

Meeting Notes For Ashokan Education and Outreach Committee

June 22, 2012

In Attendance:

Elizabeth Higgins, CCE Ulster County/CCE Sullivan County
Brent Gotsch, CCEUC
Gretchen Rae, CCEUC
Todd Spire, TU, Ashokan-Pepacton Chapter
Mark Vian, NYC DEP
Aaron Bennett, Ulster County Department of the Environment
Diane Galusha, CWC (via telephone)

Stakeholder's Council Representation

Two representatives from this committee are needed to attend Ashokan Watershed Stakeholder's Council Meeting. Todd Spire from Trout Unlimited has volunteered. It was also suggested that Mary McNamara of the Lower Esopus Working Group (and Woodstock resident) be the other representative. Someone will reach out to her to confirm her availability.

Progress on 2012 Work Plan

US Forest Service Training

Well attended and received but it is difficult to get some stakeholders (in particular highway department personnel) to take a whole week off of work to attend. Forest Service presenters expressed interest in developing a new curriculum that could be developed for either an alternate schedule or perhaps online modules. There may be interest in the Hudson River Estuary Program to put on trainings such as this. The Forest Service may not have funding to do these types of programs in the future and their key presenters will be reaching retirement age soon. How can we help the Forest Service keep this going?

Rochester Hollow Stream Walk

Event was well-received and most of the participants stayed to journey up to the John Burroughs memorial. For future events we are strongly considering doing a longer event (around 3 hours) and advertising that there may be some "bushwhacking" involved.

Volunteer Events

Oliverea Stream Clean-up on May 5 was highly successful. There was lots of community support with 40 volunteers. Lots of trash including a large a 30 cubic foot dumpster was filled with debris as well as a large pile of metal. We would like to replicate this experience for future cleanup events.

CSBI Plantings in Towns of Olive and Shandaken were also very successful with good turnout. Planting recipients have engaged us to find ways to give back to the program.

Completed Publications

The Esopus Creek News continues to be published and generally well-received. The next issue will be available to landowners around the end of July following final reviews.

A “Guide to Native Riparian Plants” was created which was very successful and well-received by the public. Visually it is of excellent quality and acts as a catalog for the CSBI program. It is a great outreach tool for the CSBI program.

A guide to “LWD Management” was also completed.

Upcoming Events

See attachment.

Document Review Process

One of the major challenges of this program is effective review of documents and final decision on when it can go to print. In an effort to obtain the best possible resources and information on a particular topic (LWD management for example) multiple authorities on the subject from Soil and Water, CCE, DEP, DEC and academia (Cornell University et al.) are utilized. However, there are often overwhelming comments which many times contradict one another which need to be synthesized. In the current state of work there is no formalized review process which the major stakeholder groups in our program can agree upon.

At this meeting some suggestions were brought up including having a topic be developed by a small group (approximately 3-4 people) who would shepherd it through the development process from beginning to end. There was also talk to developing a logic model which outlined the goals and objectives of the document/topic to be followed by a brief which would inform the main points of the publication which would then be revised from that.

There was also discussion about comments from those who are “Deciders” and those who are providing “Input.” While it is important to include those providing “input” it ultimately rests with the “deciders” to determine what continues in development and what gets dropped. There is currently no consensus on who (either on an individual level or an agency level) who decides what is valid and what is not and makes final binding decisions.

Master Watershed Steward Pilot Program

The first in-person meeting of the Master Watershed Steward pilot program occurred June 16-17 at the Omega Institute in Rhinebeck, NY. While it was successful, going forward there are some concerns that need to be addressed. In particular the need for the 40 hour project has run into some complications. Who determines what projects meet the program’s requirements? What type

of resources do we have at our disposal to help them? In the case of our program, what are our responsibilities to help candidates outside of the Ashokan Watershed?

It was suggested that the following three items be developed regarding MWS projects:

1. Each candidate should write a few paragraphs to a page outlining what type of project they want to do so it can be reviewed by the committee.
2. Have a list of recommendations for the candidates to choose from.
3. Develop criteria or a form for project idea, objectives for the project, and needed resources.

The Ulster County Department of the Environment has leftover equipment from the Lower Esopus River Watch program which can be used by the MWS candidates. They would be willing to establish a lending library for MWS candidates to take equipment out. Need to follow up with Aaron Bennett to find a current list of items available.

Kiosk Updates

There are plans to update the AWSMP kiosk at Woodland Valley and to build a new kiosk in Phoenicia (or utilize the existing one) with details on the Stony Clove flood remediation project. Dave Channon has been contracted with to do these kiosks. Liz Higgins will follow-up with Mr. Channon regarding the status of the kiosks.

Money for E & O Projects

The current 5-year contract between DEP and CCE/UCSWCD is coming up in May 2013. There will be extra budgetary funds available in lines that are not fully utilized (e.g. training, travel, etc.). Liz Higgins expects there to be about \$50,000 available that can be used for the Education and Outreach Group. It is requested that committee members think about things that they would like to use this money for such as having speakers or training programs, publications, etc.

Other Items

Alma Rodriguez from CCEUC would like the committee to know that Phoenicia Elementary school has installed 20 10x10 garden beds for school children to use and learn about gardening. There is currently a committee forming to determine how best to put these beds to good use. Please contact Alma at CCEUC in Kingston (845-340-3990) for more information.

Future Actions

Committee will reach out to Mary McNamara concerning her role as the Education and Outreach Committee representative on the AWSMP Stakeholder's Council.

Gretchen Rae and Brent Gotsch will continue to work with the rest of the Master Watershed Steward committee to refine project plans for MWS candidates.

Aaron Bennett will provide the committee with a list of available equipment that can be loaned from the UC Department of the Environment.

Liz Higgins will reach out to Dave Channon concerning status of kiosk project.

All committee members will think about projects they would like to use the extra \$50,000 towards.

Next meeting will most likely be in late August/early September.

Adjournment