

Highway Managers' Meeting
May 15, 2012 Phoenicia, NY
AWSMP Office

In attendance:

Cory Ritz, UCSWCD
Deron Davis, USDA-NRCS
Danny Davis, NYCDEP
Eric Hoffmeister, Town of Shandaken
Mike Reynolds, Town of Woodstock
Clyde Russell, Town of Hurley
Kirk Peters, UCDPW
Andy Emrich, UCDPW
Brent Gotsch, CCE Ulster County

Program Updates

Liz Higgins (CCE Ulster County) will be leaving the program at the end of the month to take a position in CCE Sullivan County. She will remain part time with the program (probably around 1 day a week) until a replacement can be found for her.

AWSMP originally had a \$2 million grant program. All money has been allocated as of May 2012. Money is expected to come back to the program that is not expended. That money will be given to emergency watershed protection (EWP) projects.

The next contract with DEP is expected to allocate \$2 million for the stream management implementation fund grant program for the next 5 years. AWSMP is looking to allocate a good portion of that money for highway and infrastructure projects.

All grants must go through the Stakeholder's Committee (formerly the Advisory Council). AWSMP would like to have representatives from this group (Highway Managers) to attend these meetings (approximately 4 times a year) to advocate for highway/infrastructure projects. The next stakeholders meeting will be sometime in late June.

Contractors' Training

150+ people went to the contractor's training in March. 1 session as held at the Emerson in Mount Tremper and 2 sessions were held at the Greene County Emergency Services Building in Cairo. It was very successful and ultimately we are looking to expand the program and have another training next year. Want to be able to give out a packet with information explaining in detail what is presented in the training. Would also like to have a field day where attendees can see work being done in action.

Group that put it together would like to revisit this next fall. Lots of interest is still out there.

It was suggested that this summer we videotape restoration projects going in so we can post on our website and YouTube to show best management practices and visually show principals explained in classroom. CCE Education and Outreach team would be in charge of this project.

How do we make it better?

EWP Updates

Every town has a handful of EWPs. About 26 sites throughout the watershed total. 20 of those sites are related to amount of soil loss. USDA-NRCS used a number of criteria to determine a dollar amount for damage sustained by town based on eroding sediment entering streams. It estimated that amount to be \$88 per ton for clay/soil going into stream. This amount was determined based on how much reduced tourism, water quality, etc. will hurt local areas.

New York State says that 25% EWP match should come from the NYC DEP if a project is going to be in the watershed. DEP is currently picking up part of the tab for EWP projects in the watershed. Unsure how this will play out.

Next year DEC may allow municipalities a general permit. This would allow towns to contact the DEC, send them a sketch, and then the state would approve it to allow a quicker permitting process for stream work.

Flood Hazard Mitigation—DEP to get \$40 million for flood mitigation. This amount may get rolled into CWC. This amount will be used for buy-outs and be used for land acquisition to buy properties with structures and that are under 10 acres (currently DEP land acquisition is prohibited from doing this). May also be used to continue CWC debris removal program.

Stream Assessment

Bobby Taylor (UCSWCD technician) is currently writing up a management plan for the Beaverkill. This would be an “owner’s manual” for the stream. Future stream management plans will follow this protocol. Much of the data currently generated from StreamStats will be found in these plans.

The Catskill Streams Riparian Buffer Initiative (CSBI) would like to work more closely with municipalities. Towns would have to formally apply for CSBI plants. We have found that using willow stakes on top of rock structures (i.e. Fawn Hill) has been very effective. Currently there is no place that we can easily or cheaply access willows for plantings. NYS will not allow us on state land to cut willows for projects. We are currently looking into how much willow stakes will cost from a private nursery. Eventually we would like to have a staging area where we would grow our own. Plans are underway to have one at the Ulster County Fairgrounds.

Miscellaneous

Sheet piling costs are high. Three-sided box culverts/ bottomless culverts are ideal compared to other kinds (i.e. Traver Hollow culvert).

Is it possible to rent an excavator with a pounder (for willow stakes in rip rap or similar structures)?

It's important to get a bridge's width right. Sheet piling will stay in place but may get water behind it.

If you can show FEMA that a bridge has been continuously damaged then they can pay to mitigate it. They will pay 100% of the cost of mitigation. First you must put in an application for mitigation. Then you must get an engineer to prove it is improperly sized.

C. Ritz said that he could write a letter for M. Reynolds concerning hydraulic constriction on Mink Hollow Bridge.

Deron Davis reported that he heard that the Town of Lloyd wants to write a local ordinance that will allow it to go into areas where water ponds/pools and clean them out without emergency approval and to get reimbursed for it. Currently it is just a rumor but if it comes to pass in that town other towns in the watershed may want to consider adopting resolutions with similar language.

Future Actions

Next meeting will be sometime in July. Exact time/date to be announced.

AWSMP would like highway departments to have an agreement to allow them to apply for work with the CSBI program.