

---

**Stakeholder Council 2020  
Membership**

---

The Ashokan Stakeholder Council is comprised of:

**The Executive Council:**

**2 representatives from each of the active AWSMP working groups.**

Both representatives of a working group should not come from the same organization or agency.

Representatives should be chosen annually by the working group.

No person can represent more than one working group on the Stakeholder Council.

**Staff: (CCE Ulster County, Ulster County SWCD, DEP SMP Contract Manager for Ashokan Watershed)**

**Regular Members:** Membership in the Stakeholder Council is open to any interested and knowledgeable stakeholder.



**ASHOKAN WATERSHED STREAM MANAGEMENT PROGRAM  
STAKEHOLDER COUNCIL MEETING NOTES**

Webinar Meeting

**April 15, 2020 from 1:30pm-4:00pm**

**In Attendance via Webinar:** Allison Lent, Adam Doan, Sierra Smith, Brian Burns, Andrew Emrich, Aaron Bennett, Scott George, Mark Loete, Tim Koch, Dave Burns, Maxanne Resnick, Tiffany Runge, Jim Sofranko, Mary McNamara, Bobby Adams, Leslie Zucker; **Executive Council members present:** Chester Karwatowski, Burt Samuelson, Mike Flaherty, Barry Baldigo,

**Next scheduled meeting:** November 12, 2020

**Introductions and Stakeholders Announcements**

Stakeholder Council members were invited to update on their organizational operations and project status during the COVID-19 pandemic, which began to affect the region in early 2020.

USGS field work will resume in early May on an approval basis.

Trout Unlimited cancelled their 2020 event season, but plans to implement the recently awarded Brook Trout genetics study.

DEC has adjusted its stocking schedule, with some hatchery fish released ahead of schedule, and may release the same amount of

fish as planned but during fewer releases. Work has shifted from volunteers to DEC staff. DEC field work is approved on a case-by-case basis with some work cancelled in April. Hoping to do a normal amount of field work this summer.

This is DEC Region 3 Fisheries Manager Mike Flaherty's last day on the job before retirement. Mike has been a long-time AWSMP Stakeholder Council member and all wished him well in retirement. Mike will continue to serve on the Stakeholder Council in the capacity of Co-Lead for the Stream Ecosystem Working Group (with Barry Baldigo). Mike hopes to spend more time traveling around the country and world to visit family and friends, and to spend more time fishing the Esopus with his wife!

DEP Operations and Water Quality staff are working as normal to operate the water supply. Other staff are working from home and realizing some innovation with digital submissions.

**AWSMP Updates**

The AWSMP office in Shokan is closed. Staff are checking messages regularly and maintaining the office, but otherwise working from home. AWSMP does anticipate completing scheduled field work this summer, but is not currently interacting with the public or meeting with landowners. The Ulster SWCD can conduct site visits if there is no on-site interaction with the landowner. Staff are adapting well and finding innovative ways to deliver programs.

## Buffer Plantings, Stream Restoration, and Stream Assessment

Bobby Taylor, CSBI Coordinator at Ulster SWCD is currently finishing a buffer demonstration planting at the Emerson Resort in Mt. Tremper. The planting is located on an intermittent stream channel south of the resort buildings. The planting will have paths and placards identifying native trees, shrubs, and wildflowers. AWSMP will be able to use the site for educational programs. Slides of the recent CSBI buffer planting at the Emerson are attached to these notes.

Ulster SWCD is preparing two stream restoration projects on Warner Creek to reduce the supply of suspended sediment and turbidity in the watershed. Erosion is occurring at rotational streambank failures at the sites. There is a stable section of stream between the two project sites. During the 2010 floods, the channel avulsed at one of the sites. Ground penetrating radar was used to map subsurface deposits and the information was incorporated into the restoration design. The project is at 60% design completion, with MMI (recently acquired by SLR) completing the design.

An additional site on the Stony Clove Creek was investigated for a stream restoration project to be constructed in 2021. Field investigations are complete and the SWCD is seeking an engineer to develop the design. This project, in addition to the Warner Creek sites, will satisfy DEP's requirement for three more projects to be included in the Stony Clove Creek monitoring study. Stream restoration projects are being studied for effectiveness at improving stream stability and reducing turbidity.

Allison Lent, Stream Assessment Coordinator with Ulster SWCD reviewed assessments completed in 2019 and plans for 2020. Last year, a stream assessment crew of Allison, Tiffany Runge, Amanda Cabanillas, and interns from the Watershed Conservation Corps, completed a Stream Feature Inventory (SFI) assessment of the mainstem Esopus Creek from its upper extent to the confluence with Bushnellsville Creek. The crew also assessed the Hatchery Hollow and Lost Clove tributaries to the Esopus Creek. Slides of the assessed stream sections are attached to these notes. Assessment of Little Peck Hollow, Elk Bushill, and McKenley Hollow tributaries this year will complete the Esopus Creek headwaters SFI.

A total of 13.7 miles were assessed in 2019 (11.3 miles of mainstem and 2.4 miles of secondary channels) over 25 field days; a large assessment for one summer. Bank erosion was observed over about 15,400 feet or 10.7% of the total length assessed. Of the eroding portions, 3,416 feet or 5.7% of length was in contact with fine sediments. The stream does not interact much with roadways in this section, and 9,038 feet of observed revetment was mostly for private property protection. About 74 large wood accumulations were observed. A slide showing the results with a chart of observations by Management Unit is attached to these notes.

The stream assessment crew applied the BANCS model to evaluate Esopus Creek headwater bank erosion. Predicted erosion for the 217 eroding streambanks was weighted toward moderate rates of erosion. The total predicted volume of sediment generated each year from eroding streambanks was calculated. Additional erosion was observed from mass wasting at hillslopes in the upper reaches. The amount of erosion from hillslopes is more difficult to assess. Ulster SWCD will continue to assess bank erosion sites and refine Ashokan Watershed regional bank erosion rate curves for the watershed in 2020.

The Esopus Creek mainstem was last assessed in 2005 (before Tropical Storm Irene). A report for the Esopus Creek headwaters reassessment will be completed this year. Also, the Little Beaver Kill Stream Management Plan will be available in digital format later this spring.

Ulster County DPW looks forward to discussing assessment results for the section along Creekside Drive.

The AWSMP stream assessment crew plans to complete the Esopus Creek SFI re-assessment and conduct stream project monitoring and annual BANCS monitoring in 2020. The Ulster SWCD welcomes assessment intern Elizabeth Axley to the assessment crew this summer.

### Flood Hazard Mitigation, Community Outreach, and Stream Education

CCE Resource Educator Brent Gotsch gave an update on the status of outreach and education projects. Brent held 12 training courses for several local code enforcement officers to prepare them for taking the Certified Floodplain Manager exam. The exam was originally planned for May at the NYS floodplain managers conference, which has been rescheduled for September. A total of six local officials have become Certified Floodplain Managers after attending AWSMP training courses so far.

AWSMP offers a Flood Map and Insurance Basics course to local zoning and planning boards. A new training on flood elevation certificates will be soon be available. Brent is currently preparing a larger training for engineers and code officials on how to review hydraulic and hydrologic models used to determine if work in a floodway results in increased elevations. The training is planned for later this year, either in person or remotely. More information will be announced. A large portion of the watershed's floodplain is located within the floodway, so this is a timely training topic.

For community outreach, the AWSMP held a successful Snowshoe Stream Walk in Pine Hill this February. Brent was a guest on the "From the Forest" radio program at WIOX Radio Roxbury in April. AWSMP is planning the annual Family, Fun & Fish Day (FFFD) event for later this year. The original May event date was postponed. At FFFD participants to learn to fish for the first time. Volunteers are needed to assist learners and make the event successful. This year AWSMP was planning to hold an interpreted kayak trip as part of the event. Event plans are subject to change due to the pandemic.

The Ashokan Watershed Conference is in the planning phase with events to be held over July 9, 10 & 11. Each day will focus on a different audience: Municipal Officials, Youth & Family, and Landowners. AWSMP hopes to have some in-person interaction, and is planning for virtual delivery as needed.

CCE Stream Educator Tim Koch is developing a workshop for landowners who manage culverts and bridges on their property. The workshop will help landowners assess whether their structure is compatible with the stream and what management actions might be needed. Each participant will receive an assessment manual. Many different stream process and management concepts are explained and illustrated in the manual. It was suggested private landowners may be able to provide geo-tagged images of their crossings for monitoring and outreach purposes after the training.

Tim is assisting the towns of Woodstock and Olive with a Natural Resources Inventory, in particular inventory of water resources. Tim is piloting maps that deliver stream management plan results along with other water data layers, for towns to use during decision-making.

The AWSMP will meet with towns to review recommendations in newly released stream management plans and can meet at any time to review recommendations in completed management plans.

### Youth Education

CCE Youth Educator Matt Savatgy reported the Youth Education Program is switching gears while the schools are closed. Staff are working to support remote learning through virtual classes and after-school club meetings. AWSMP staff

are producing short educational videos to deliver education we would normally provide outdoors and in-person. Staff are creating outdoor activities that students can try at home.

The Stream Explorers Youth Adventure was postponed to July and our ability to deliver the youth conference is being continually reassessed. Our youth education staff will support the Olive Summer Recreation Program with educational activities on the Bushkill if possible.

The AWSMP welcomes Irene Foster, part-time Watershed Program Assistant with us through the summer. Irene was originally going to help staff community outreach events and youth education. We now have Irene helping with watershed blogging and video editing. Amanda Cabanillas continues working with the AWSMP to support the Watershed Detectives After-School Club, which is continuing on remotely. Amanda is producing video content and activity sheets on stream science. A few minutes of video Amanda produced for the Watershed Detectives Club on how to assess road-stream crossings was shown at the meeting. Thanks to Amanda and Irene for your creative work!

Paying attention to published evaluations of online learning techniques and their effectiveness should help the program improve virtual learning methods over time.

#### Local Flood Analysis (LFA) and Flood Hazard Mitigation (FHM) Implementation Project Update

Watershed communities have been focused on pandemic response. But some flood hazard mitigation actions are moving forward. The Town of Olive is in discussion with landowners for buyouts and relocations in the Boiceville LFA study area following completion of a *Boiceville Planning & Feasibility Study*. The Boiceville Fire Station Relocation is complicated to implement, but still a priority. A number of completed flood buyout demolitions will occur this summer. Replacement and enlargement of culverts recommended in the Boiceville LFA study area are planned for the summer.

Ulster County DPW plans to replace the Maltby Hollow Bridge in the West Shokan LFA study area. The CWC and AWSMP are matching county funds to complete the project, now tentatively planned for construction in 2020 or 2021. The county has placed a fiscal halt on everything but essential spending at this time.

Ulster County's project to remove the Mt. Pleasant bridge in the Mt. Tremper LFA study area is about to begin. Asbestos abatement will proceed for 1-2 months and the bridge will be removed in early July.

NYSDOT's replacement and enlargement of the Route 28 bridge in Mt. Tremper in the Town of Shandaken is advancing. Trees have been cleared.

In Shandaken, additional flood buyouts along the Esopus Creek are progressing.

A rain event on April 13 caused localized flooding on County Route 47 in the Oliverea reach of Esopus Creek. At least one home flooded. Some occupied short-term rentals in the area that are severe repetitive loss structures were isolated by flooding.

The Town of Shandaken's Community Rating System application is nearly ready for submission. FEMA has requested a meeting with the town in July to review documents, a final step before entry. A completed flood mitigation plan and repetitive loss area analysis (which scored the maximum points), supported by the AWSMP, will greatly improve the town's score.

Stakeholder Mark Loete is co-producing a video documentary about the Esopus Creek along with local production house Willow Mixed Media. They have collected footage of the watershed during the worst days of turbidity and reported the impact AWSMP has made in reducing turbidity is apparent.

### **Stream Management Implementation Program (SMIP) Update:**

The first funding round in 2020 to distribute SMIP funds for implementation of stream management and flood hazard mitigation projects was completed in March.

#### SMIP-Funded Project Updates

An LFA-recommended project to enlarge culverts at the Town of Olive's DeSilva Road and Upper Boiceville Road is advancing. AWSMP provided funding for construction inspection services and will fund construction. Olive Highway Supervisor Brian Burns is overseeing the project.

The AWSMP funded a portion of construction inspection services for Ulster County DPW's Maltby Hollow Bridge replacement. County Engineer Andrew Emrick is the project manager.

Ongoing research projects will be discussed in more depth at the next Stream Ecosystem Working Group meeting in May. USGS is able to continue sediment monitoring at Woodland Creek, but trackdown of tracer rocks in the Stony Clove Creek was interrupted by the pandemic this spring. Field work may resume in May or June.

USGS is about to begin a study of fish assemblage response to stream restoration practices at sites within the watershed.

A small amount of additional funding, \$3,000 was provided to the Town of Shandaken to complete its Entry into Community Rating System project.

The Town of Woodstock is advancing design of an enlargement and replacement of the Mink Hollow Bridge over the Beaver Kill. That project is nearing the 60% design phase.

Ulster County DPW is hoping to advance several culvert replacements on Watson Hollow Road this year.

#### 2020 SMIP Funding Schedule

There will be three Ashokan SMIP funding rounds in 2020. The first round was completed on March 6. The next funding round will be announced on June 10 with a deadline of July 8. A third funding round will open from mid-September through mid-October, with a vote on funding at the November AWSMP Stakeholder Council meeting.

Towns can apply for LFA implementation project funding at any time. The AWSMP will quickly review the application.

#### 2020 Round 1 Application Review

The AWSMP received two funding applications during Round 1:

- *Catskill Heritage Brook Trout Study – Ox Clove*, Trout Unlimited, \$1,500
- *Modeling the Impact of Changes in Streamflow and Water Temperature on Availability of Suitable Trout Habitat in the Upper Esopus Creek*, SUNY New Paltz, \$45,000

Grant Review Committee Co-Lead Burt Samuelson presented the committee's recommendations for funding. The application from Trout Unlimited was recommended for funding. The application from SUNY New Paltz was not recommended for funding at this time. The Council discussed the recommendations.

Burt Samuelson moved to vote on funding recommendations for each project individually. Mark Loete seconded the motion. All Executive Council members present (Mike Flaherty, Burt Samuelson, Mark Loete, Barry Baldigo) voted in favor. The motion passed.

Burt Samuelson moved to fund the Trout Unlimited application as recommended. Barry Baldigo seconded the motion. Mark Loete recused himself from the vote as he is an official for the applicant organization. All present and eligible Executive Council voting members (Mike Flaherty, Burt Samuelson, Barry Baldigo) voted in favor. The motion passed.

Burt Samuelson moved to not fund the SUNY New Paltz application as recommended. Mark Loete seconded the motion. All Executive Council members present (Mike Flaherty, Burt Samuelson, Mark Loete, Barry Baldigo) voted in favor. The motion passed.

**SMIP Fund Update**

The current five-year SMIP fund spans the period 2019-2024. Following the vote to approve \$1,500 for funding during Round 1 above, the fund balance left to award is:

Regular Expense:	\$576,285
Regular Capital:	\$1,468,015
LFA Expense:	\$500,000
LFA Capital:	\$218,083

**AWSMP Action Plan Update:**

AWSMP staff updated recommendations and project plans in a Draft 2020-2022 AWSMP Action Plan that was circulated to the AWSMP Stakeholder Council before the meeting. The identified changes were developed by staff and AWSMP Stakeholder Council working groups at recent meetings. Proposed changes marked in the draft document were reviewed during the meeting.

Discussion focused on whether the AWSMP should fund educational displays on private property. The merits of supporting displays on private access property versus public access sites were debated. The program recently considered developing educational panels that a local hotel would display along a stream trail. Some council members felt this action would be warranted if AWSMP and watershed residents had easy access to the site for educational programming. Others felt this action would not be appropriate on private property, particularly to benefit a for-profit entity that charges the AWSMP and others for use of the site. The council was more comfortable with interpretive signage placed at CSBI buffer demonstration planting sites even if on private property.

Brochures should not be distributed at displays during the pandemic. The DEC develops educational displays at its public access sites following state guidelines.

The AWSMP modified a recommendation in the plan to develop an educational kiosk for placement along the Esopus Creek to remove mention of a specific site.

The Executive Council voted to approve the so modified 2020-2022 AWSMP Action Plan as follows:

Chet Karwatowski moved to approve the 2020-2022 AWSMP Action Plan as finalized at the meeting. Mike Flaherty seconded the motion. The motion carried with all Executive Council members present (Chet Karwatowski, Mike Flaherty, Barry Baldigo, Burt Samuelson, Mark Loete) in favor. None opposed.

The dedication of the AWSMP stakeholders in contributing to Action Plan development and review was acknowledged.

#### **Stakeholder Council Working Group Reports**

No reports were delivered at this meeting.

The meeting was adjourned. The AWSMP Stakeholder Council will meet again on November 12, 2020 from 1:30-4:00 pm.