
Stakeholder Council 2015

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, Shokan, NY 12481

July 9, 2015 1pm-4:00pm

In Attendance: Sylvia Rozzelle, Burt Samuelson, Andrew Emrich, Leslie Zucker, Aaron Bennett, Kirk Peters, Brent Gotsch, Jim Fugel, Kerissa Battle, Adam Doan, Barry Baldigo, Danyelle Davis, Candace Balmer, Mike Flaherty, Amanda LaValle, Mike Reynolds, Tim Cox, Jamie Joy, Chester “Chet” Karwatowski (via phone).

Next scheduled meeting: December 2015

Introductions and Announcements:

Attendees introduced themselves and Leslie Z. overviewed the agenda.

Leslie Z. introduced Jamie Joy as the new AWSMP Administrative Assistant at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County (CCEUC).

Community Updates:

Barry B. updated on USGS activities. USGS sampled 6-7 stream locations over the past 7 years to determine fish population status. Following several years of decline, this year it appears rainbow trout populations have rebounded with more young-of-year observed than expected.

Grant Overview and Vote on Recommendations: (Leslie Z. shared presentation)

Chet K. summarized the AWSMP Grant Review Committee’s work and recommendations for funding. The Grant Review Committee met on June 15, 2015 and reviewed 8 grants in the following categories: 2 infrastructure grants, 4 education grants, 1 planning grant, and 2 stream restoration grants. There are \$2 million in Stream Management Implementation Program (SMIP) funds to distribute through 2019. If all of the Grant Review Committee’s recommendations are funded, the total distributed would account for roughly 23% of the \$2 million allocation for the five-year contract. This is about on track for how much should be spent at this stage.

Recommendations for funding:

Bushkill/Watson Hollow Slope Stabilization

Ulster County Department of Public Works requested \$63,000 to repair a failing streambank along Watson Hollow Road on the Bushkill, Town of Olive (near Kanape Brook trailhead). There was strong support from the Grant Review Committee to fund this project.

Final Design and Construction Grade Control on Fox Hollow at Herdman Road

Town of Shandaken requested \$90,000 to install grade control on Fox Hollow Creek near Herdman Road bridge. There was strong support from the Grant Review Committee to fund this project.

Butternut Creek Culvert Design

Ulster County Planning Department requested \$93,500 to fund design and engineering of a Butternut Creek culvert replacement along railroad grade for rail trail project. Committee supported partial funding in the amount of \$35,000. However, Ulster County seeks full support for the project. AWSMP will organize a field visit this fall to learn more about the project site.

Pollinator Garden at Catskill Interpretive Center

Catskill Center for Conservation and Development requested \$9,000 to create a riparian pollinator garden at the Maurice D. Hinchey Catskill Interpretive Center. Committee supports project, but would like more Catskill specific native plants and CSBI education incorporated into the garden. Will support this project if changes can be made.

Riparian Rangers After School Program

The Ashokan Center requested \$33,840 to implement an intermediate grade level afterschool enrichment program within the Onteora School District to complement the Watershed Detectives Program at Bennett Elementary School. Committee supports if Ashokan Center staff can include more watershed and stream science education in their curriculum.

Burt S. motioned to accept Grant Review Committee recommendations with modifications. Kerissa B. seconded. The present Executive Council Members voted as follows:

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|------------------|-----|
| Burt Samuelson | Aye |
| Barry Baldigo | Aye |
| Mike Flaherty | Aye |
| Kerissa Battle | Aye |
| Chet Karwatowski | Aye |
| Amanda LaValle | Aye |

Motion carried by unanimous decision.

AWSMP Updates:

Stream Projects:

Adam D. of the Ulster County Soil & Water Conservation District (UCSWCD) shared updates on AWSMP's 2015 stream restoration projects.

The stream project on the Stony Clove Creek at Wright Road in the Town of Hunter is proceeding. Project is partially supported by the last of federal Emergency Watershed Program (EWP) funds available. All landowner agreements are in place. Kingston Equipment Rental (Baker Brothers) won the construction bid. Construction should begin late summer and end early fall.

UCSWCD is working with the firm One Nature to complete a bioengineering project on the Bushkill. It is currently in the design stage.

Stream Assessments, Plans, and Monitoring:

Data is being compiled for a Woodland Creek Stream Management Plan. When finished it will be compared with previous Woodland Creek assessment in 2007. Stream Management Plans for the Bushkill and Bushnellsville Creek are nearing completion.

The Beaver Kill Stream Management Plan is complete. AWSMP will meet with municipal officials from the Town of Woodstock to discuss plan recommendations. The plan is posted on the AWSMP website at:
<http://ashokanstreams.org/publications-resources/resources-for-streamside-living/>

Danyelle D. reported that Revised 2007 Filtration Avoidance Determination (FAD) requires evaluation of stream projects for turbidity reduction. Past monitoring showed the Stony Clove Creek contributed the highest suspended sediment load of any tributary to the Esopus Creek. Monitoring shows a 40% reduction of suspended sediment in the Stony Clove following recent stream restoration projects, suggesting the projects were effective at reducing chronic turbidity.

There will be a 10-year study to see if sediment load is being suppressed. DEP will work with USGS to expand suspended sediment monitoring in the watershed. There will be 20 monitoring sites along the Stony Clove.

CCEUC acting on behalf of the Town of Olive is requesting proposals to assess the Maltby Hollow Creek. Six firms bid on the job. The firm that is selected will complete a stream feature inventory and bank erosion assessment.

Education and Outreach:

Brent G. recapped AWSMP's Family Fun and Fish Day held at Kenneth Wilson State Campground on June 27. Very successful event despite the weather. Lots of positive feedback from attendees. AWSMP thanks Trout Unlimited volunteers for helping, as well as NYSDEC staff for being there to loan fishing equipment. If future attendance grows, will need more volunteers to staff the event.

AWSMP is hiring the consulting firm Tetra Tech to conduct a Community Rating System training workshop later this year. This will be an intermediate level training. Slots are saved for municipal officials, but will be open to others if space is available.

Brent G. is working with a Cornell University GIS analyst to hold a one-day training on how to use both paper and digital flood maps. Date is tentatively set for October 7. More details to follow closer to the date.

NYSDEC in conjunction with consulting firm Atkins Global will be holding flood trainings in every county of New York from now through next year. Trainings will focus on National Flood Insurance Program topics. Additional sessions on levees and coastal erosion hazard areas will be held. No date has been set yet for Ulster County. Check the NYSDEC website for more information: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/101275.html>

Jen B. conducted macroinvertebrate identification activities at every school in the Onteora School District for their annual Earth Day events. She also held a macroinvertebrate program at the Scout Camporee in Accord, NY. She and other AWSMP staff organized a Stream Walk along the Little Beaverkill on June 6.

Upcoming Education and Outreach events include a stream table demonstration at the Ulster County Fair, July 31 from 11:00am to 3:00pm. AWSMP will have tables at Shandaken Day (August 29) and Olive Day (September 12). There is an additional stream walk and a pollinator workshop planned for fall 2015.

AWSMP may hold a stream feature inventory field day in spring 2016 for interested Stakeholder Council members if there is interest.

Stakeholder Council members are encouraged to attend and assist with events when they are able.

Report outs from Working Groups to the Stakeholder Council

Stream Ecosystem Working Group:

Barry B. reported that stream fish community survey is ongoing. Links to hard copies of USGS reports on the effects of Esopus Creek flooding on fish assembles are available at the AWSMP website and open access for download:
<http://ashokanstreams.org/publications-resources/technical-data/>

Mike F. reported that Walt Keller is putting together a portfolio of completed work/research in the watershed. Walt will summarize key findings to inform an update of the AWSMP Research Framework.

Danyelle D. plans to convene a subcommittee to focus on sediment issues (both suspended and bedload). There is a need to develop conceptual models of sediment transport in the Esopus Creek watershed.

Education and Outreach Working Group:

Kerissa B. reported the the working group is seeking a co-lead. At their last meeting, the group discussed updating the AWSMP website to highlight youth development and to have an interactive calendar. The group discussed the idea of developing a watershed volunteer network across multiple agencies. The group is working on a needs assessment for organizations who might participate and benefit from a volunteer network.

Amanda L. suggested looking into a collaboration with Ulster Corps. This is a volunteer network serving Ulster County that has similar functions, such as online volunteer interface and volunteer event calendar. A collaboration might offer efficiency.

The working group will meet again this fall.

Flood Hazard Mitigation Working Group

Sylvia R. reported the Town of Olive selected Woit Engineering and Consulting to perform Local Flood Analysis (LFA) for the hamlets of Boiceville and West Shokan. The LFA kick-off meeting was April 14 and well attended.

Woit is also consulting with DEP about the Five Arch Route 28 Bridge replacement. Woit's findings show that even the best designed bridge would still contribute to flooding in Boiceville.

NY Rising awarded the Town of Olive with \$1 million for engineering projects and \$2 million for a new Town Hall complex (one of the projects outlined in the Town's Community Reconstruction Plan). There is \$8,500 from a Greenway Grant for a flood hazard mitigation plan for those portions of the Town outside of the NYC watershed. Woit has reported there is more work that needs to be done on sediment issues in the Bushkill.

Rob S. said the Shandaken Area Flood Assessment and Remediation Initiative (SAFARI) is meeting Friday, July 10 from 10-12 at the AWSMP office. The Town of Shandaken's engineering firm, Milone and MacBroom, Inc. (MMI) will present final results of their benefit-cost analysis (BCA) for LFA projects advanced by the Town. The mitigation options being analyzed include floodplain enhancements and modifications to the Bridge Street Bridge in Phoenicia, and improvements to Beaver Kill stream crossings in Mount Tremper.

Other Flood Hazard Mitigation Updates:

Tim C. reported the next Catskill Watershed Corporation (CWC) funding application deadline is December 1, 2015. CWC's Local Flood Mitigation Implementation Program rules were updated on July 7, 2015; available for download from

the CWC website. Changes include allowing for subdivision of parcels to sell an area within the floodplain and relocate structures out of the floodplain on the same parcel. CWC is offering up to \$10,000 assistance. Also, Critical Facilities are eligible for relocation regardless of damage and can be included in relocation as long as the BCR is 1.0 or better.

Tim C. introduced John Mathieson who will replace Nate Hendricks as hazard mitigation program coordinator at CWC.

Aaron B. reported on revised rules for the NYC-funded Voluntary Flood Buyout Program. Inundation and erosion categories are eligible, but communities must opt-in to the program to receive funding.

Tim C. noted that towns require legal guidance on buyout program procedures to ensure consistent decisions and avoid Article 78 lawsuits. Article 78 is part of New York State Law that deals with appealing agency decisions.

The Coalition of Watershed Towns created a white paper in preparation for the 2017 Filtration Avoidance Determination (FAD) update. It calls for updating the rules of the buyout program and adding \$80 million to the Catskill Fund for the future and for flood relief.

Stream Access and Recreation Working Group

Marc H., the working group lead, was unable to attend. Brent G. gave an update in his place. Mark L. has expressed interest in being named co-lead for the working group.

The working group met with the NYC Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), including Deputy Commissioner Paul Rush, on May 6 to discuss proposed releases to the Lower Schoharie Creek. Concerns focused on the plan to use a low level outlet to discharge water from the Schoharie Reservoir into the Lower Schoharie Creek for flood attenuation and conservation. The low level releases can reduce the amount of cold water available for Esopus Creek releases through the Shandaken Tunnel. This could harm the trout fishery and limit recreational releases. The meeting was productive and DEP officials said they would investigate avenues to better manage cold water and achieve the goals of stakeholders in both the Ashokan and Schoharie watersheds. The working group will reconvene later this year to learn what alternatives DEP is considering.

Mike F. reported the July recreational release from the Shandaken Tunnel was canceled. This was due to a lack of cold water reserves in the Schoharie Reservoir. This highlights concern that cold water releases to the Lower Schoharie would increase the possibility of future recreational releases being canceled.

The Town of Shandaken Parks and Recreation Committee received a SMIP award from AWSMP to investigate the feasibility of a walking trail with stream crossings in the hamlet of Pine Hill. The Town engineer, MMI, is developing a feasibility report that may be reviewed at the next working group meeting.

Fall Schedule

Leslie Z. reported the next SMIP grant funding round will occur October 2015.

Next Meeting

TBA – December 2015