

Esopus Creek News

Ashokan Watershed Stream Management Program Newsletter

Spring 2009

Broadstreet Hollow - Woodland Valley - Stony Clove - Fox Hollow - Birch - Beaverkill - Little Beaverkill - Peck - Bushnellsville - Bush Kill

Two Year Action Plan for Watershed Completed

The cars parked along Route 28 on April 1st marked the opening of fishing season and the return of spring to the Ashokan Watershed. April was also a busy month for the project team. Our primary task for the spring has been to prepare a two year

Action Plan for the Ashokan Watershed Stream Management Program. The Action Plan was developed during April and May with input from the Ashokan Watershed Advisory Council and the Working Groups on Flooding and Erosion; Riparian and Aquatic Ecosystems; and Stream-Based Recreation and Tourism and the Ashokan; and Education and Outreach.

We are soliciting comments from the public on an on-going basis on our website (<http://www.esopuscreek.org>).

Second, Extension is developing guidelines to fund the Action Plan. DEP has provided \$2 million dollars for project implementation in the Ashokan Watershed.

Announcements of funding opportunities should be available this summer. A



New office location for Ashokan Watershed Stream Management Program in Phoenicia.

draft request for funds is available for review and comments on our website.

Working Groups are the primary means of community engagement with the program's policies and the best way to have an influence on the program. Membership is open to anyone who is interested in working as a partner on the committee and can contrib-

ute to the group's knowledge. Our website has a description of the working groups activities and membership lists. Anyone who is interested in serving on a working group can contact Elizabeth Higgins at emh56@cornell.edu.

We hired a new administrative coordinator, Colleen Griffith, in February, and we are in the process of hiring a new educator. Cory Ritz will be the Project Manager for Soil and Water Conservation District starting

in July. Bobby Taylor will be back as a Student Conservation Association intern for a year starting in June.

Don't miss our **Open House & BBQ** on Friday, August 21, from 3:00pm - 8:00pm. See the new office, meet our new staff! RSVP by calling (845) 688-3047.

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We're on the web!

www.esopuscreek.org



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Ashokan Watershed Stream Management Program

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Planned Stream Assessments for 2009

The Ashokan Watershed Stream Management Program Team is continuing to assess the condition of streams in the watershed. Over the next five years, at least five major streams in the watershed will be assessed and management recommendations will be developed. This summer (2009) the Project Team plans to assess the Beaver Kill from Mink Hollow to the confluence with the Esopus Creek.



The Beaver Kill at Willow Flats

Assessments typically involve walking the stream and recording information on stream bank erosion, depositional features, locations of woody debris jams, past management practices, and opportuni-

ties for enhancing streamside vegetation. A letter will be sent to streamside landowners explaining the assessment and requesting permission for property access. If you have

questions about the planned assessment, or would like to provide information about your section of the stream, please contact the Program office at (845) 688-3047.



Open House & BBQ Ashokan Watershed

Stream Management Program

Friday, August 21 - 3:00pm - 8:00pm
6375 Route 28

Meet New Staff

Tour Riparian Forest & Wetland

Socialize with Other Watershed Residents

RSVP by calling
(845) 688-3047

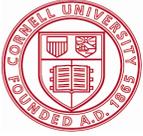
Now Enrolling – Summer Session!!!

Ashokan Watershed 4-H Youth Internship Program

For Youth GRADES 7 –12 (see article on page 3)

Summer session: **Monday mornings, July - August**

For information contact **Kristen Wilson**
at **(845) 340-3990** or **kew67@cornell.edu**



Guide to Stream Friendly Practices for Common Streamside Projects

Do you have a streamside issue created by erosion or stormwater runoff? Are you considering building a house or structure near a stream, landscaping your streamside area, or adding a road or walkway on your property? In this guide we have answered some frequently asked questions from local homeowners about streamside projects. We have attempted to provide stream-friendly considerations for each project and contact information for any permits or additional resources needed.

Everyone wants their stream to look and be healthy. Stream ecological health is not only measured by the plants and animals that live in it, but also by its riparian

(streamside) buffer area and the stability of its bed and banks. A stable stream does not undergo accelerated erosion. This means the stream does not move laterally (the banks remain stable), or vertically (the stream bed does not build up or cut down) over relatively short periods of time or during small floods.

Streams can be very sensitive to disturbances, and if stream-related projects are poorly planned and



Maintaining Healthy Streamside Vegetation is the Most Cost Effective Way to Protect Your Streambank

implemented, a stable stream can quickly become unstable.

Do I Need a Permit?

Before you begin any streamside project, first learn about what permits you might need. Here are some of the more common situations that require permitting, but this list is not all encompassing.

Failure to obtain the proper permits can result in hefty fines and even jail time!

DEC Protection of Waters/Stream Disturbance Permit: see below for each activity or see DEC guide at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/permits/6042.html>.

Crossing, Piping and Diversion Permit: (NYC DEP): Depending on how any drainage features (streams or wetlands) on the property will be involved as a result of the project; it may require a Crossing, Piping and Diversion Permit.

Freshwater Wetlands Permit: (NYS DEC) Wetlands 12.4 acres or larger require a permit for most disturbances within 100 feet.

NYS DEC Stormwater State Pollution Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) requires review of new construction involving a disturbance of more than 1 acre. A *stormwater pollution prevention plan* will need to

be developed for construction disturbances under the SPDES permit requirements.

Stormwater Pollution Prevention Permit (SPPP) (NYC DEP) is required, including submitting a stormwater or erosion plan if the project will disturb more than 2 acres within 100 feet of a watercourse or a slope exceeding 15%.

US Army Corps of Engineers Permit: An Army Corps permit is required when more than 25 cubic yards of fill material will be used below the “ordinary high water mark” (the approximate yearly flood level).



How do I Stabilize an Eroding Streambank?

Care should be taken in designing a streambank stabilization project so that you don't over-widen the stream, narrow or encroach upon the stream. Do not borrow from nearby gravel bars in the stream for fill material. If you are not careful, you can cause an erosion problem on your neighbor's property.

We recommend that you seek technical assistance from Ulster County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) to identify the set of causes of your streambank instability problem and to develop a solution that does not transfer the erosion problem upstream or downstream. Neighboring properties may need to be involved. Take advantage of this free technical assistance. Contact information below.

NYS DEC Article 15 Stream Disturbance Permit is needed for streambank stabilization projects. An Army Corps of Engineers Permit may be required.

How Do I Pave or Repave a Driveway Near a Stream?

Impervious surfaces (i.e., pavement and buildings) and land drainage can accelerate rain runoff into streams, in effect delivering it all in a big "gush." Poorly drained impervious surfaces can encourage localized streambed or bank erosion. Even worse, localized erosion problems can move upstream or downstream and cause your property or a neighbor's property to erode. Some options for slowing runoff flows include maintaining a buffer of shrubs and trees, rain gardens, rain barrels, grassy swales, and retention areas. See Cooperative Extension websites: <http://rwqp.rutgers.edu/univ/nj/> or <http://www.rocklandcce.org/stormwater.htm>

NYS DEC Article 15 Stream Disturbance Permit: may be required. Seek DEC guidance if the impervious surface is within 50 feet of the stream.

How do I Construct a Private Bridge or Place a Culvert on the Stream?

Avoid widening or narrowing the stream beyond its naturally stable width. Each stream location has a set of dimensions (width, depth and cross sectional area and slope), which should be maintained to effectively pass the sediment and water transported during floods. Contact the Ashokan Basin Stream Management Program's SWCD staff for technical assistance.

Some design features you should consider:

- Bridges should be located at a narrow and straight reach, not on a bend.
- Bridges are preferable to culverts wherever possible.
- A bridge should span the entire stream and not block access to the flood plain if possible.
- Multiple culverts are rarely, if ever permitted as they tend to split the channel and collect debris.
- If a culvert is absolutely necessary, the size and placement are critical to the stability of the stream and the culvert as well as minimizing impact on fish passage. DEC's Habitat Unit staff can advise you on size and placement.

Three important design features DEC looks for to issue a permit are:

1. Single opening
2. Culvert is large enough to accommodate both the channel and flow up to the banks
3. The bottom of a culvert will be installed at least one foot below existing stream bed level.

NYS DEC Article 15 Stream Disturbance Permit is required.



Courtesy of Jack Isaacs, DEC

*Multiple Culverts clog with woody debris.
This should have been a bridge.*



How Should I Cut or Trim Streamside Vegetation or Debris on the Streambank?

Stable streambanks in the Catskills usually require woody vegetation. For maximum stream bank stability and ecological benefits, do not mow to the stream edge. If you have lawn at the stream edge, stop mowing along a wide streamside buffer, allow natural vegetation to grow in, and plant additional trees and shrubs. Maintain existing streamside shrubs and tree vegetation.



Courtesy of Jack Isaacs, DEC

Lack of Riparian Vegetation Can Result in Heavy Streamside Damage

Large woody debris is essential to the ecological health of your stream and plays an important role in maintaining the long-term stability of the stream. It also can be a recreational hazard or cause property damage. Consult DEC or SWCD if you are unsure whether to leave or cut streamside trees.

If you remove individual trees leaning over the stream, they should be cut up into smaller pieces and moved away from the stream so they won't get caught downstream in another debris jam. If a log jam or falling trees are not on your property, but are causing damage to your property, you must coordinate with your neighbor. If you are removing a log jam (a pile of trees in the stream that are trapping more trees and sediment), this requires technical assistance to prevent stream erosion upstream or downstream in the removal process. Free streamside landscape design and plant material may be available for streamside landowners through our Streamside Assistance Program. Contact the Ashokan Watershed Stream Management Program staff for more information.

NYS DEC Article 15 Stream Disturbance Permit: required if the project will disturb the bed or banks of the stream. Debris that can be cable-pulled from the top of the bank or cut up in stream without heavy machines (e.g. a tractor or bulldozer) can be done without a permit (a chainsaw is ok).

What Should I Consider When Building a House or Other Structure Near a Stream?

Building in a floodplain area is unsafe and often has negative consequences for the stream. Floodplains are uncontrollable areas that should be given due respect. Consider stream flooding and erosion behavior, not just how the location appears during low or average flows. Floodplain maps are not always accurate. Seek technical assistance from SWCD to identify local floodplain boundaries, and erosion hazard areas.



Courtesy of Jack Isaacs, DEC

Building too close to the stream with little vegetation can have disastrous results!

Climate change is expected to intensify rain events and increase the elevation of the 100 year flood. Design your site as far as possible from inundation and erosion hazards to keep yourself safe and protect your long term investment.

Do not build right next to the stream; give the stream room to flood and to move. A slow rate of erosion is a natural stream adjustment process. Giving the stream space allows you to enjoy your home more and reduce home maintenance time and costs resulting from erosion or flood inundation.

Permits: Many permits are needed for new construction, and we can't list them all here. You will need to follow State and local regulations, and contact your town code enforcement officer.

NYC DEC Article 15 Stream Disturbance Permit: is needed if the house or structure is within 50 feet of a streambank.

Individual Stormwater Permit: Needed from DEP if the house or driveway will be within 100 feet of a perennial (flows all year round) stream.



Important Contacts for Streamside Landowners

General Information:

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County
6375 State Route 28
Phoenicia, NY 12464
(845) 688-3047
www.esopuscreek.org

Streamside Problems, Restoration, Drainage Issues, Planting Design:

Ulster County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)
6375 State Route 28 Phoenicia, NY
(845) 688-3047

- or -

Times Square Professional Office Park
652 State Route 299 - Highland, NY 12529
(845) 883-7162

New York City Dept of Environmental Protection (NYC DEP) Stream Management Program
Dan Davis, Project Manager/Geologist
71 Smith Avenue, Kingston, NY 12401
(845) 340-7839 ddavis@dep.nyc.gov

Stream Disturbance, Stormwater, and Wetlands Permit Applications and Forms:

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, (NYS DEC) Region 3
Environmental Permits Office
21 South Putt Corners Rd. New Paltz, NY 12561-1620
(845) 256-3054

Technical Issues:

Jack Isaacs, Habitat Manager, NYSDEC Reg.3
(845) 256-3087 (phone)
(845) 255-4659 (fax)

New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)
Water Supply Bureau
71 Smith Ave, Kingston, NY 12401

Individual Stormwater Permits, Stormwater Prevention Plans:

Joe Damrath, Environmental Analyst
(845)340-7234 jdamrath@dep.nyc.gov

For Septic System Approval:

Christopher Costello (845) 340-7235,
ccostello@dep.nyc.gov

Permits involving wetlands over 12.4 acres, or dredging/filling water bodies.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,
Albany Field Office
Amy Gitchell, Enforcement Officer
1 Bond St., Troy, NY 12180
(518) 270-0589

Town Floodplain Officers

Town	Phone Number	Town Website
Town of Shandaken	(845) 688-5008	http://www.shandaken.us/
Town of Olive	(845) 657-2015	http://www.town.olive.ny.us/
Town of Woodstock	(845) 679-2113 ext # 3	http://woodstockny.org/content/ Email: building@woodstockny.org
Town of Hunter	(518) 589-6209 ext 307	http://www.townofhuntergov.com/
Town of Lexington	(845) 989-6176 ext. 11	http://www.lexingtonny.com/government.htm

Watershed Council

Catskill Center for Conservation & Development

Catskill Mountain Railroad

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County

Ulster & Greene County Soil & Water Conservation District

Local Landowners

NYC DEP

NYS DEC

Town of Lexington

Town of Hunter

Town of Hurley

Town of Olive

Town of Shandaken

Town of Woodstock

Trout Unlimited

Ulster County Dept. of Environment

Ulster County Emergency Management Services

Ulster County Planning Dept.

Ulster County Soil & Water Conservation District

NYS Department of Transportation

Whitewater Recreationalists

Watershed Interns Attend Croton Conference

Five students from Onteora High school and Middle School who are participating in the Ashokan Watershed 4-H Youth Internship Program attended the Croton Watershed Student Conference on Monday, March 30th at the Teatown Lake Reservation in Ossining, NY.

The Ashokan Watershed Youth Internship Program teaches watershed stewardship and leadership skills, culminating in a service project to educate the broader community on a watershed topic. The interns went to this conference to get project ideas from other students and to connect with other young people from New York City watershed communities. The conference was sponsored by Teatown Lake Reservation, Hudson Basin River Watch, Stroud Water Research Center, Riverkeeper, and NYS DEC.

Catskills-based writer Diane Galusha opened the



4-H Youth Watershed Interns; Stephanie Cross, Viva Frasier and Angela Landman begin stream monitoring by identifying stream dwelling insects.

conference with an engaging presentation about the history of the New York City water supply. At the conference, youth from other communities in the New York City water supply system presented their science projects and efforts to protect water resources.

Participating presenters were from Mahopac, the Bronx, and Brooklyn. After the presentations, students headed outside for a hands-on macro-invertebrate workshop in Teatown's Bailey Brook. One of the Ashokan Watershed interns, Karina Buckholz, a 7th grader, was surprised that older youth, from New York City communi-

ties, had not learned about macroinvertebrates (stream insects) before. All of the Ashokan youth expressed appreciation for the beautiful place where they live and the watershed education opportunities they've had. On the ride home they mentioned some ideas they gleaned from the presentations, and said they are looking forward to creating their own project.

So far this spring, the 4-H Interns have learned about local stream management issues, how use GPS technology, and how to outline a watershed boundary using topographic maps. Since the conference, the interns have selected a wetlands mapping service project that will be completed during the summer session. New students may join the summer session which runs weekly from July - August. For more information about the Ashokan 4-H Intern Program, contact Kristen Wilson at (845) 340-3990 or kew67@cornell.edu.

Calendar of Events

Sunday, July 26 - Streamside Property Stewardship Tour

10am—11:30pm Meet at the Duck Race! For complete details, contact:

Michael Courtney at (845) 688-3047 or email: mcc55@cornell.edu.

Friday, August 21 - AWSMP Open House & BBQ - 3pm - 8pm

6375 Rt. 28 across Margo's Restaurant. Call (845) 688-3047 to RSVP



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension
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**Ashokan Watershed
Stream Management
Program Newsletter**

6375 Rt. 28

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Free to residents by request.

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Managing Editor

Michael Courtney

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Stream Stewards Pull Knotweed for Demonstration Site

On a sunny Saturday morning, May 30th, the Ashokan Stream Stewards were out cutting and pulling up a colony of invasive Japanese knotweed to create a knotweed control demonstration site at the corner of Upper High St. and Bridge St. by the railroad tracks in Phoenicia. The invasive plant spreads rapidly along streams, growing in dense thickets, crowding out native plants and potentially increasing erosion with its shallow root system. The stream stewards want landowners to know how to control knotweed without spreading it.



Close-up of Japanese Knotweed

Mechanical control is a good option for these small to medium sized colonies. The cuttings and pulled up roots will be dried in an enclosed rack (to be built at the demon-

stration site soon) and burned to prevent starting other colonies. Repeated cutting of the plants over 3-4 years should control the colony by exhausting the roots. Once the large growth is cut and pulled, it's easier to return and cut about every two weeks when it's only one to two feet high through the growing season.

For more information about knotweed control strategies, call Michael Courtney at (845) 688-3047.

Esopus Creek News

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Kingston, NY 12401