

**AWSMP Stream Access and Recreation Working Group Meeting Minutes**  
**1/27/2014**  
**10:00am to 1:00pm**  
**AWSMP Office, Phoenicia, NY**

*In attendance:*

Brent Gotsch, CCE Ulster County  
Aaron Bennett, UC Dept. of Environment  
Harry Jameson, Town Tinker Tubes  
David Gilmour, Gilmour Planning  
Marc Hollander, KCCNY  
Tony Coccozza, Trout Unlimited (AP Chapter)  
Mark Loete, Trout Unlimited (AP Chapter)  
Martie Gales, Town of Shandaken Parks and Rec Committee  
Kathy Nolan, Catskill Mountainkeeper  
Mike Flaherty, NYSDEC

**Announcements**

Preliminary flood map open house for Ulster County is scheduled for Wednesday February 5, 2014 at the Woodstock Fire District located at 242 Tinker Street, Woodstock, NY. It will be held from 4:00pm to 8:00pm. Anyone interested in learning more about the flood maps can come in at any time during that period to ask questions.

Ashokan-Pepacton Trout Unlimited will have their next meeting on February 26, 2014 at the Boiceville Inn. During that meeting Mark Vian of NYC DEP will give a presentation.

On February 18, 2014 the 3<sup>rd</sup> Public Meeting for the NY Community Rising group of Shandaken & Hardenburgh will be held at the Shandaken Town Hall.

The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual AWSMP Annual Conference will be held at the Ashokan Center on April 5<sup>th</sup>. Check the website periodically for registration information.

April 5<sup>th</sup> will also be the Annual Dinner for the Ashokan-Pepacton Chapter of Trout Unlimited.

**AWSMP Action Plan Review**

The group was generally happy with the language for Section F of the action plan (the section that pertains to Stream Access and Recreation). There were a few suggestions, however.

Add language that does not single out Shandaken as the only Town that we are working with. Work closely with other town Parks and Recs departments and utilize their master plans/rec plans. Also suggested that language be added that any changes to Shandaken Tunnel document be done for the mutually beneficial result of all Esopus Creek stakeholders.

## Working Group Focus for the Year

### *Kiosks/Signage*

There was much discussion about what areas or projects should be concentrated on or worked towards for the year. One area that the group agreed would be good to focus on would be better signage and kiosks around stream access areas, whether they be for fishing, whitewater or multiuse purposes. It was also suggested that along with developing kiosks that it would be beneficial to develop a booklet that goes along with the kiosks that reinforces the messages of the kiosk. In particular, the group thought that it would be important to clearly explain stream etiquette and identify known hazards for specific locations, hence the reason why more kiosks and signage would be useful and appropriate.

There was discussion on what signage currently existed in town. The kiosk in Phoenicia at Main Street is open for our use. There is currently an AWSMP kiosk in Woodland Valley (at the Esopus confluence) and there will be 4 additional kiosks placed in Shandaken as part of a project they have worked on for the past year or so (these kiosks were designed by Dave Channon).

Would any of our new signage be permanent or would it be able to be updated with regularity? Which would be the preferred option? Would we want there to be QR codes to link to websites that are updated and maintained with regularity? What would the messaging be?

Ideally there would be a kiosk (or at least substantive signage) at every access point on the Esopus. Potential locations (without current kiosks) include: Phoenicia (at Main Street Bridge), fishing access site at Allaben cemetery, the dirt pull-off between AWSMP office and Phoenicia. The last location is private land but Harry Jameson has a good relationship with the landowner and would discuss the potential for creating signage or better access at that site.

**Before next meeting the working group members are tasked with providing Brent Gotsch a list of currently existing DEC access points, kiosks and their locations as well as a list of sites that could potentially be used as access points. Brent will put this into a spreadsheet to help guide the group on which area(s) to concentrate on.**

**Also need to have an update on the status of the Shandaken Kiosk Project.**

### *Planning Projects*

Suggested that perhaps there be a study on the Esopus Creek on the recreation potential, in particular of areas in between current access locations. This would be based on the recreation site evaluation that was done before and after Irene.

### *Town Specific Projects*

Shandaken: Proposed new access sites at stream restoration sites in Chichester. Working Group learned that the DEC is still purchasing public fishing rights (PFRs) and this could potentially be a good location for that. DEC would need the name and address of the landowners at that site. If

they are interested then the DEC would send them a letter and interface with them about the PFR program. Also suggested that a fish ladder might be added to that location to allow trout to access the colder reaches upstream. There is currently a cement obstacle blocking their path. This obstacle may be part of the Chichester sewer district.

The land around Warner Creek Site 5 stream restoration project is currently up for sale. Would it be possible for TU or similar organization to get a grant from AWSMP to purchase property for public fishing?

Gilmour Planning has resources available to do increased signage or access in Phoenicia as part of the Complete Streets program.

Olive: There has been some talk of having a trail connecting Boiceville to the Catskill Interpretive Center.

Woodstock: None offered at this time but working group members will continue to think about potential projects in this town. It's difficult because not much of Woodstock is located in the watershed and the parts that are happen to be generally remote and do not have easy access.

### **Educational Seminar**

There was support for an educational seminar around in-stream debris management (including large woody debris) including the legal and ecological aspects of the problem. The seminar would be based on the Shandaken Tunnel session held last winter.

It was strongly suggested that this seminar, which would invite officials from the state attorney general's office, DEC and other entities, offer more than just talk and that it would offer some resolution/solution to the issues. The issue of debris management has been a hotly debated topic since the beginning to the Esopus Creek Stream Management Plan and even before this. Suggested that policy-makers be strongly encouraged to offer solutions.

It would be interesting for a kayaker, to have a go-pro camera and footage of them going through the stream near woody debris as part of this seminar.

**Brent Gotsch will begin arrangements for this seminar.**

### **Shandaken Tunnel Memo**

Representatives from Trout Unlimited believe that the project is a good idea, but have misgivings about its implementation and fear that it could do more harm than good. They are concerned that given the fragile nature of the stream ecosystem and the already complicated nature of the regulatory process of releases (further complicated by recent Lower Esopus issues) that adding what they believe to be another layer of complexity to the subject is ill advised.

DEC feels that the idea has merit and should be experimented with. It was noted that it is permissible under the current regulations to experiment with different proposed release strategies

in an effort to create an optimum policy. If this is pursued they would take a week to experiment with the release strategy proposed by the memo to determine if it would work and then pursue more research to see if it is really feasible. This pilot experiment would only occur if conditions allowed.

**It was suggested that Marc Hollander (the point person for the memo project) do the following with assistance from working group members:**

- 1. Fully cite and provide links to the literature and studies that he referenced to make his calculations on water releases and schedules.**
- 2. Write up language in the memo explaining that DEC has done similar experimental release measures before.**
- 3. Write up a timeline and text explaining to the reader how we got to this point and what the idea and goal of this memo is.**
- 4. Explain that any pilot experiment would occur only when conditions allowed and that it would only be for the time period of the experiment (likely one week) and would not become permanent. The change in release regulations would only occur after further detailed research and collaboration between all regulatory agencies. This would be a long process with lots of time and collaboration between all stakeholders.**

#### **Next Steps/Assignments**

See bolded text throughout document.

#### **Next Meeting**

TBA. Likely will be held either April or May.