia County would potentially be holding a technical conference on debris removal/gravel management in the future that could potentially be used as a model for this workshop.

Publications

There are two publications that are completed: an update of the Flood Emergency Preparedness guide that CCE Ulster put out a few years ago and the summer edition of the Esopus Creek Newsletter.

The Esopus Creek Newsletter had a number of positive comments from community members. The Fall/Winter newsletter is expected to be sent out in Nov/Dec of this year.

Possible topics for the Fall/Winter edition is expected to include articles on the Chichester project, Warner Creek as a featured creek, a science article related to Water bots or Ashokan Center citizen science, floodproofing your home, and a “nominated stream steward” to showcase. Possible recreation articles could include: winter hiking options on DEP land.

Other upcoming publications include a guide to the Beaverkill as well as a guide to NYS Water Law.

Other Upcoming Events

Creek Speak will be held September 16. A one mile hike along Birch Creek will include information on stream features and the influence of development on Catskill Mountain streams.

The Catskill Environmental Monitoring and Research Conference

Organizers of the Catskill Environmental Monitoring and Research Conference are calling for proposals for this year’s conference. Proposals are due by September 14.

Registration for the conference is now open. For more information please visit the website at <http://www.ashokanstreams.org/research%20conference.html>

Master Watershed Steward Program Updates

There have been a number of challenges for AWSMP Staff as they relate to administering this program including difficulties with helping the candidates attain their full potential. This is complicated by the fact that AWSMP staff are not authorized to work outside of the watershed. The next MWS Program training will occur on October 20 at the Agroforestry Center in Acra, NY. Next year the funding for the program allows a year for review and evaluation so there will likely not be an active MWS program.

Kiosk Updates

AWSMP is working with local artist Dave Channon to update kiosk panels on the Esopus Creek at Woodland Valley demo project site and a new kiosk at the Main Street bridge on the Stony Clove in Phoenicia describing flood history and the project that went into that area. D. Davis, B. Gotsch and G. Rae will continue to work with Mr. Channon until completion of the project.

AWSMP Website Overhaul

AWSMP is working with Stephanie Blackman of Blackman Designs to redesign and overhaul the existing AWSMP website. A design has been picked and AWSMP staff will be working with Ms. Blackman on content for the webpages. There will be a webpage designated for this

committee and we would like the committee develop content for that page and potentially other pages as well.

Other Items/Sharing

The Ashokan Center is looking for equipment that it can have/borrow for their stewardship service learning project. This project is for students staying at the Ashokan Center and includes invasive species removal and replanting. It was suggested that she contact A. Bennett for a list of resources for this program that they can use. It was also suggested that they partner with Adam Doan of the Ulster County Soil & Water Conservation District/Catskill Streams Buffer Initiative for technical expertise and potential use of the district's auger.

Aaron Bennet would like everyone to check out the website for Ulster County Creek Week and promote the events for this year. <http://ucenvironment.org/ulster-county-creek-week/>

Diane Galusha would like to report that the John Burroughs memorial on Rochester Hollow has been restored and that they may have an event to celebrate its restoration. Also suggested that we check out the Wyland Foundation watershed science bus/trailer that will be at Bennett Elementary school which was made possible by US Forest Service and CWC monies. Gretchen and Brent went to see this after the meeting and it was SUPER COOL!

Mary McNamara wanted to report that the Lower Esopus Watershed Partnership is having digital sub-basin maps designed and would like feedback on them.

Dany Davis would like to thank everyone for their support with her gender transition.

Future Actions

G. Rae and B. Gotsch will continue to work with Stephanie Blackman on webpage redesign.

G. Rae, B. Gotsch, and D. Davis will continue to work with Dave Channon on kiosk updates

Committee members will continue to work together and collaborate on various programs.

Next meeting will likely occur after the New Year. A doodle poll will be sent out to determine date and time.