

Stream Access and Recreation Committee Meeting Notes
August 9, 2011

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mike Flaherty, NYSDEC
Wayne Turner, Ashokan Center
Mark Loete, Trout Unlimited
Aaron Bennett, Ulster County Department of the Environment
David Gilmour, Gilmour Planning
Elizabeth Higgins, Cornell Cooperative Extension (AWSMP)
Brent Gotsch, Cornell Cooperative Extension (AWSMP)

Major Goal of Meeting: To come up with the draft list of projects/ideas to put out for review.

At the previous session it was determined that there are three major categories of projects: Informational, Educational, Construction/Development. We have also included a 4th category of policy projects. These are not recommended for funding but are issues of access that require policy changes.

Informational Projects help to guide people to what currently exists in the area. Examples include kiosks and directional signage.

List of proposed Informational Projects:

- (1) Provide funds (if necessary) to assist DEC and DOT put wayfaring signage on rt. 28 and side roads.
- (2) Assist in developing kiosks to help guide people to stream access locations.
- (3) Developing reporting mechanism for needed repairs on DEC fishing access locations
- (4) Developing reporting mechanism for needed improvements to DEC information at trail-heads

Educational Projects seek to help the public better understand the resources in the area. Examples include site specific guides and ambassadorships.

List of proposed Educational Projects

- (1) Grant to an organization to increase access to stream resources (tours, outreach, events)
- (2) Encourage groups to “adopt” an access site in much the same way that groups “adopt” a highway.
- (3) Booklet highlighting the various trails, access points, activities in the Ashokan area. The booklet could feature 12 activities for people to do. When all 12 are completed you get a patch or similar reward. Booklets would be mass produced and made easily available or

you could go to a local store, farmer's market etc. and if you spend a certain amount of money you'll a set number for free.

Construction/Development projects improve sites, or add additional sites. Examples include building new trails, access points, etc.

List of proposed Construction/Development Projects

(1) Improvements to DEC Fishing Access Sites.

There were several DEC Fishing Access Sites that were identified as needing trail work and other minor improvements. We will present the list of sites identified as needing work to DEC as they may be able to repair them with their existing resources. The next step is for DEC to determine what ability they have at each location to make needed repairs as it will depend on the type of easement they have at the site and the willingness of the landowner to have the upgrade made (depending on the easement). The other recommendation is to develop a means for the public to report needed repairs/upgrades of DEC fishing access sites to DEC (see recommendation in information section)

Specific Sites Identified (#7, #9, #10, #11, #21 and #22).

Also, Site #10 is a DOT pull-off and one of the needs is to reach out to DOT to see if they could create a break in the guard-rail at the point where an improved trail is developed

(2) Handicap Accessibility

The lack of handicapped accessible locations on the stream was discussed by the group. Specific locations where handicapped accessibility might be improved (where fishing would also be good) were identified. A key component to this is to find areas where the stream is stable so that the project would be sustainable.

Site #10 – it might be possible to create a platform over the stream at this location.

Site #12 – this was an area where members of the committee thought that it might be possible to create a trail that would go underneath the Rt. 28 bridge that could be handicap accessible.

(near Site #17) In collaboration with the Emerson and possibly tied to the public fishing rights locations above or below the Emerson property to develop a handicap accessible site

Site #18 or Site #29, (the abandoned bridges) over the Esopus. Both of these would create an opportunity to fish off the bridge.

(3) Purchase of additional DEC fishing access/public easements

There currently is no one formally tasked at DEC with identifying high priority lands for easements. Another question is whether or not the category of easement could be broadened to allow other activities than angling (maybe similar to the easements the DEP has on some properties). Several areas that were identified as priorities for long-term access (in some cases the landowners currently allow access without an easement) include:

- a. Behind the Boiceville market plaza (site 30) (it might be possible to get an easement at the water treatment plant). This is an area that is used both as angler access but also by the school for educational programming and by kayakers. This is an area where a broader easement would be desirable.

(4) Woodland Valley Confluence with Esopus (sites 13/14)

This was one of the highest priority for a significant project as it is a very heavily used area and is used by multiple groups (fishing, swimming, kayaking). Needs include better parking, trails, boat access, Develop better use of railroad bed as trail along Esopus along Herdman Rd.

(5) DOT (?) property above Phoenicia (site #12)

This site was one where improved trails, possible benches and some signage would improve the site. It is heavily used, but is not welcoming. Might be possible to develop this into a handicapped accessible site (see above)

(6) Nissin Road Bridge (site 29). In conjunction with RR off of Coldbrook Rd.

This would be a great resource for walking, sitting and viewing the river. Longer-term project because of cost of repairs to bridge.

(7) Beaverkill DEP access (Site 26).

There is a pull-off on 212 where the DEP property is adjacent to 212 and then crosses the Beaverkill. This would be a nice place for a bench or a table as there are few areas for people to pull off and enjoy the streams.

(8) Minor trail improvements

There were several sites where the committee felt that minor improvements would enhance the experience without overwhelming the resource. These included:

- a. (Site 25) Developing blazes to guide people from Silver Hollow Road entrance of Warner Creek DEP property into the property (w/o going on private property) and ultimately to Warner Creek and linking up with the DEC trails. Currently it is difficult to navigate the property without going onto the adjacent private properties.
- b. (Site 20) across from Catskill Interpretive Center site. Mow an inconspicuous trail to the Esopus. This would balance the desire for solitude at that site with the fact that it is very difficult to get through (due to brambles etc...).

Policy Changes/Improvements are items to continue working on, but are not directly related to funding.

List of proposed Policy Changes

- (1) Work towards opening up City of Kingston Lands (esp on the Beaverkill) for public access. Currently the City of Kingston is more restrictive than DEP in this area. It might be possible to work with the City and DEP to help align the City of Kingston's policies with DEP's in that area and maybe share resources for monitoring and enforcement.

- (2) Work with the Town of Woodstock to remove the requirement that individuals accessing DEP recreation lands have a DEP access permit.
- (3) Work with the Town of Woodstock to open up the Sickler Road DEP parcel to recreational access.
- (4) Work with DEC to have a category of easements that is broader than angler access for areas that may not be a high priority for angling, but are a high priority for access. Activities include kayaking, picnicking.