
Advisory Council 2013

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

ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

AWSMP Program Office, Phoenicia, NY 12464

June 10, 2013 1pm-4pm

In Attendance: Eric H.; Mike R., Mary M., Rob S., Amanda L., Burt S., Andrew E., Barry B., John H., Kathy N., Tim C., Leo L.
Staff: Leslie Z., Brent G., Danyelle D.; Beth R.; Adam D.; Bobby T., Gary C.

Next scheduled meetings: TBD (October)

Introductions, Meeting Overview:

Adam Doan was promoted to Project Manager with Ulster County Soil and Water Conservation District (UCSWCD). Bobby Taylor has taken the position of Catskill Streams Buffer Initiative (CSBI) Coordinator with UCSWCD. Allison Lent with UCSWCD has taken on responsibilities for stream assessment this summer.

Gretchen Rae of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County (CCE) is no longer with AWSMP. She has moved with her husband (Cory Ritz) to New Hampshire. AWSMP staff and Stakeholders gratefully thank her for her enthusiasm, service and accomplishments in the watershed.

Christina Appleby is a 12-month Student Conservation Association (SCA) intern and Elyse Clifford a 6-month SCA intern with the AWSMP this year.

AWSMP Events/Announcements:

Ashokan Watershed Conference (4/27/2013)—The conference was held at the Ashokan Center in Olivebridge, NY. Over 100 attended and heard presentations on how Catskill and Ashokan watershed communities are promoting post-flood responses and solutions for improving community resilience to flooding. Planning for the next watershed conference will begin in fall 2013. We expect to hold the next watershed conference in early April 2014.

Bennett Elementary Earth Day (6/7/2013)—Brent G. and Christina A. participated in the Bennett Elementary School annual Earth Day event in Boiceville. They taught macroinvertebrate identification to approximately 150 4th, 5th and 6th graders.

Family Fun and Fish Day (6/8/2013)—Had good weather and great attendance, especially by youth and first-time anglers. Special thanks to DEC for providing poles, bait and literature; and volunteers from both the Ashokan-Pepacton and Catskill Mountain Chapters of Trout Unlimited for assisting anglers.

AWSMP Website—An updated AWSMP website (www.ashokanstreams.org) is going through the final stages of review. We hope to have it live by July-August of this year.

Announcements/Upcoming Events at Stakeholder Organizations:

Catskill Mountainkeeper's **Barnfest** will be held on June 22nd from 12-5pm in the Town of Woodstock. Please contact Kathy N. for more information.

Ulster County was featured as a mapping case study in a recently published **NYS Green Infrastructure guide**. The guide is available for download at: <http://ulstercountyny.gov/environment/New-York-Guide-To-Evaluating-And-Conserving-Green-Infrastructure-Across-The-Landscape.pdf> The Ulster County Department of the Environment hopes to have the digital files used to create the document's maps on their website soon.

Two-Year Action Plan Review and Discussion:

AWSMP is developing a two-year Action Plan covering the period 2013-2015. The Action Plan is a Filtration Avoidance Determination (FAD) deliverable for the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) submitted annually to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). A "bare bones" Action Plan that carried forward 2011-2013 recommendations previously reviewed by the Stakeholder Council in 2012 was submitted to EPA in May. AWSMP would like to update the Action Plan by January 2014 after additional input by the Stakeholder Council at spring and fall 2013 meetings.

In late 2013, AWSMP will begin the process of preparing a Request for Proposals to allocate about \$243,000 of Stream Management Implementation Program (SMIP) funds that remain in the current DEP-CCE contract. As a result, the Stakeholder Council will be reactivating the Grant Review Committee. These funds were previously allocated to projects that did not proceed or came in under budget.

New 5-year contracts between DEP and UCSWCD and CCE are nearly complete. It is hoped the contracts will be registered by July 1, 2014. There will be \$2 million in SMIP funds available in the new contracts, with an additional \$2 million allocated specifically for flood hazard mitigation planning and implementation projects.

The following sections are a review of recommendations from the Action Plan discussed by the Stakeholder Council. Stakeholder Council members are encouraged to provide additional feedback on any or all of these sections.

Stream Assessments

- UCSWCD has developed a Beaver Kill Stream Management Plan (SMP) that undergoing DEP review.
- Full walkover assessment of the Bushnellsville Creek will commence this summer.
- Stony Clove Creek will be reassessed this summer to document changes that have occurred in the watershed since it was last assessed in 2003.
- UCSWCD is currently working on remote sensing analysis of the Bushnellsville Creek, Fox Hollow Creek, and the Little Beaver Kill. This is Phase 1 assessment work that precedes stream survey. DEP has provided the AWSMP with updated Digital Elevation Models (DEMs) that provide a highly detailed representation of the earth's surface.
- Kathy N. inquired if there could be more opportunities for citizen science during these assessments. Trout Unlimited is working with a stream restoration specialist from upstate. Hope to have him come down to the Catskills in September or October. For more information please see nytu.org and search for stream restoration.
- Bobby T. (who was previously the senior stream assessment coordinator) described the need to streamline input of stream survey data into Stream Management Plans. AWSMP is considering use of the Rondout-Neversink Stream Management Program's template for plan development. This includes creating recommendations for reaches.

- Recommendations in Stream Management Plans are useful to other agencies (e.g. NYSDOT, etc.). AWSMP should explore additional ways to transfer assessment data and recommendations to managers. Recommendations might be distributed via the AWSMP website. This would likely be a SMIP or a contract-funded project.

Stream Restoration Projects

Three stream restoration and stabilization projects are under development in 2013:

- Warner Creek 5—funded in part by NRCS Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) fund. SMIP funds will provide the local match.
 - Hubbell (a construction firm out of Delaware County) won the bid. Contracts were signed June 10. They are currently mobilizing and construction could begin as early as the week of June 10.
 - The project design includes a number of in-stream structures including J-hooks and constructed riffles to direct flows through the sharp turn on the site and away from the eroding hillslope. Highly dispersive clay will be excavated from a failing hillslope and a sand filter and dewatering swale installed. The hillslope and a riparian buffer will be planted.
 - Project budget is currently \$460,000.
- Chichester Sites 2,3,4—funding for these projects is expected to come through EWP, with local match from the AWSMP. This site includes a large eroding hillslope that is greatly contributing to turbidity in the Ashokan Reservoir. The design for this site is very similar to Chichester Site 1 constructed in summer 2012. Includes dimensioning of the channel form and profile, and stabilization of channel bed elevation. Rock structures will be installed to protect streambanks from erosion. Portions of the site will be revegetated to enhance bank stability.
- Warner Creek/Stony Clove Confluence—will essentially be two separate projects due to access issues, but will be funded as one project. Project goal is to stop a large headcut from moving upstream and destabilizing the road. Design will reestablish a step-pool morphology and grade control. Design is currently under review.
 - ❖ Goal is to complete all the projects above this year because of a time limit on when EWP money is available.
- Brown Road (Olivera)—is a Hazard Mitigation Grant Program application submitted to FEMA by the Town of Shandaken. This is a large project in an area where there is significant flood inundation cutting off access to residents and posing an erosion threat to roadways. Funding for work at this site will come from FEMA, AWSMP, and possibly other funds.
 - Some landowners are in the process of obtaining a buyout from FEMA. Once the buyouts go through, FEMA has to approve any project work done on that property.
 - This area is a big concern for Ulster County as the major road through the area is County Route 47.
 - Suggested that more coordination on the Olivera reach is needed.
 - Add recommendation to next Action Plan for additional coordination that cross-references the Town's plans.
 - A detailed SMP for the Olivera portion of the Esopus Creek would be helpful and should be considered in the next Action Plan.

Education and Outreach

- Stream Stewardship principals used throughout the West-of-Hudson Watershed are due for a review.
- Local Flood Hazard Mitigation (LFHMA) now to be called Community Flood Analysis (CFA).
- CCE is looking to engage more educators from the diverse body of groups in the area through a reinvigorated Education and Outreach Working Group.

- CCE goals are to continue producing high quality publications (factsheets, press releases, newsletters, etc.) trainings for stakeholders, contractors, and other audiences.
- CCE is in the process of hiring a professional videographer to film stream Best Management Practices (BMPs) during the construction season this year to use in future trainings.
- Have added a recommendation to consolidate existing and future Stream Management Plans into one Ashokan Watershed plan.
- Continue working relationship with Catskill Environmental Research and Monitoring (CERM) committee.
- Public outreach programs include: Ashokan Watershed Conference, stream walks, Family Fun and Fish Day, community fairs and festivals (e.g. Shandaken Day), Ulster County Fair, Ulster County Creek Week, Ulster County Harvest Festival, CCE Board of Directors and Program Committee.
 - Will include youth and SCA interns to the extent possible.
- Would really like to engage more young adults in the program.
- Funding for education and outreach is provided through a contract between DEP and CCE. Approximately \$100,000 in SMIP grants will be available for education and outreach projects over 5 years.
- Please let Brent and Leslie know if you have suggestions or want to participate in the Education and Outreach Working Group.

Floodplain Management and Planning

- Recommends training for local floodplain administrators.
- Recommends assistance to communities with review of flood studies/maps.
- Recommends project to identify critical floodplain areas.
- In the upcoming contract CCE and Ulster County Department of the Environment will create a new position (under DOE but working in Phoenicia) that will help communities with floodplain management issues and management of funding programs.
- Invite watershed towns to form flood commissions (similar to the Town of Shandaken’s SAFARI group) and participate in the basin-wide Flood Hazard Mitigation Working Group.

Local Flood Analysis (LFA)—Over the next five years, new DEP funding for Stream Management Program and Catskill Watershed Corporation (CWC) to implement flood mitigation projects in the West-of-Hudson watershed.

LFA has a two-step process:

1. Engineering analysis of flooding causes and identification of hazard mitigation projects in plans (up to \$1 million)—public outreach to identify flood issues and review results. Town Board determines next steps.
2. Project design and implementation (\$1 million).

Program rules will be available later this year. LFA program will begin in 2014. DEP funded implementation projects will require the flood analysis (Step 1). Water quality is a factor in determining which projects are funded, but it is not the only factor. Can be coupled with NY Rising Community Reconstruction (CR) funds. CWC Board is still reviewing the draft scope of services for the analysis, but would like the Town Boards to be the driving force on project priority and selection.

Rob S. stated that the Town of Shandaken would like to have projects that have multiple benefits (flood mitigation, water quality improvement, etc.).

Working Group Report Out:

Stream Access and Recreation Working Group

The group worked on reviewing policy for how recreational releases are made from the Shandaken Tunnel. A useful information session was held on March 7 with guest presenters from NYC DEP, NYSDEC and The Nature Conservancy who described how decisions about the Tunnel releases are made. The group is developing a draft proposal to be presented to DEP, DEC and other stakeholder groups on how to maximize Tunnel releases for whitewater recreation, but not adversely impact fisheries and the water supply. The proposal is still in its early stages and the group welcomes input and collaboration with others.

Shandaken Area Flood Assessment and Remediation Initiative (SAFARI)

- Final edits on the Flood Mitigation Plan from Tetra Tech are pending. Once finalized, Tetra Tech will present the plan to the Town Board for adoption in the summer of 2013. A public hearing will take place on July 1 at 6:30 in the Town Hall.
- The Town of Shandaken has been earmarked to receive \$3 million dollars through NYS's Community Reconstruction Program (CRP). CRP requires a flood committee to oversee the process.
- New preliminary Flood Insurance Rate Maps were released. The Town of Shandaken has some issues with the maps that they are addressing with FEMA. Overall the new maps have more detail than previous ones. Currently, the Town of Shandaken is updating its floodplain ordinance and is preparing an application to the National Flood Insurance Program's Community Rating System, which could reduce flood insurance rates for policyholders. Ordinances on sizing of public and private bridges are being considered by the Town.

Vacant Executive Council Positions

- The committee reviewed Stakeholders Council Rules regarding Executive Council positions.
- The Stream Access and Recreation and Education and Outreach Working Groups have vacant co-lead positions.
- Grant Review Committee member Virginia Craft (from Ulster County Planning Department) was honored and lovingly remembered as a co-worker and friend. She was an instrumental part of both the Grant Review Committee and the Stakeholder Council and she will be dearly missed.

Next Scheduled Meeting: TBD (October 2013)