

Schoharie Watershed Advisory Committee meeting
Wednesday February 25, 2009, 4 – 6 p.m., WAP office, Tannersville

Attendance: Steve Walker (Windham), Mike Tancredi (Village of Hunter), Dennis Lucas, Paul Dibbell (Town of Hunter), Mike McCrary (Jewett), Rebecca Wilburn (Gilboa), Peter Nichols (Schoharie County SWCD), Eric Allan (Ashland Highway Superintendent), Lynn Byrne (Lexington), Steve Matheke (President, Columbia-Greene Trout Unlimited), Ron Urban (Chairman, NYS Trout Unlimited), Dan Zielinski (Aquatic Biologist, NYSDEC), Walt Keller (Fisheries Biologist), Eric Dahlberg (Conesville), Kyle Byrne (Lexington resident/student) Carrie Miles and Michelle Yost (GCSWCD Watershed Assistance Program), Dave Burns and Beth Reichheld (NYCDEP)

1. SWAC application roll-out – month of March

- Brochure in municipal halls, libraries, and possibly place in bill from Williams Lumber, Bottini fuel, Bank of Greene County as inserts
- Local radio stations, public service announcement, Windham Journal
- Purpose of feedback boxes? Mainly for referrals, recommending property owner/agency that could apply for funding. Less emphasis here, more on using SWAC and agency members to get the word out.

2. Subcommittee updates by committee members

- ❖ **Education and Outreach meeting** and possible projects – Rebecca Wilburn gave an overview of this group's ideas (see summary). In addition to the handout the following was recommended:
 - Dennis suggested working with planning boards on understanding the program, relevancy to the Stream Management Plans, keep this in the forefront as relates to municipal planning. This could be done formally with each municipal planning board and include SWAC members. Rebecca suggested doing the same with town boards, e.g., Gilboa not as up to speed as other communities.
 - Eric D. emphasized linking up with the Watershed Agricultural Council as it relates to school programming as they conduct education programs. A recommendation is to identify other programs, who's doing what and how, and using the survey to identify gaps that may be addressed by this program
 - The towns of Gilboa and Roxbury will be introduced to the SMP Implementation Program. Michelle will attend a board meeting for each to formally introduce the program and the town representatives' roles.
 - More education around Japanese knotweed (JK) at the site level (property owner) and community scale. Project ideas: 1) mailing to JK free areas (locations that have been mapped), 2) update brochure include latest information on what to do with it, 3) posters throughout community with contact information, 4) offer training for people to become certified applicators (intensive and expensive approach; Kyle Byrne is going through process now), 5) information to specific audiences (e.g., highway departments as relates to ditch management), 6) designate site somewhere on mountaintop for highway crews to bring material with JK in it.
 - New staff through GCSWCD (Education/Outreach coordinator, Streamside Assistance Program Coord.) to do workshops such as a Species Awareness Day

- ❖ **Habitat and Recreation meeting** and possible projects – Walt Keller and Dan Zielinski updated the group (see summary):
 - Water temperature study – ~\$50K for aerial thermal survey of the Schoharie creek using infrared technology to identify and help protect coldwater inputs to the stream during stream projects, culvert placements, development projects, etc. High water temperatures have significantly affected the trout population in the Schoharie. This should be paired with the Esopus Creek flyover (DEP doing?) to reduce costs if possible.
 - Expand tourism opportunities to promote fishing – more derbies, stock fish in ponds (easier access for people with disabilities and will ensure greater return on stocked fish**), plus more advertising. Link to Mountaintop Resource Strategy.
 - Monitoring – **DEC creel survey indicating losing stocked yearlings at an enormous rate (15,000 stocked, found 250 through survey). Theory is more mortality based (high temperatures, poor habitat) than predation (mergansers and anglers). Impact on economy – interest in fishing is decreasing
 - Need to organize and integrate data across agencies (DEC, DEP, USGS, GCSWCD), look for patterns to use in habitat recommendations, select sites for planting.
 - Lynn B. shared a list of projects funded through the US Fish & Wildlife Service National Fish Habitat Action Plan which can generate ideas for similar protection efforts here.
 - Consider an inventory of vertebrate and invertebrate passage problems – one in Spruceton. Collect information on invasive and endangered species.

- ❖ **Highway and Infrastructure** – summary from highway department meetings identified a number of potential projects, a sampling of which includes:
 - hydroseeder use and better road abrasives were discussed, organizing a schedule for hydroseeder use is needed.
 - possibility of hiring engineering firm “on call” to work with highway departments when culvert work is required (need experience using hydrologic engineering models, GCSWCD has two staff knowledgeable). This could be integrated with habitat considerations and impacts from culverts. Consider doing windshield surveys with highway departments, identify priority areas in towns.
 - Driveway permits and road specifications – Village of Hunter buys culverts in bulk, can sell to landowners who typically pay for initial installation and then town takes over responsibility. Reviewing different road specifications (local, county, state) to see where effective ones can be shared is a need in the basin.
 - Each highway superintendent was asked to rate projects in order of importance in order to prioritize funding.

- 3. **2009 schedule** – the next SWAC meeting will be Wednesday March 25, 2009 starting at 4 p.m. at the Tannersville WAP office. A draft action plan with potential projects as discussed above and with the subcommittees will be provided. Group may need to prioritize once a framework is established.