
Stakeholder Council 2022 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

Hybrid Meeting

November 10, 2022 from 1:30 pm-4:00 pm

In Attendance at office: Burt Samuelson*, Jake Wedemeyer, Tim Koch, Leslie Zucker, Heidi Emrich, Laura Gust, Brian Burns*, Amanda LaValle*, Adam Doan

Via Webinar: Barry Baldigo*, Kathy Nolan, Mike Flaherty*, Andrew Emirch, Nick Hvozda, Mary McNamara, Andrew Emrich, Sierra Smith, Dave Burns

*Executive Council member

Next scheduled meeting: April 2023

Announcements:

Ulster County is holding public workshops for its natural Resources Inventory Planning project. A meeting on November 14 from 7-8:30 pm will review the project scope of work, early deliverables, and exercises around the development of the inventory, and the mapping product that goes with the inventory. There is also a virtual version of the same workshop on November 15 at 11:30 am. Nick H. shared a link with registration information (Here is the website for Ulster County's NRI project: <https://natural-resources-inventory-ulstercounty.hub.arcgis.com/>).

Ulster County is updating the county All-Hazard Multi-Jurisdictional Mitigation Plan. The county wide plan will be updated during 2023 working with the individual municipalities to update the plan, risk assessments, capability assessments, and actions they want to see five years forward.

The Catskill Environmental Research & Monitoring ([CERM](#)) conference was held October 26-28 at the Full Moon Resort. The conference, last convened in 2018, was well-attended. The conference brings together environmental scientists and managers working in the Catskills. AWSMP supports implementation of the conference with funding, planning, administration, and staffing. Staff work to promote priorities in the Ashokan Watershed Research, Assessment, and Monitoring Strategy. The next CERM will be held in 2-3 years.

The NYS Department of Transportation (DOT) just announced that [Bridge NY](#) funding is available. There was also an \$8 million allocation of funds made to the Ulster County Transportation Council. There is a current grant funding opportunity from the [Federal Highway Administration](#) for culvert replacements to improve aquatic organism passage.

CCE/SWCD/DEP Updates:

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County (CCEUC) is searching for a Watershed Educator to work at least part-time on delivering the AWSMP. This position backfills a position vacated by Brent Gotsch in 2022. A hiring process completed in 2022 yielded no accepted offers. The position will be reposted in early 2023. The Ulster County Soil and Watershed Conservation District (Ulster SWCD) is seeking a water resources engineer who holds a professional license and has several years of experience.

The NYC Department of Environmental Protection is anticipating a hiring freeze or reduction and facing a large wave of retirements. However, a project manager position for the Ashokan basin is moving through the hiring process and may be staffed in 2023.

This is the mid-point for the current NYC Filtration Avoidance Determination. Mid-term revisions are anticipated for release early next year and will reflect [National Academy of Sciences review](#) findings. The only major revision for the Stream Management Program is to add five additional miles of Catskill Streams Buffer Initiative (CSBI) plantings across the entire NYC Watershed.

The AWSMP published methods for the Multi-Objective Stream Crossing Assessment Protocol (“MOSCAP”) over the summer. MOSCAP is a new method for assessing culverts that looks into organism passage, flow capacity, as well as structural capacity and geomorphic compatibility. This holistic assessment method was developed and tested over recent years in the Ashokan watershed. A published [MOSCAP Field Data Collection Manual](#) shows the user how to do the actual field assessment and includes a photographic index. The manual provides education on stream process topics related to crossing assessment. The entire set of manuals includes two large manuals and a third that goes into how to use data and prioritize crossings based on their assessment scores. In May 2022, AWSMP offered a training on MOSCAP methods to 16 attendees from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation’s Hudson River Estuary Program, Soil and Water Districts from within the NYC Watershed, NYC DEP staff, and staff from the NYS Department of Transportation (DOT). It was great to make a connection with DOT. This was a three-day training with classroom and field components. In early 2023, we plan to hold another training outside the NYC Watershed in partnership with the Ulster County Dept. of Environment. Officials from within the Ashokan watershed may be able to attend this training.

The Ulster SWCD completed a stream restoration project on the Panther Kill last week (*see attached slides*). A failing over-steepened terrace failure coupled with instream erosion was leading to lateral instability and generating high turbidity during high flow events, and under relatively low flow conditions. The design approach combined streambank bioengineering, instream structures to restore step-pool morphology, followed with native seeding and willow staking. The construction work was completed by Hubble out of Margaretville. The project designer was Stantec and one of their first projects in or basin. A second large restoration project was completed in 2022 above Jansen Road on the Stony Clove Creek in Greene County. A structure on the property at top of a large hillslope failure was threatened by erosion and went through the flood buyout program before the project began. The project is almost done with a few plantings left. The restoration spans about 1,500 linear feet and around 5 acres within the floodplain. Over 1,500 trees and shrubs were installed plus several thousand live stakes and willow fascines. This project was constructed by Kingston Equipment Rental/Baker Brothers. The designer was SLR. Ulster SWCD will be monitoring these projects for the next five years to track any changes.

Ulster SWCD is wrapping up fall plantings through the CSBI program and conducting geomorphic survey work associated with a USGS fisheries project this fall.

CCEUC is working on release of a Streamside Landowner Survey in early 2023. The main objectives are to understand what landowners think about streams, what they understand about stream process, what their perceptions and priorities are, and ultimately what their concerns are. We also want to learn about their preferred methods for receiving information

and what kind of information they need in order to take stream management action. Once we know what information landowners need, we can create educational products that benefit them. We are also assessing demographics to make sure we're overcoming any cultural or language barriers. This is an update of the 2006 'Survey of Esopus Creek Landowners' that helped to shape what the AWSMP came to be. There has been a large change in the use of technology since 2006 (smart phones weren't yet a thing) that is likely to affect results. The current survey will expand beyond the 2006 survey of main-stem landowners to reach landowners in the tributaries. This study is being conducted with experienced academic researchers at Cornell University's Center for Conservation Social Sciences. They are predicting a 40% response rate, which would be high.

New Contract Development:

Both Ulster SWCD and CCEUC are working to renew their five-year funding agreements with NYC DEP supporting implementation of the AWSMP. Leslie Z. and Adam D. gave an overview presentation of the major contract deliverable categories (*see attached slides*). No major changes are anticipated to the program structure or the funded deliverables for the upcoming five year period that begins in 2024 for CCEUC and 2025 for Ulster SWCD. Small adjustments will be made to reflect the increased use of video and social media for education and outreach. The program will also focus on moving more of its data and management results and recommendations to online delivery. During negotiations, attention will be paid to reducing administrative inefficiency that is taking time away from project implementation. Contract negotiations are expected to complete in 2023. The Stakeholder Council will be updated as more information becomes available.

The Stakeholder Council was invited to provide input and feedback on the program's direction. In response, the need for educational video production was emphasized. Even if videos are of a short length and some videos are not top-end production quality. It's more important to provide new information on happenings in the watershed to expand information reach. And to add an element of fun to bring in the average person who doesn't know they should care yet. Also on the education front, reaching tourists about not littering and leaving no trace. Ulster County tourism is working on getting out Leave No Trace information as a resource.

Other comments included that the SMIP program is going very well from a municipal perspective. No major suggestions for changes and municipalities would like to continue with the good work.

A question was asked if the professional engineer being hired could help municipalities with designing stream projects. The answer from Ulster SWCD was that yes, there should be opportunity for the engineer to assist the towns and Ulster County DPW with projects that require engineering input but are not large in size. Ulster SWCD is trying to hire an engineer with both 1- and 2-dimensional hydraulic modeling skills.

Now is the point in contract negotiations for the Stakeholder Council member organizations and municipalities to make their views known about what they would like the stream management program to look like through 2029. Including if the level of funding available meets local needs and capacity.

Stream Management Implementation Program (SMIP) Update:

The current five-year SMIP fund spans the period October 1, 2019 through September 30, 2024. During this period, 15 grant awards were completed and 8 grants are underway (23 grants awarded total). Heading into the final funding round of 2022, the five-year SMIP fund had a balance left to award of:

Regular Expense:	\$260,911
Regular Capital:	\$494,212

LFA Expense: \$500,000
LFA Capital: \$512,714

During the third and final SMIP funding round, the AWSMP received one grant application. The SMIP Grant Review Committee met on November 4 to review the application and develop a funding recommendation.

Burt S. delivered a report on the committee's recommendation for the following application:

Project Name: *McKenley Hollow Stream Project Design & Engineering*
Applicant: Town of Shandaken
Request: \$50,000

The committee found the project met eligibility requirements and program goals and recommended funding with the condition that the Town of Shandaken provide a qualified consultant quote/proposal that is reviewed by AWSMP for reasonableness of cost. The Executive Council should be notified if substantial issues are identified.

A quorum of Executive Council members were present. The Executive Council voted to approve the award as follows:

Amanda LaValle moved to fund as recommended contingent upon AWSMP review of vendor quotes obtained at the town's discretion.

Mike Flaherty seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. No abstentions.

The motion passed with all Executive Council members present in favor. None opposed.

Working Group Reports:

Stream Access & Recreation Working Group

Amanda L. reported on the working group's 2023 priorities. From the county's standpoint, they are observing "sticky" level of visitor-ship in the Catskills, with attendance increasing during the pandemic and not falling substantially. The autumn is seeing summer-like visitation. The struggle is to maintain high visitor use experience and protect resources while supporting the tourism economy. The Ashokan Rail Trail (ART) is seeing high use and is a tremendous draw. The working group will look for opportunities related to improved stream access and recreation at locations of infrastructure projects underway (e.g., the Mt. Tremper bridge replacement) within the stream corridor. These types of opportunities support the tourism economy in the region but are also used by local residents. The county has documented local usership of the ART on weekdays and local area codes identified in geo-fencing studies. Th trail is an example of recreation that can increase local quality of life.

The county was awarded \$4 million from the NYS DOT to develop the next 2.5 mile of the Ulster & Delaware Rail Corridor from Belleayre Beach to Highmount (to the county line). The county is seating a committee now to review design proposals for the project. The project is fully funded and moving forward. The NYS DOT will allow the county to not pave the trail to stay compatible with surroundings. The project will connect to multiple other trails with expansion plans. There will be many stream-related opportunities to consider as this project develops.

A question was asked, how can the stream management program provide input to the county around road-stream crossings design or educational opportunities on the new rail trail? Interpretive signage is an opportunity, but also advising on the technical components of the design. It's best to provide input during the initial design phase because retrofitting can be

expensive if there are problems. The county will take the lead on project design as for the ART and the AWSMP would be happy to participate in design review of the crossings if there's an opportunity.

The Central Catskill Chamber of Commerce is examining user-ship and commerce along the Route 28 corridor, in addition to protection of natural resources related to development.

The working group will consult with the towns on how the AWSMP as a technical advisor and potential funder can best coordinate with town plans to redevelop flood buyout sites for recreation and stream access.

Stream Ecosystem Working Group

Barry B. provided an update on 2022 work and plans for 2023. One focus is on fish work and evaluating the response of the fish community to stream restoration. A thermal component was added to a USGS study at the Elk Bushkill in 2022, in addition to fish sampling at the site. Water was low or non-existent in some study reaches during summer 2022 but results are comparable across sites. The USGS also sampled fish at a future Hollow Tree Brook restoration reach and control site for this location. The SWCD is conducting a Rosgen (methodology) habitat evaluation assessment to pair with the fisheries results.

The ecosystem working group last met in April and have since lost some members to retirement. Don Kent at DEP retired and a replacement has been identified. Bobby Adams at DEC is less available than in the past due to retirements and current understaffing. DEC is hiring replacements for vacant positions.

The group will follow up on discussion that occurred at the CERM conference about sediment and turbidity monitoring, including extension of monitoring at the Panther Kill stream restoration site with SMIP funding, and using temperature data already collected at 30-40 locations in the Ashokan watershed to conduct temperature modeling. The USGS through its NGWOS program has been piloting methods for relating groundwater discharge and surface water temperature in the Rondout-Neversink watershed and many of these methods could be applied in the Ashokan watershed using existing LiDAR and water temperature data collection.

The group will continue focusing on water temperature monitoring, and modeling of spatial temperature across the basin to predict stream temperatures under different climate scenarios. Funding efforts for this focus have not been successful yet, but it might be possible to advance this work with existing data following on presentations by Dan Doctor, USGS, at the CERM conference.

Flood Hazard Mitigation Working Group

The FHM Working Group will be searching for new working group Co-Leads. Heidi E. gave an update on flood mitigation activities. The NYC-Funded Flood Buyout program remains active in the towns of Olive and Shandaken. Olive has five parcels in the process of acquisition. Shandaken has six parcels working through the FBO process.

The Pine Hill Local Flood Analysis (LFA) is nearing completion, with two public hearings and a draft final report before the town flood committee now. Several mitigation strategies are identified for multiple project areas, including floodplain enhancement, channel dimensioning, and road-stream crossing enlargements. Shandaken is eager to apply for LFA funding for one of the priority projects.

The AWSMP Flood Hazard Mitigation Working Group met recently and heard a presentation on how to use stream gages that received positive feedback. The floodplain administrators appreciate any opportunities to receive training. One topic

of interest is changes in requirements resulting from Risk Rating 2.0 for different types of projects. A new generation of town officials are interested in training to become Certified Floodplain Managers.

Highway Managers Working Group

Brian B. reported for the working group. The Town of Olive is wrapping up its Burgher Road LFA project. The final plantings are installed. Woodstock's Mink Hollow bridge enlargement and channel restoration project is similarly planted and complete. Olive is looking to advance and finalize designs for the Red Maple and Bostock Road crossings over Butternut Creek. Olive is also pursuing projects for construction outside the watershed in 2023. Olive has completed multiple major projects over recent years.

Grant Review Committee

The AWSMP will follow the typical schedule of three grant funding rounds in 2023 with the Stakeholder Council meeting in April and November to review grant funding recommendations.

The AWSMP staff greatly appreciate the contributions of stakeholder council members and member organizations and hopes for continued participation in a quality stream program that benefits local communities and water users through the coming years.

The meeting was adjourned.

Agenda

- Announcements
- Streamside Landowner Survey
- AWSMP from 2024-2029
- SMIP Update and Vote
- Working Group Reports
- 2023 Meetings

Panther Kill SRP



Stony Clove Above Jansen Rd SRP



2024-2029 Program Scope



Ashokan Watershed
Stream Management Program

AWSMP Stakeholder Council Meeting
November 2022

Contract Development Schedule

Kickoff October 2022

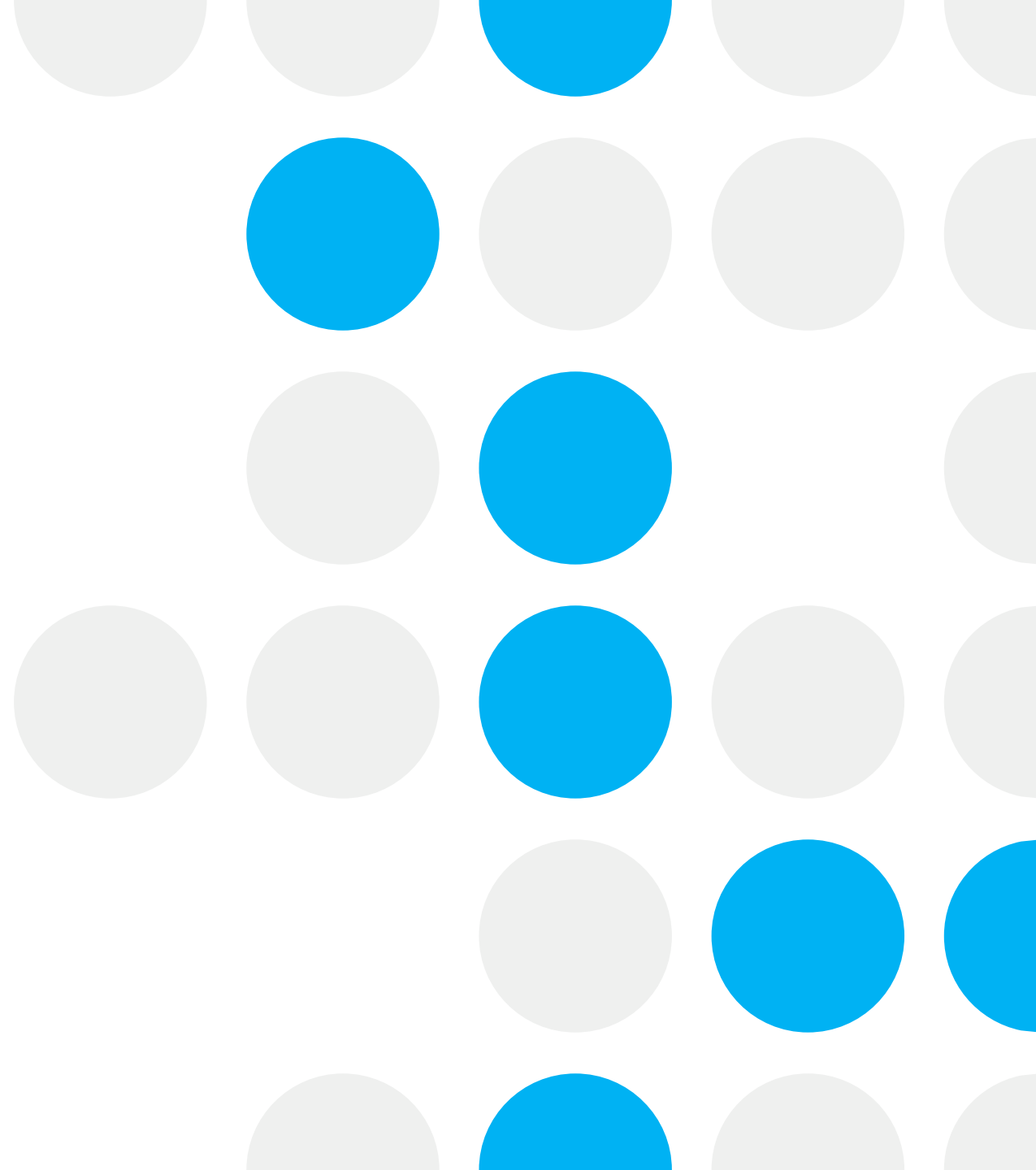
Scope of Services December 2022

Budget Development January 2022

Review and Negotiate Articles

Order to Commence Work by October 2024 - CCE

Order to Commence Work by March 2025 - SWCD



Assessment & Monitoring

- Project Monitoring
 - USGS/UCSWCD fisheries study
 - Stream Feature Inventories and Stream Management Plan development
 - Other needs as they arise via RAMS
-





Catskill Stream Buffer Initiative

- Miles of CSBI determined by FAD
- Project monitoring
- Bioengineering projects
- Plant material center maintenance
 - Willow cutting beds – Woodstock and New Paltz
 - Containerized stock areas

Stream Restoration Projects

- Complete remainder of current FAD deliverable projects identified for Ashokan basin
- Plan for second half of new agreement to address projects related to next FAD



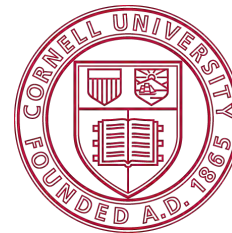
Stakeholder Coordination

AWSMP Stakeholder Council

Working Groups

- Highway Managers
 - Public Access and Stream Recreation
 - Stream Ecosystem
 - Flood Hazard Mitigation
-

Cornell Cooperative Extension of
Ulster County





Program Planning

- AWSMP Action Plan
 - Municipal Acceptance of Stream and Flood Plans
 - Education Program
 - Research Agenda
-

Flood Hazard Mitigation and Flood Response

Flood Hazard Mitigation*

- Coordinate across agencies
- Support Local and County flood mitigation planning
- Identify priority mitigation projects

Flood Response*

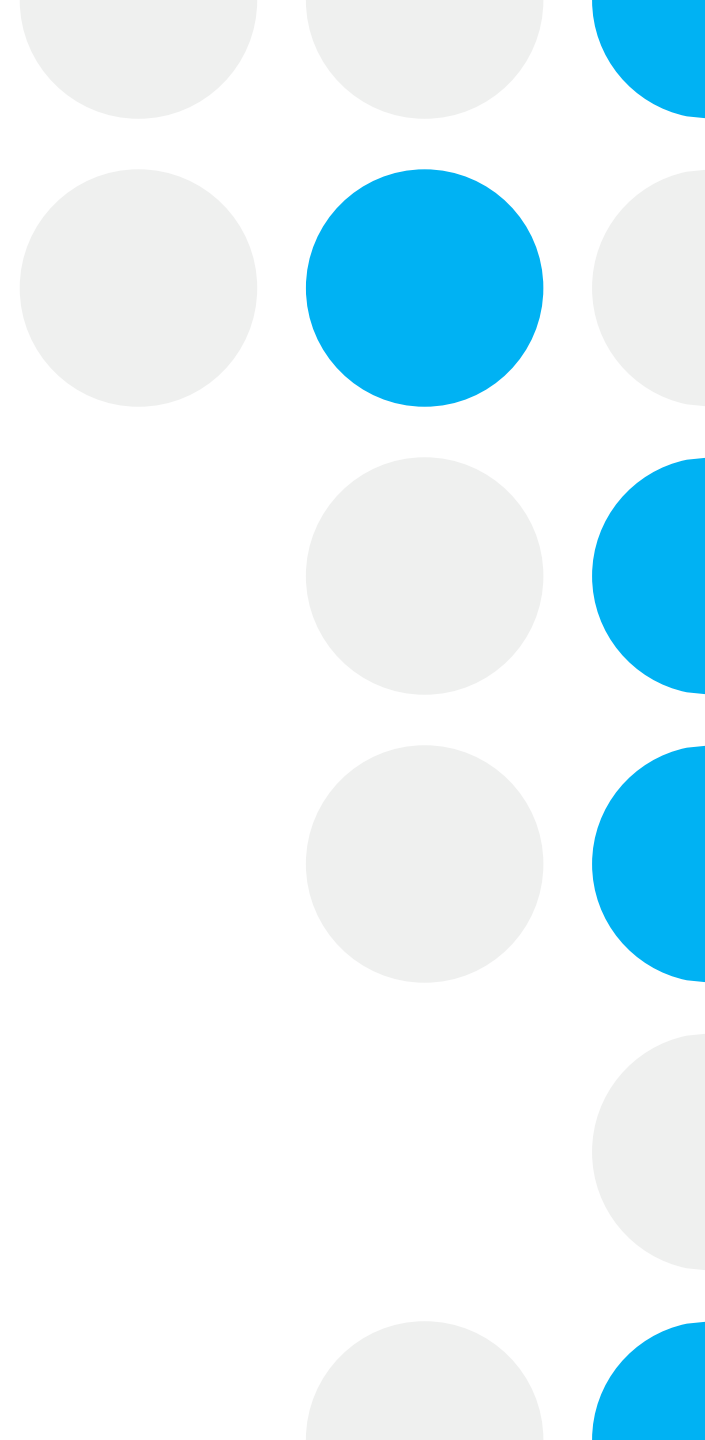
- Inform and assist residents and communities
- Coordinate with Ulster County
- Plan flood response

* Flood Mitigation is supported by Ulster County Department of Environment under agreement with CCEUC

* Technical assistance provided by SWCD

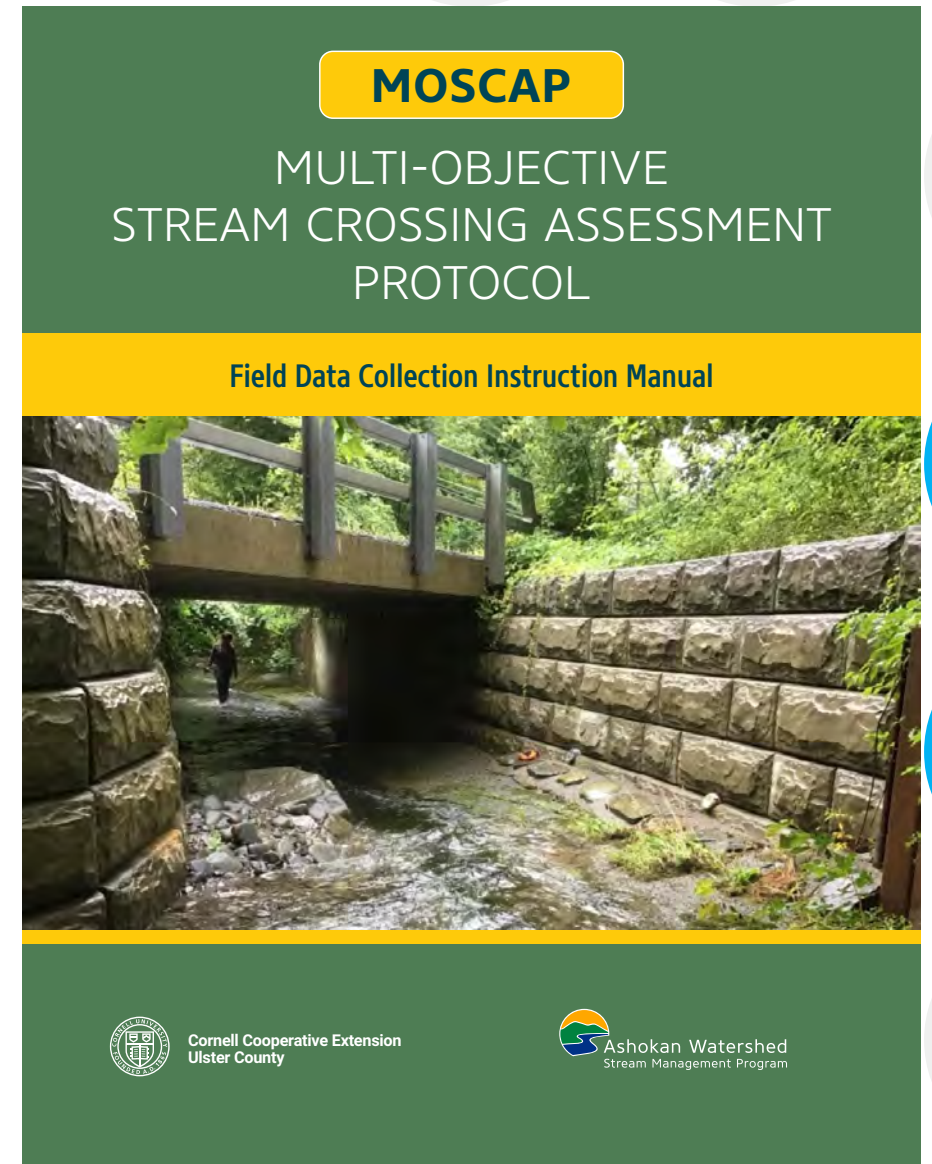
Education and Outreach

- Publications
 - Conferences
 - Trainings
 - Community Programs
 - Youth Program
-



Publications

- Esopus Creek News
- Fact Sheets and Video
- AWSMP Brochure
- Technical Publications and Plans
- Website and Social Media
- Press Releases
- Interactive Online Databases



Conferences and Trainings

Trainings

- Stream Process & Management
- Floodplain Management
- Technical Topics
- Scholarships

Conferences

- Ashokan Watershed Conference
 - Catskill Environmental Research & Monitoring
 - Stream Management Conference
-

Community Programs

- Stream Walks
- Landowner Workshops
- Demonstrations and Talks
- Family Oriented Events





Youth Program

- Stream Explorers Conference
 - Onteora Central School District K-6 Classroom Enrichment
 - Watershed Detectives After-School Program
 - Summer Recreation
-

Office Management

- Health and Safety
- Maintenance and Upkeep
- Property and Vehicle Leases
- Office Supplies and Equipment
- Meeting Access
- Data Server and IT
- Insurance and Procurement



Program Funding



Matching Grants



SMIP Grant Funding

Grant Award Process
Grant Agreements
Project Administration



SMIP Budget 2019-2024

Over 25 projects completed before contract end

Category	5-Yr Budget	Awards Completed	Awards Underway
Expense	\$800,000	7	5
Capital	\$1,680,000	4	2
Local Flood Analysis	\$2,500,000	4	1
Total Available:	\$4,980,000	15	8

Comments

What parts of these scopes are particularly valuable?

Would you like to see a change in the level of effort put into any area of the program?

