

AWSMP Stream Access & Recreation Working Group Meeting Notes

March 30, 2017

AWSMP Offices, 3130 State Route 28, Shokan, NY 12481

Attendees: Marc Hollander, Mark Loete, Rob Stanley, Kathy Nolan, Harry Jameson, Tony Cocozza, Ed Ostapczuk, Chris Tran, Dave Burns, Maxanne Resnick, Mike Flaherty, Adam Doan, Brent Gotsch, Leslie Zucker, Aaron Bennett

Welcome and Introductions – Those present at the meeting introduced themselves

Member Updates – Aaron B briefly mentioned a few of the upcoming events he was aware of including a Japanese knotweed meeting for the Big Indian-Oliveria Valley residents next Thursday night at the Alpine Inn and an event at the Catskill Interpretive Center (CIC) on 4/4 as part of an art/living history project titled “Catskill Waters”. He directed folks to the postcards for each near the entranceway. Additionally, Brent G mentioned the Ashokan Watershed Stream Management Program (AWSMP) conference which will be held on 4/29 at the Ashokan Center. He also reported that the annual Family Fun and Fish Day will be held on 5/20 at Kenneth Wilson State Park. Mark L announced that the annual Trout Unlimited banquet will be held on 4/8 at the Boiceville Inn, the public is invited.

Shandaken Tunnel (Portal), Schoharie Reservoir, Gilboa Dam

- New York City Department of Environmental Protection (NYCDEP) Capital Projects Update (State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System [SPDES] meeting report-out) – Aaron B shared 8 slides of a PowerPoint presentation that was given at the 2/22 semi-annual SPDES meeting that spoke to the rehabilitation of the Gilboa Dam (completed), the Low-Level Outlet (30% complete), the Rehabilitation of the Shandaken Tunnel Intake Chamber (completed by 2020), and potential for a High-Level Outlet on the Gilboa Dam.
 - *See slides attached*
 - Ed O reported that members of Trout Unlimited met with New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) and NYCDEP officials on 1/23/17 to express their concerns over how the Catskill System was managed last summer and what could be done differently moving forward. One of the outcomes was a commitment from the NYCDEP to provide the NYSDEC with the required “cold water plan” one month earlier this year than previous. Trout Unlimited is hopeful that more water can be stored in Schoharie earlier (in May) rather than released, before June 1.
 - The group, in support of habitat and recreational interests, also discussed a preferred method of evacuating the warmest water first by maintaining and using the siphons as part of a strategy that also includes the Low Level

- Outlet, as there is a safe limit to the rate at which the Schoharie Reservoir can be emptied while ensuring the reservoir banks remain stable.
- Additionally, the group discussed having an articulated arm added to the High Level Outlet to enable it to access warmer water for its releases.
 - Kathy N noted that over the last several years NYCDEP has seemingly become much more willing to work with stakeholders to address issues that affect the community. The consensus of the group was that the NYCDEP have become more approachable and easier to work with. A few examples, such as the work proposed for the Shandaken Tunnel Intake Chamber were given.
- 2017 Recreational Release Dates (requested) - Marc H circulated a copy of the letter he sent to NYSDEC requesting the four whitewater release weekends in 2017.
 - *See letter attached*
 - Status of Part 670
 - History and current status of Part 670– Mike F gave a concise yet thorough overview of Part 670 since the mid-1970s when it was enacted. He stated that at the time a full EIS was completed and that the regulation was a compromise between the parties. Nobody got everything they wanted. He stated that it took 10-15 years to begin to realize some of the deficiencies associated with it (such as the lack of temperature and turbidity standards).
 - Mike F began working for NYSDEC on the Esopus in 1990 and really started to look at the Portal and its impacts on the creek, primarily on temperature, including the daily fluctuations in the water diverted from Schoharie, as well as the fact that as the summer months went on, the overall temperature of the releases were getting too warm.
 - To address these issues, NYSDEC and NYCDEP came to a formal agreement; however the whitewater community was not entirely happy with the results. In 1994, a stakeholder meeting(s) was held to work though the issues and explore new ideas and re-examine old ones. NYSDEC then drafted protocols to address these issues, however, as a result of the lawsuit (1998-99), this momentum ceased.
 - Shortly thereafter, Watershed Inspector General Jim Tierney was brought in to try to address the issues, forming a “Clean Water Task Force”. This group attempted to further develop these protocols rather than revise Part 670, or get a new SPDES permit.
 - These talks ultimately broke down likely due to lack of progress on the lawsuit, which resulted in the SPDES permit, which is where we are today.
 - A lengthy group discussion ensued where the stakeholders gave input on several different approaches. One being to make potential updates to or changes within Part 670. A second approach discussed was to convene State, City, and other stakeholders with the intent of working towards “operation agreements”. This agreement would pull together the SPDES permit and the draft protocols (which Mike F offered to share), with the intent of making Part 670 more effective. Several of the concerns expressed during the meeting were:
 - Trout Unlimited has continued to voice its concerns about the release of too much cold water early in the year (April-May). The pros and cons of this

strategy were briefly discussed and all seemed to agree this would be something that could be looked at.

- NYCDEP can now use its Operation Support Tool (OST) to better predict weather and modify reservoir operations accordingly, which it could not do twenty years ago.
 - Could NYCDEP use the OST for Esopus Creek (Shandaken Tunnel) management as well (like was done for the Schoharie Low-Level-Outlet releases)?
 - If using OST for this purpose, the committee felt like getting an update validating the accuracy/effectiveness of OST would be warranted.
 - The Filtration Avoidance Determination (FAD) requires that an “expert panel” independently review the use of the OST – currently ongoing.
 - Ed Van Put’s book has a great history on Part 670.
 - Idea of “bubble releases” was mentioned, and has been modeled by NYSDEC. Results do not indicate much of a savings in cold water.
 - Tony C stated all Trout Unlimited is asking for is that NYCDEP keep the cold water in the reservoir for one more month, ramping down those early spring releases.
 - Marc H suggested that we start off by making a list of stakeholder concerns regarding Part 670. He began by giving simple examples of language within it that is antiquated. He also developed a website (which facilitates moderated comments) to begin this discussion and a list of concerns, where comments and suggestions on Part 670 can be made. The site can be found at <http://670.marchollander.com>. It was noted that re-opening Part 670 would likely result in a feeding frenzy for other groups or entities to try to get other issues they may have with the legislation changed as well.
- To summarize, the group should decide whether to attempt to open up Part 670 (to revise a portion of it and/or modernize all of it w/pertinent revisions) or work with stakeholders to come to an agreement about future management of the resource outside of 670. Opening up Part 670 is very complicated, and getting both NYSDEC and NYCDEP to “agree” that it needs to be revised/updated would be the initial step. A lengthy process afterwards is anticipated, including public input and comments, and legislative review.

Recreational Safety Subcommittee

- Updates on Ulster County Waterways Advisory Committee
 - Aaron B reported that this committee met on March 27 at the Boiceville Inn. NYSDEC staff attended, however Rob S (who is on that committee) was unable to attend. Rob reported that he had not heard any of the outcomes.
- Implementing the Large Wood protocol – a pilot location?
 - Adam D offered to have Ulster County Soil & Water District staff pilot the large wood protocol that had been discussed at the last meeting this coming spring.

He would ensure that the members of this group were made aware of the date(s) in case they wanted to join.

- Harry J indicated that he will be conducting his annual reconnaissance of the Esopus (in the portion that he uses) in the next 2-3 week and will share his findings with Adam so that an appropriate pilot location, from these potential sites, can be selected.

Stream Access at Catskill Interpretive Center (CIC)

- Mark L articulated concerns on the part of Trout Unlimited about this newly created public access site along Route 28 at the CIC. Mark L believes that a site known as Hudler's Flats, which is nearby, is a premier fishing destination. He and others are very concerned about its degradation because of potential over use, and does not want it to become another "Blue Hole" (a nearby location on the upper Rondout that saw widespread misuse and damage two summers ago). He did go on to say that he recently walked the path on the site and indicated that it does in fact lead people away from the fishing hole, however concerns still exist.
- A discussion ensued debating the degradation potential to the site, and what is being or can be done to mitigate against it. Several of the points mentioned included:
 - If more stakeholders were involved in the planning and development of that site previously, a better, more palatable project would have resulted.
 - Kiosks and signage at the site will be installed to direct people to the already developed fishing site (not Hudler's Flats) and back to the CIC.
 - NYSDEC is currently developing the verbiage for "carry it in / carry it out"-type signs as there will not be garbage cans on site (bear activity)
 - NYSDEC has 7 other access points similar to this along the Esopus, all of which have very few issues
 - The "park-like" atmosphere and high visibility at this location lends itself to visitors acting appropriately and cleaning up after themselves, unlike at Blue Hole which is much more remote
 - NYSDEC and CIC indicated that they intend to monitor the site closely and will respond accordingly. The group agreed that collectively, we can stay ahead of any issues that begin to arise.
 - Mark L also indicated that Trout Unlimited is prepared to allocate resources to this effort as well, if needed.

Habitat

- Impact of 2016 drought on the fish population in Esopus and tributaries

- Mike F reported that it is too early to tell if last year's drought had impact on the fishery. Mike F, Ed O, and Tony C all noted that they observed tons of little rainbow trout at/above the Portal last fall, possibly a good sign?
 - A question was raised about NYSDEC trout stocking this spring. Aaron B displayed a page on NYSDEC's website where that information can be found.
- Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA)
 - Kathy N spoke about work that Catskill Mountainkeeper is doing to help support the combat of HWA in the Catskills. She stressed the importance of hemlock in riparian areas (provide shading year-round) and that one-third of the forest in the region is comprised of hemlock. Once HWA infects a tree, it can take years for the die off to be seen. Monitoring and response efforts are underway, primarily through Catskill Regional Invasive Species Partnership (CRISP), and others. Dave B noted that NYCDEP and the Rondout-Neversink Stream Program have also done work related to HWA in the upper Rondout and Neversink basins.
 - Recently, \$5 Million was announced in the State budget for the Catskill region, and Kathy N reported that \$1 Million will likely be going toward HWA efforts to develop a natural predator, a beetle from the Pacific Northwest that feeds exclusively on HWA, called "Little Larry" (*Laricobius nigrinus*).
 - A request was made to continue to have this issue on future agendas, as well as explore opportunities to have Mark Whitmore from Cornell University and/or Meredith Taylor from NYCDEP, who are both working on HWA, attend a future meeting to speak about their work. This committee may be able to assist in their work. Mark Whitmore has recently published a paper on this work that Kathy N will send around to the group.
 - Mike F reported that as part of the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture this summer, the interns will be looking at hemlock health when they are in the field doing their fish surveys.

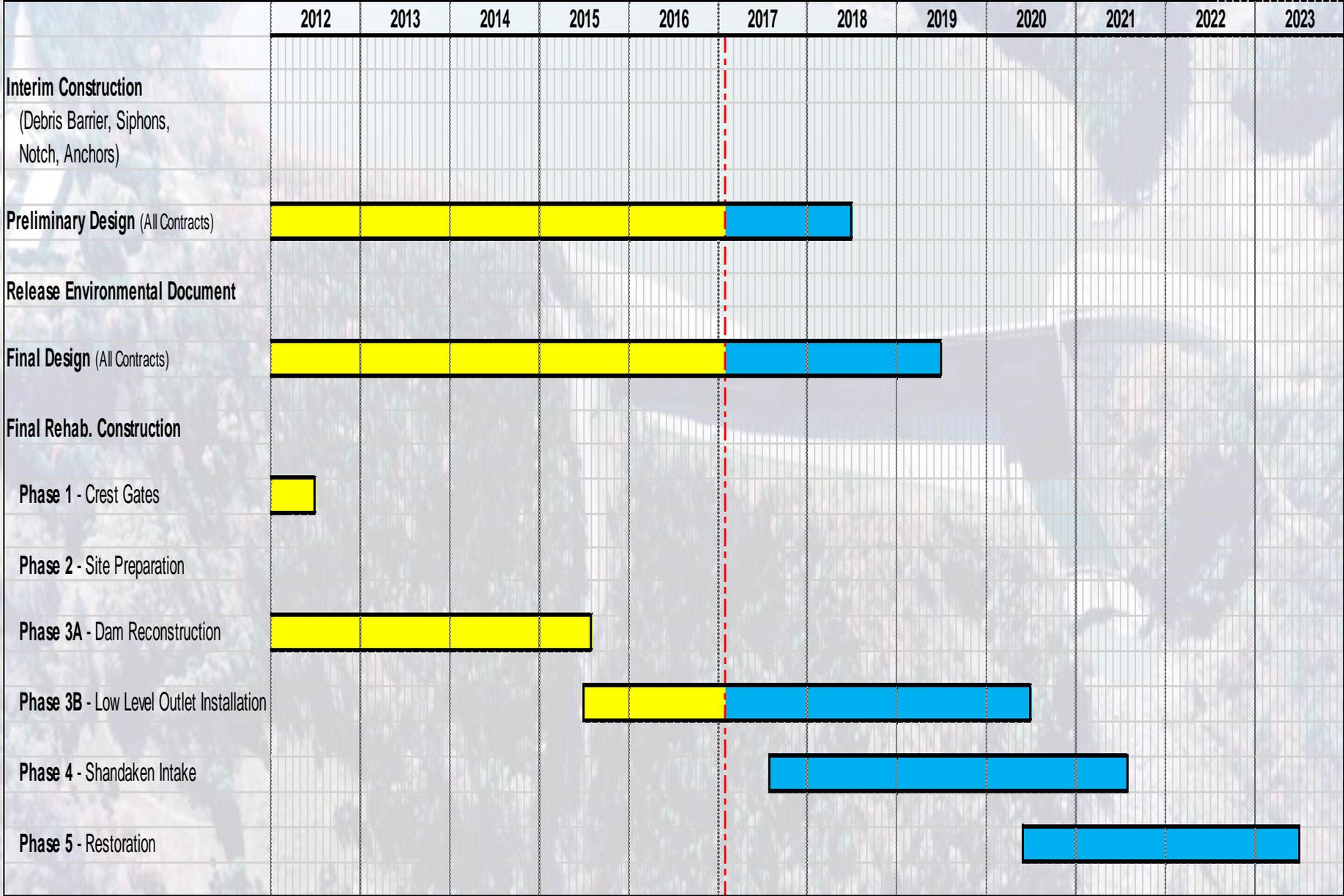
The meeting was adjourned at 12:30pm.

Gilboa Dam:

Planned reconstruction work is intended to repair long-term deterioration, upgrade the dam to current standards, and improve operational capability. Project goals are: 1) ensuring public safety and 2) sustaining public water supply. The main work at the dam will be completed in five phases.

1. Installation of Spillway Crest Gates (CAT-359 – completed June 2012, final cost \$7.1 million).
2. Site Work (CAT-212A – completed March 2011, final cost \$17.8 million).
3. Reconstruction of the Dam (CAT-212B – substantial completion August 2015, final cost \$137.9 million). Installation of a low-level outlet (CAT-212C – notice to proceed granted June 29, 2015, scheduled completion date of June 28, 2020, bid cost \$142,636,000).
4. Rehabilitation of Shandaken Tunnel Intake Chamber (CAT-212D est. cost \$35 million, currently being Bid, est. Notice To Proceed July 2017).
5. Site Restoration (CAT-212E – Scheduled NTP 2021, est. cost \$30 million).

Gilboa Dam Construction Status



Contract CAT-212C Work Update Low Level Outlet (LLO)

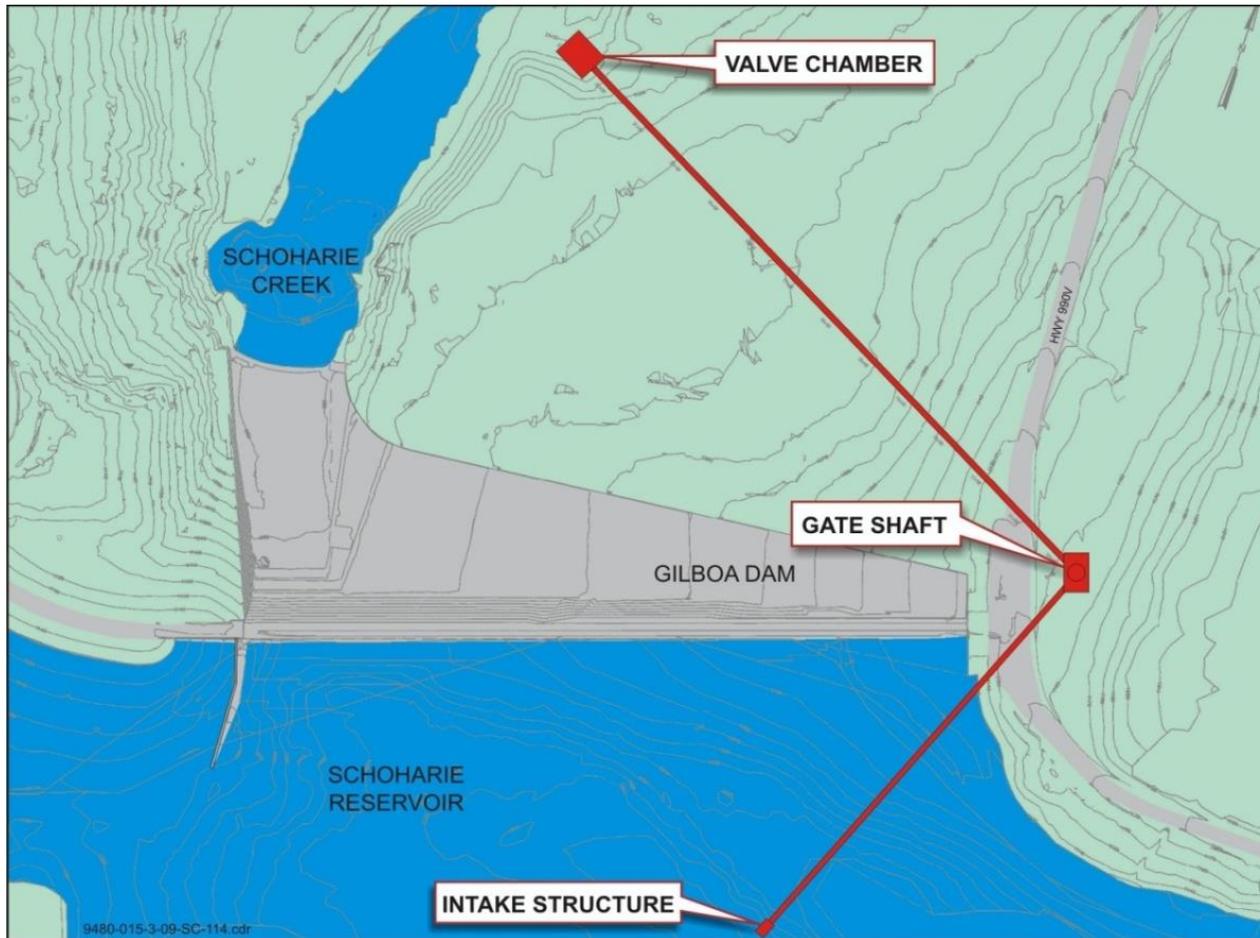
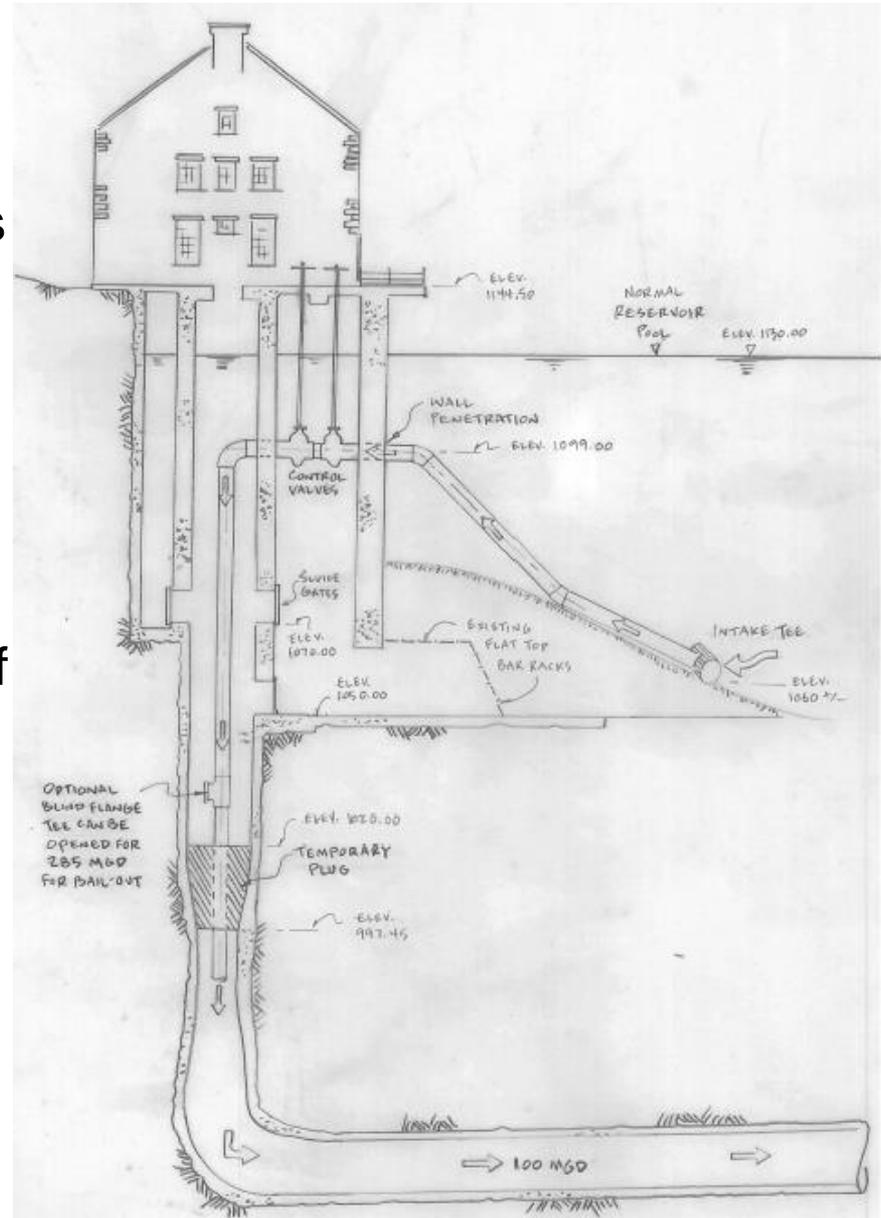


Diagram of new LLO facilities

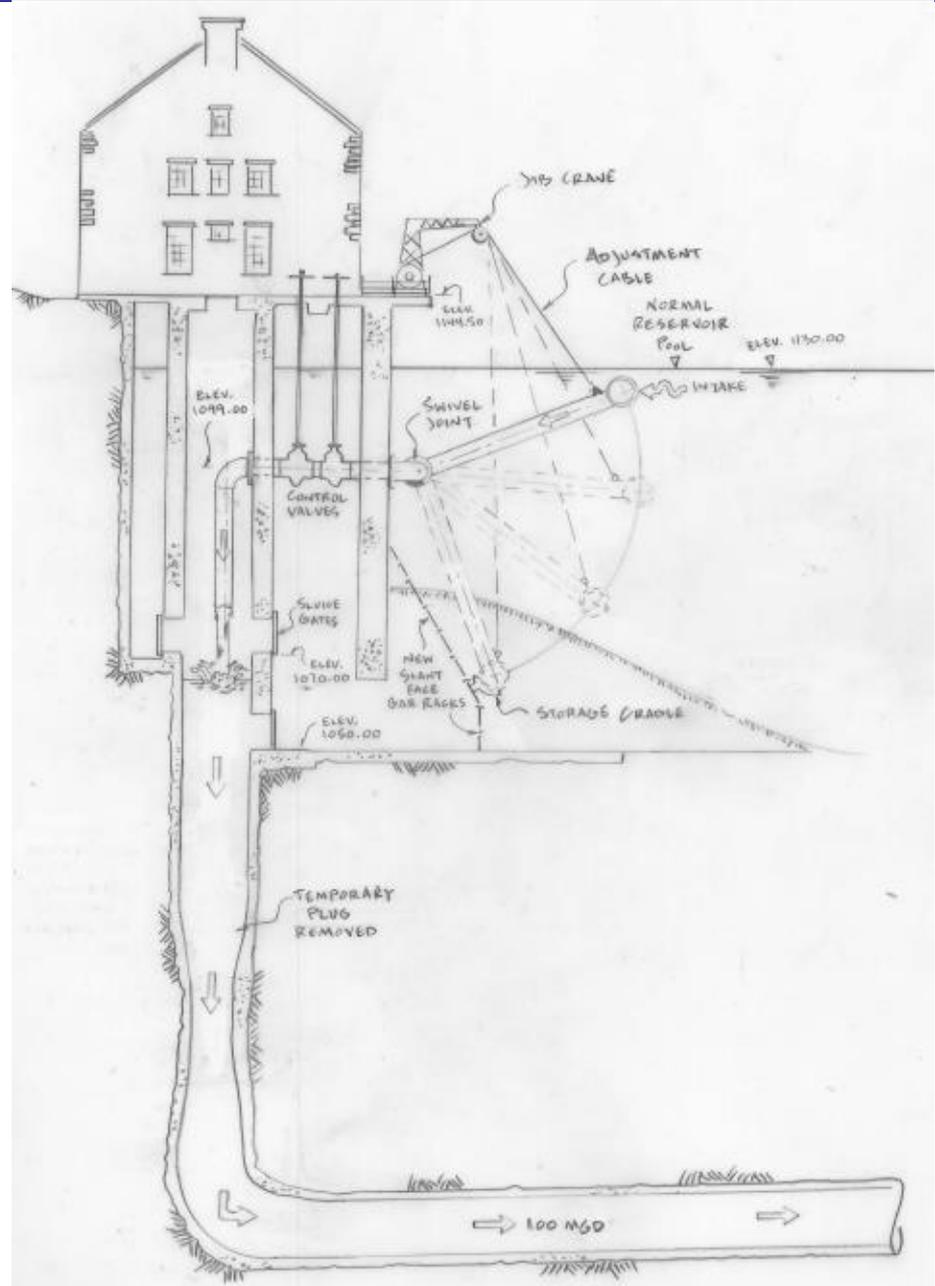
Shandaken Tunnel Intake Chamber Rehab

- ❖ Project CAT212D
- ❖ Rehabilitate the structure and replace the 8 original sluice gates
- ❖ Sluice gate replacement must be done underwater with divers
- ❖ A plug must be installed in the shaft below to protect the divers
- ❖ Some diversion shut downs needed to install & remove plug
- ❖ Shutdowns planned for periods of higher natural flows in the Esopus
- ❖ Gravity fed bypass system will provide limited diversion capability at other times through the plug
- ❖ Bypass is capable of 100 MGD depending on reservoir elevation



Shandaken Tunnel Intake Chamber Rehab

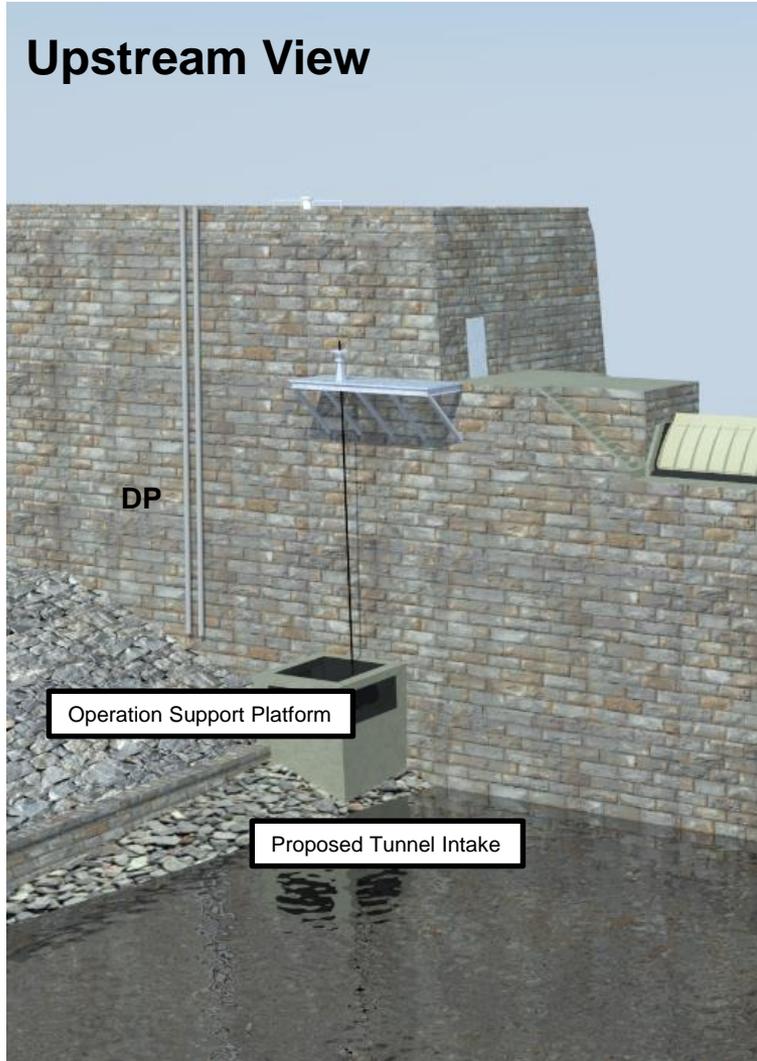
- ❖ Project CAT212D
- ❖ The bypass will be converted to a new High Level Intake (HLI) at the end of the project
- ❖ HLI will have an adjustable intake elevation from approximately elevation 1080ft to 1125ft



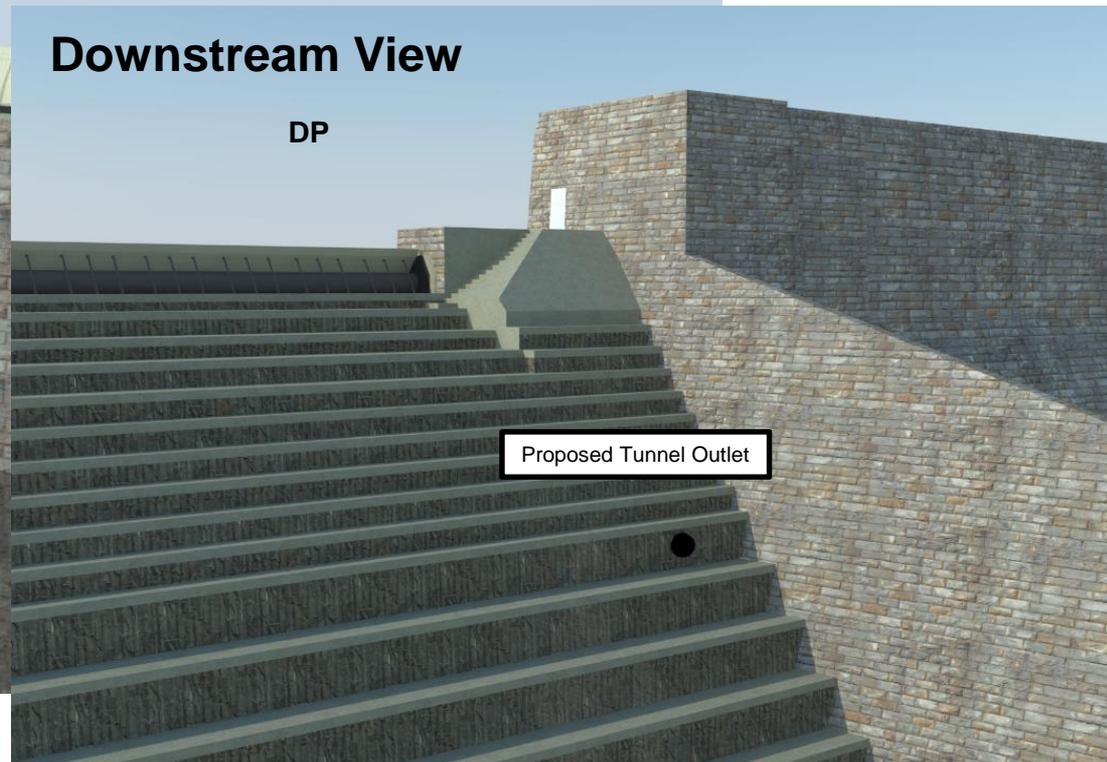
- ❖ Required under the NYSDEC permit
- ❖ Study submitted to NYSDEC in December 2014
- ❖ DEP is reviewing some alternatives to mitigate potential impacts of the Schoharie Release on the diversion to the Esopus Creek:
 - ❖ Use of the Shandaken Tunnel Intake Chamber (STIC) High Level Intake (HLI)
 - ❖ Structural addition to Gilboa Dam; a High Level Outlet (HLO)
 - ❖ DEP is coordinating the effort with NYSDEC
 - ❖ DEP is performing modeling to evaluate the performance of the alternatives
 - ❖ Preliminary modeling shows favorable results using a new HLO at Gilboa Dam and a new HLI at STIC

Direct Dam Penetration at Monolith 18.

Upstream View



Downstream View



- ❖ CAT-212C complete dredging (permit modification may be needed to extend dredging window), install cofferdam and tremie concrete, complete gate shaft excavation and place concrete floor and thrust block, prepare for micro tunnel boring machine, complete “O” piles for the wing walls at the valve chamber area, and complete the hand mining land leg tunnel outlet at the valve chamber
- ❖ CAT-212D Presently bidding the E,H,P and G contracts the pre-bid meeting was on 1/31/17, tentative notice to proceed July 2017
- ❖ Complete additional modeling regarding a proposed HLO to to mitigate impacts of Schoharie Release on cold water storage

KAYAK AND CANOE CLUB OF NEW YORK
c/o Marc S. Hollander
5 Edgebrook Ct
New City, NY 10956-2465
H: (845) 638-3839 // M: (845) 553-5998 // GV: (845) 418-4194

February 8, 2017

Mr. Brenan Tarrier
New York Department of Environmental Conservation
Division of Water
625 Broadway, 4th Floor
Albany, NY 12233-3505

Dear Mr. Tarrier:

It's my honor to write you on behalf of the KCCNY, the Appalachian Mountain Club, the Town of Shandaken, the American Canoe Association, American Whitewater and The Adirondack Mountain Club to request the following water release dates on the Esopus Creek for 2017:

June 3-4, 2017 1000-1100 cfs/620MGD	KCCNY/AMC Whitewater Weekend <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Marc Hollander - KCCNY/ACA, AMC, ADK, AW, Co-Chair AWSMP Recreation Stream Access Committee<ul style="list-style-type: none">o H: <u>(845) 638-3839</u> , C: <u>(845) 553-5998</u>, GV <u>(845) 418-4194</u>o <u>mshmovie@gmail.com</u>• Marty Plante – AMC Trip Leader<ul style="list-style-type: none">o C: <u>518-321-8277</u>o <u>mjplante@yahoo.com</u>
July 15-16, 2017 1000-1100 cfs/620MGD	AMC/KCCNY Whitewater Weekend <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Marc Hollander - KCCNY/ACA, AMC, Co-Chair AWSMP Recreation Stream Access Committee<ul style="list-style-type: none">o H: <u>(845) 638-3839</u> , C: <u>(845) 553-5998</u>, GV <u>(845) 418-4194</u>o <u>mshmovie@gmail.com</u>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loretta Brady – AMC Trip Leader <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ C: 917-497-0446 ○ lorettajbrady@hotmail.com ○ canoekayak@amc-ny.org
<p>Sept. 2- 4, 2017 1000-1100 cfs/620MGD</p>	<p>Shandaken Whitewater Weekend</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rob Stanley, Supervisor, Town of Shandaken <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ (845) 688-7165 ○ shandakensupervisor@yahoo.com • Marty Plante – AMC Trip Leader <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ C: 518-321-8277 ○ mjplante@yahoo.com • Marc Hollander - KCCNY/ACA, AMC, ADK, AW, Co-Chair AWSMP Recreation Stream Access Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ H: (845) 638-3839 , C: (845) 553-5998, GV (845) 418-4194 ○ mshmovie@gmail.com
<p>Oct 7 -8, 2017 1000-1100 cfs/620MGD</p>	<p>ACA Esopus Slalom – New England Slalom Series – http://nessrace.com/esopus-slalom/</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michael Cook, Coordinator <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 23 Myers Heights Rd, Lansing, NY 14882 ○ (607) 227-4998 (m) // (607)255-7163 (w) ○ mjc10@cornell.edu // slalomracer55@gmail.com ○ Please note that this well-established (over 35 year old) competition draws significant participants from across the Northeast. • Loretta Brady – AMC Trip Leader <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ C: 917-497-0446 ○ lorettajbrady@hotmail.com ○ canoekayak@amc-ny.org

While in the past the weekends’ release began to “ramp up” on the afternoon/evening prior to the first day of the event (to account for the ~six hour transit time) and began to “ramp down” on the last day of the release, we defer to your discretion to implement a protocol compliant with [670.3 \(c\)](#) so as to conserve as much cold water as possible. We envision this would ensure full target CFS as measured at the portal from 9AM to 7PM on each day of the release ensuring there’s an opportunity to reduce the release volume of water using electronic gate controls allowing conservation of cold water for the benefit of the habitat.

Additionally, we'd gladly welcome any discussions to ensure a good balance between all the needs your balancing ; we would appreciate a call if there are any

challenges we might partner to address that might lead to a positive disposition for a modified recreational release.

As you can see, and observed in prior years, there is a great spirit of cooperation among the various clubs and organizations that look to the Esopus for recreation. Other paddling clubs and organizations will learn of these releases through newsletters and paddling schedule exchanges and will be scheduling their own trips and workshops. Accordingly, if there is a foreseeable problem with any of these dates, please contact the indicated event coordinator, and myself, at the earliest opportunity.

We look forward to receiving a confirmation of these dates as soon as you're able to provide them; plans and financial commitments are dependent on the NYS DEC's timely disposition on these requests. As always, thank you for all you've done to support these activities in the past, your continued support, transparency, consideration, help and cooperation.

As always, thank you.

Sincerely,

Marc S. Hollander

KCCNY – Board Member: Conservation & River Stewardship, ACA, AMC, Co-Chair
AWSMP Recreational Stream Access Committee

cc:

- American Canoe Association
 - Louis Metzger, Department: Stewardship & Public Policy – American Canoe Association (mlmetzger@americancanoe.org)
 - Michael Cook - ACA (mjc10@cornell.edu)
- Kayak and Canoe Club of New York
 - John Coraor - Competition Chair, KCCNY (jcoraor@optonline.net)
 - Andrew Frey – President, KCCNY (andrewfrey@forestelectric.net)
 - Daniel E. Kirsch – Executive Board, KCCNY (dkirsch@kirschandkirsch.com)
 - Steve McLuckie – Vice President, KCCNY (scagrotto@hvc.rr.com)
- American Whitewater
 - Bob Nasdor – Northeast Stewardship Director - Bob@americanwhitewater.org - 617-584-4566
- Rob Stanley - Town of Shandaken (shandakensupervisor@yahoo.com)

- Harry Jameson - Town Tinker Tube Rentals (towntinkertubes@yahoo.com)
- Marty Plante – AMC Trip Leader, C: [518-321-8277](tel:518-321-8277), mjplante@yahoo.com
- Loretta Brady – AMC Trip Leader, C: [917-497-0446](tel:917-497-0446), lorettajbrady@hotmail.com
- AMC - Connecticut Chapter
 - Mark Schappert - [203-240-3544](tel:203-240-3544) - Whitewater Co-Chair, riverloony@earthlink.net
 - Dennis Wigg - [860-526-2126](tel:860-526-2126) - Whitewater Co-Chair, dennis_wigg@yahoo.com
 - David Shoup – Trips Coordinator - [860-526-2126](tel:860-526-2126) - zippyq2@comcast.net
- AMC - Delaware Valley Chapter
 - Eric Pavlak - Paddling Chair, [610-650-8926](tel:610-650-8926); paddling@amcdv.org
- AMC - Berkshire Chapter
 - Bill Blatner - Paddling Chair, [413-584-8917](tel:413-584-8917); wjblatner@hotmail.com
- Adirondack Mountain Club (North Jersey Ramapo Chapter)
 - Phyllis Key (Membership Chair) – pkeyhiker@gmail.com – [201-768-5573](tel:201-768-5573)
- Adirondack Mountain Club (Schenectady Chapter):
 - Ralph Pascale – Chairman, rpascale@spendwood.com, [518-235-1614](tel:518-235-1614).
 - Larry Woods - cboater1@yahoo.com, [518-810-7552](tel:518-810-7552).
- Adirondack Mountain Club:
 - Neil F. Woodworth - Executive Director and Counsel
- neilwoody@gmail.com, [518-449-3870](tel:518-449-3870) (Albany office), [518-669-0128](tel:518-669-0128) (Cell), [518-668-4447](tel:518-668-4447) x-13 or 25 (Lake George office)