

ASHOKAN WATERSHED STREAM MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

AWSMP Program Office, Phoenicia, NY 12464

July 28, 2011 9AM-12PM

Advisory Council 2011

Town of Shandaken

Robert Stanley, Supervisor
Eric Hoffmeister, Highway Superintendent
Gina Reilly, Code Enforcement Officer
John Horn, Planning Board, Chichester Landowner
Vin Bernstein, Town Board, Esopus Creek Landowner

Town of Olive

Berndt Leifeld, Supervisor
Jimmy Fugel, Highway Superintendent
Bruce Duffy, Trout Unlimited Ashokan Pepacton Chapter, Olive Resident
Helen Chase, Olive Resident
Chet Karwatowski, Trout Unlimited Ashokan Pepacton Chapter, Olive Resident

Town of Hurley

Gary Bellows, Supervisor

Town of Woodstock

Jeff Moran, Supervisor
Michael Reynolds, Highway Superintendent

Town of Hunter

Dennis Lucas, Supervisor

Town of Lexington

Gregg Cross, Supervisor
Christine Baltz, Broadstreet Hollow Landowner

Ulster County

Virginia Craft, Planning Department
Aaron Bennett and Amanda LaValle, Department of the Environment
Art Snyder, Emergency Management

New York State

Brian Drumm, Department of Environmental Conservation, Region 3

Watershed Non-Profits

Nate Hendricks, Catskill Watershed Corporation
Peter Manning, Catskill Center for Conservation and Development
Michelle Yost, Greene County Soil and Water Conservation District

Ashokan Watershed Stream Management Program Staff

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County

Lydia Reidy, Executive Director
Elizabeth Higgins, Program Coordinator
Michael Courtney, Watershed Educator
Gretchen Rae, Office Manager

Ulster County Soil and Water Conservation District

Gary Capella, Executive Director
Cory Ritz, Project Manager
Adam Doan, CSBI Coordinator

USDA NRCS

Deron Davis, Project Engineer

NYC Department of Environmental Protection

Beth Reichheld, Stream Management Program Manager
Danny Davis, Contract Manager

In Attendance:

Members: Alan W.; Amanda L.; Arthur S.; Bruce D.; Chester K.; Eric H.; Gina R.; John H.; Kathy N.; Mike F.; Mike R.; Rob S.; Virginia C.;

Staff: Cory R.; Danny D.; Elizabeth R.; Liz H.; Gretchen R.; Brent G.

Minutes taken by: Brent Gotsch, CCE Ulster Count.

Next scheduled meetings: TBD

Advisory Council Regular Meetings 2011 (October).

Meeting Notes

1. Community Announcements

DEC Creel Survey

DEC is in the midst of a survey of recreationalists on Esopus Creek. Fisheries staff will record what activities people are engaging in (i.e. fishing, tubing, etc.). This will help determine future stream access/recreation projects.

USGS Studies

USGS is continuing work related to fish stress and water temperatures.

Shandaken RFQ

Rob Stanley has put together a RFQ (Request for Qualifications) to hire a consultant for hazard mitigation project and emergency management plan for Shandaken. Project should be completed by June 30, 2012. Depending on what the consultant recommends, the Town will seek out new grants for future projects.

Mr. Stanley also requested that the Advisory Council draft a letter of support for the town so that they can get the USGS to allow for real-time call –in data from the stream gage at the Stony Clove. This will help with emergency management operations. This will probably cost USGS some money, however, those costs may be off-set by grant funds from the stream program. They would need money to finance a phone line to get the levels.

DEP

There will be a public meeting at 7:30 at the Town of Ulster Town Hall for the Release Working Group. The Ashokan Reservoir releases water (unless there are draught conditions) into the Lower Esopus. They are considering releasing 10 million gallons a day. This would have ecological benefits.

2. Advisory Council Visioning & Planning Updates

World Café Visioning Session Outcomes and Recommendations

In June a professional facilitator led a World Café-style visioning session for advisory task force to decide what the future for the Advisory Council will be. (Please see handout for specifics). Facilitation suggested that there be “formal” and “informal” members. Votes on grant applications will be recommendations but non-binding because of contract stipulations between DEP, CCE, and UCSWCD. Those three agencies will make the final decision.

It was discussed who would be eligible for funds. It was suggested that only members in “good standing” should be eligible. It was also suggested that a point system be created to determine which projects were most worthy. However, it must be made clear that as long as a Town adopts an SMP they are still eligible for grant funds. The ultimate goal is that more participation in the group should be encouraged, however, mechanisms should be put into place which would ensure that a group or groups do not show up in force to “stack the vote” in favor of their organization and then never show up again once they receive their funding. It was reiterated that every effort would be made to ensure that the recommended parties be given grants, contracts, etc. However, DEP, CCE, and UCSWCD will have final say. The only way they would not contract with the recommended parties is if they did not meet certain requirements (i.e. no insurance, not enough capacity, etc.).

There was some discussion about the quantity of formal vs. informal members. Would there be a tier system to determine who fell into which group? There were concerns about misinformation getting out into the community because of people who only attend one or two meetings. It was suggested that there be a “general membership” but that they would not attend administrative meetings. To be eligible for “general membership” you would have to attend a certain number of meetings and volunteer events.

It was suggested that the recreational railroad and various sporting clubs be included in the group. It was also suggested that for better clarification formal members should be reclassified as “voting members” and informal members be reclassified as “non-voting members.”

It was also recommended that those of the committee who are putting in a grant on behalf of themselves or their organization should recuse themselves from any deliberations about who should be awarded grants.

Operations

It was proposed that an Operations Subcommittee be established. This subcommittee could be the same as the current Advisory Council Task Force. There was some concern that there were already too many subcommittees and too many meetings to attend already. It was also suggested that formal bylaws be created and adopted. These bylaws could be from the outline that came out of the visioning session. It was also strongly suggested that rules and operations bylaws be formally adopted so that everyone knows what to expect from these sessions. It agreed upon that the group should adopt Robert’s Rules of Order (or at least some portion of the Rules) for all future meetings.

3. Grants and Project Updates

(Please refer to handout for specific details on the projects discussed)

Higgins reviewed the recommendations of the Grant Review Committee. The committee reviewed 11 proposals. Overall most projects were recommended for funding however there were three projects that needed more information: (1) The Stony Clove at Phoenicia, do not have 60% designs yet that would allow for an accurate budget (2) USGS grant for 1 additional year of Beaverkill gauge and 3 years for new gauge on Warner Creek – concern about cost and duplication of other efforts and need for long-term strategy and (3) Syracuse University proposal for reassessment of Stony Clove there was concern that the data may not be available.

Stony Clove at Phoenicia

Dewatering of the Stony Clove at Phoenicia will cost a lot. They will have to use 4 foot diameter pipes to dewater the stream (per DEC regulations). It has been estimated that the pipes alone will cost upwards of \$46,000 for the entire length of the project site. Highway department will investigate to see if it will be cheaper to do the project in sections or perhaps even to rent a water pump to pump the water out (instead of using pipes).

USGS Grant

This grant would really be a 3-year grant although their application only displays information for one year. Currently USGS only allows budgeting for one year at a time, however, their project would be over the course of 3 years. Three years of data greatly improves the validity of the results. Their application needs to be refined to be accepted and Danny, Beth and Liz will meet with USGS soon to refine their proposal. It was felt by DEP that having data on Warner Creek, given that it has been identified as a significant source of turbidity, would be important. One additional year of data on the Beaverkill would result in the three years necessary for good data validity.

Syracuse Grant

Although there is support for a study that follows up on assessment work and provides some monitoring, there was concern about the availability of the data and the need to ensure that the project is integrated with other efforts.

Grant Account Information

So far the program has committed about \$1.2 million to projects in the watershed. This leaves about \$800,000 that still needs to be obligated by May 2012.

Grant Review Committee Policies

Rules (such as who gets a vote) will go into effect by the next round of grant funding. It was suggested that grants applications be sent to everyone and not just those who are on the grant review committee so that everyone could see that information. However the applications were available to any Advisory Council member who wished to review them and let the program staff know.

4. Assessment/CSBI Update

CSBI

CSBI plantings this spring have been very successful. A few more plantings are scheduled for this fall. Currently, there is more plant stock in the AWSMP Office storage area than expected. There are plans to use some of this excess stock for non-CSBI projects in Traver Hollow and Chichester.

Assessment

Bobby Taylor and the interns have been assessing Birch Creek this summer. Letters to residents in Bushkill Basin will go out next. Assessment of Bushkill probably will not be finished this year.

It was asked if members of the council could see and participate in the assessment so they can get a better understanding of the science behind the assessment process. Dan Davis (DEP) could interpret what assessment team is doing for advisory council members. He would serve as a docent to help ensure that stream assessment team is not slowed down. It was also suggested that perhaps a special training session for council members be held independently of the stream assessment team. It was also advised that any training not begin until next spring.

Chichester Project site 1 will be going out to bid next week (August 1). It is hoped that work on the project will begin around Labor Day. If this cannot occur, then the project will have to be pushed back, probably until sometime next year.

Traver Hollow/Bradkin Road project (large box culvert) has been underway for the past few months. When completed this next culvert should withstand a 50 year flood event.

Chichester Site 4 hopefully will be completed this year. It is a relatively small project.

Army Corps of Engineers has required many different iterations of engineering designs and information for their permitting process. This has cost a great deal of time and money and may keep some projects from being completed this year. This is an overall symptom of many regulatory agencies. Relationships and communication between regulatory agencies needs to be improved.

5. Subcommittee Reports

Flood Mapping

Liz Higgins will get a status update out to everyone

Recreation

Proposed draft of recreation/stream access recommendations will be sent out by the Committee in August.

Education/Outreach

There was a successful stream clean-up this spring as well as many successful plantings. Creek Week is coming up (September 16-25). Ulster County Fair, Shandaken Day, Olive Day and Woodstock Library Day will have AWSMP booths and displays. There will be two new staff members (Watershed Educator and Outreach & Education Coordinator) will be hired soon.

Research

Planning Committee for the conference met in June to start planning 2012 conference.

Highway Managers

Held field training in July in Woodland Valley to review projects and also discussed USGS streamstats website and how to use it for projects.

6. **Next scheduled meeting: TBD, most likely sometime in October 2011.**