

THE Trib

Esopus Creek News Briefs

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Esopus • Birch • Bushnellsville • Fox Hollow • Peck Hollow • Broadstreet Hollow • Woodland Valley • Stony Clove • Beaver Kill • Little Beaver Kill • Traver Hollow • Bushkill

Welcome to the Esopus Creek News Trib; a shorter version of the full-length Esopus Creek News. A “trib” (short for “tributary”) is a smaller creek that flows into the main river. Look for the full-length Esopus Creek News to return this winter. We hope you enjoy this edition of the Trib!

Learning about the Ashokan Watershed

Like all of you, the Ashokan Watershed Stream Management Program is adjusting to the pandemic. We have started delivering our outreach and education programs online. And we continue to provide guidance on stream management. We are developing management plans, holding digital and phone meetings with stakeholders, and assisting towns with critical infrastructure projects. Our stream restoration projects are advancing toward construction. The good news is, the rivers are still flowing and full of fish, and as spring begins a new cycle of life - there is plenty of opportunity to learn more about streams of the watershed!



The stream program continues to offer:

🌿 Answers to Ashokan watershed landowner questions. Did you know stream program staff will respond to questions about stream erosion or flooding on your property? Call the AWSMP office main line to schedule a consultation at (845) 688-3047.

🌿 A management plan for the Little Beaver Kill tributary to the Esopus Creek will be published online soon at: [ashokanstreams.org/publications-resources/stream-management-plans](https://www.ashokanstreams.org/publications-resources/stream-management-plans). We are available to answer questions about how to manage your stretch of the river.

🌿 The Catskill Streams Buffer Initiative (CSBI) is assisting landowners who want to prevent erosion and improve habitat by managing vegetation on streambanks. Contact Bobby Taylor at: bobby.taylor@ashokanstreams.org for more information. Eligible landowners can receive a free planting of native trees, shrubs, and perennials that thrive near streams, and a streamside management plan.

🌿 Check out a series of educational videos produced by our education staff and then explore local natural areas as a family. The videos were made to support online delivery of elementary school programs in the Onteora School District. Go to the AWSMP [Youtube page](#) and see videos labeled for youth at: [ashokanstreams.org/publications-resources](https://www.ashokanstreams.org/publications-resources).

🌿 Go on an Ashokan Watershed Adventure! Use our Adventure Guide at: <https://bit.ly/363UQur> to visit stream sites from top to bottom of the watershed for some fresh air and adventure!

The stream program office in Shokan is temporarily closed, but staff are working remotely during normal business hours of 8:00-4:30. Contact us at (845) 688-3047 or info@ashokanstreams.org.



NEWS STREAM

Stream Stability

Streams are dynamic - channels swell with water and are ever changing. So how can streams also be stable? Find out along with Stream Educator Tim Koch and some furry friends in this short video at: <https://youtu.be/6x4pikRXuZI>

Updated Shandaken Flood Plan

The Town of Shandaken updated its flood mitigation plan and is ready to access FEMA funds after a flood emergency. The adopted plan is at: www.shandaken.us/disaster-prep-response/flood-mitigation-plan

Mt. Tremper Bridges

Two bridge projects are underway in Mt. Tremper. The Ulster County Dept. of Public Works is removing the closed Mt. Pleasant bridge deemed a flood hazard. The NYSDOT is replacing and enlarging the State Route 28 bridge over the Esopus Creek. Shandaken's flood studies showed the projects will reduce flood risks. Read about the NYSDOT project here: <https://bit.ly/2Lx2FPK>

New Riparian Buffer Demonstration

There are now two riparian buffer demonstrations to visit in the watershed. Visit the Catskill Visitors Center in Mt. Tremper and look for the trail bridge and buffer signs - the grounds are open to the public. A second demonstration was just completed at the Emerson Resort near the ball fields. The Emerson buffer features a small path. Both buffers were installed by the CSBI program. For more information, visit: [catskillstreams.org/catskill-streams-buffer-initiative](https://www.catskillstreams.org/catskill-streams-buffer-initiative)

Fishing Season is Open

The Esopus Creek fishing season began on April 1. Learn more about one iconic mayfly (fish food!), the Quill Gordon from local angler Ed Ostapczuk in this interview at: <https://bit.ly/2Wy8wLh>

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<https://twitter.com/ashokanstreams>





EVENTS AROUND THE WATERSHED

Stream Explorers Youth Adventure

Our one-day youth education conference held each spring at the Ashokan Center is postponed until 2021. We're working to develop summer activities that families can do together using online resources.

Thurs.-Sat., July 9-11 Ashokan Watershed Weekend

Save the date! Learn about the watershed, its history and future, during three days of online presentations for municipal officials, landowners, and families. We will hold limited outdoor events if possible.

Stream Snorkeling

Sadly, stream snorkeling is not something we can do safely at this time. We'll hold this popular program again in summer 2021 if possible!

Follow us on Facebook
for updates on events

The Last Ten Years were Unusually Dry - What about the Next Ten?

Since the flood of record in 2011, the Ashokan watershed has been in a dry spell. The last time mean daily discharge values were so low, for so long, was the 1960s. Anecdotal evidence suggests the dry-60s and early-1970s invited ill-advised development near streams and in floodplains. With no large flood in the recent memory, people were not worried about the next one. Inevitably, the Esopus reclaimed its floodplain in March 1980 when over ten inches of rain fell on bare and frozen ground ([NWS 2020](#)). With a peak discharge of 65,300 cubic feet per second (cfs), a state of emergency was declared after Route 212 in Lake Hill was washed out and hundreds of people had to be evacuated from Phoenicia and Mt. Tremper. This was the flood of record until Tropical Storm Irene came in 2011.

With no large floods since 2011 to remind us that the floodplain is part of the river, it is important to remain vigilant and be prepared for the next flood. If the last 90 years of data have taught us anything, it's that mean daily discharge doesn't stay low forever, and the next flood might just be the biggest one.

Hurricane season begins on June 1. In recent decades, [the trend](#) has been for larger tropical cyclones in the Atlantic Ocean. Unfortunately, above-average hurricane activity is [forecast](#) for the Atlantic this year. The first step in being prepared is to determine if your building is in the floodplain. You can find out at the FEMA Flood Map Service Center [website](#). If you are new to the watershed, talk with your neighbors to find out what happened during Tropical Storm Irene in 2011 - did the river flood and how high did it reach where you live? Remember T.S. Irene was the flood of record, but was smaller than the 100-year flood in the Ashokan Watershed. The Town Supervisor and Floodplain Administrator are great resources and know what locations are floodprone.

Then [explore your options](#) for reducing the risk of flood damage. Elevating your home above flood levels may reduce your damages and lower your flood insurance premium. If elevation is not feasible, then wet or dry floodproofing can lower your risk of flood damage. You can also prepare by assembling items you'll need during a flood and have a plan for where to go if you are forced to evacuate. For those at great risk, contact your town hall to determine if assisted relocation out of the floodplain is an option.

Right: The U.S. Geological Survey ([USGS](#)) has measured flow in the Esopus Creek since 1931. The red dots in the graph depict the largest floods recorded. Tropical Storm Irene in 2011 is the largest flood ever measured, with a peak discharge of 75,800 cfs. Since then we've experienced a 10-year dry spell. There is an upward trend in the magnitude of large floods observed over the past 90 years. This will likely continue as climate change is predicted to increase the frequency of intense precipitation events.

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Stream Management Program

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