



Schoharie Watershed Advisor Council Meeting

June 22, 2012

Schoharie Watershed Program Office, Tannersville

Attendance: Lynn Byrne & Beverly Dezan (Town of Lexington), Mike McCrary (Town of Jewett), David Kukle (Town of Hunter), Val Riedman (Town of Gilboa), Liz LoGiudice (GCCCE Educator), Judd Weisberg (Fisheries Guide), Jim Hitchcock (Greene Co. Legislator), Stephan Walker (Town of Windham)

Municipalities not present: Ashland, Prattsville, Village of Hunter, Village of Tannersville

Others: Jeff Flack, Michelle Yost, Emily Ramlow (GCSWCD); Dave Burns (DEP); Zachery Thompson (Schoharie Co. Planning); Dennis Lucas (former Town of Hunter member)

1. Welcome new members for 2012 – 2014 term and overview of program

- a. Michelle started the meeting by providing an overview of the Schoharie Watershed Advisory Committee (SWAC) and their role in the Stream Management Implementation Program (SMIP). Michelle also provided new members with a packet of information on the program.
- b. New members were appointed in the Towns of Gilboa and Hunter, Val Riedman and David Kukle, respectively. GCSWCD and DEP extend a sincere thank you to Janet Orlando and Dennis Lucas for representing those communities from 2008-2011.
- c. The SMIP is a grant program that implements recommendations in adopted stream management plans. The program has six categories related to watershed protection and educational opportunities

2. Project summary and implementation status

- a. Jeff reviewed the status of projects funded to date (refer to Project Summary) by grant category:
 - i. Landowner Stream Assistance – applications are rated based on positive benefit/cost ratio and ranked using water quality scoring criteria. Three approved projects are receiving additional Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) funding as a result of Hurricane Irene:
 1. Nikolaidis (East Kill), Rotella (East Kill), and County Route 6 (West Kill), all three are the design phase with construction anticipated in 2012.
 - ii. Education and Outreach – objective is to partner with other organizations and communities on water resource focused educational projects.
 1. The Stream Crossing Workshop is outstanding, GCSWCD will attempt to organize by the spring of 2013
 - iii. Recreation and Habitat – projects that improve fisheries habitat are eligible as well as outdoor recreational opportunities that build on watershed tourism (stream access, trails, parks)
 1. The Prattsville Stream Access is on hold until the town can revisit feasibility given site constraints (DOT ingress/egress concerns)
 2. Windham Path – hopefully will start construction in the Fall of 2012
 3. Lexington Pocket Park – replanted after Irene damage, park materials to be ordered (split rail fencing, plant signage, sign)

- iv. Stormwater – grants involve innovative treatment practices addressing stormwater runoff
 - 1. Mountaintop Library – a good model for retrofitting a small site with low impact development practices (porous pavement, rain garden, underground stormwater conveyance system), allowed the Library board to leverage other funding sources (CWC, ACOEs) to complete the landscaping, stormwater components. Mike M. noted the project serves as a good showcase for what can be done elsewhere
 - 2. Highway Ditch Revegetation program – highway departments call GCSWCD for material to re-vegetate scraped ditches, stream technicians schedule assistance when available. An application was developed for departments that wish to purchase their own material, and if approved, they need to account through receipts and final report.
 - a. Soil and slope considerations factor into what type of material is used
 - b. Mike M. shared a Jewett landowner has planted a nonnative, tropical grass (Vetiver) on his eroding bank with the hope it will stabilize the bank (landowner applied to SMIP last year but was not approved)
- v. Highway and Infrastructure – projects that improve water conveyance, minimize infrastructure damage, and promote improved understanding of hydrology in relation to highway infrastructure
 - 1. Mountaintop Sweeper/Vacuum Truck – grant approved to leverage CWC funds to cover most of the cost. Currently on waiting list until CWC Stormwater Funds are replenished.
- vi. Planning and Assessment
 - 1. Thermal Refuge Study – still waiting for opportunity to do fly over, conditions have to be just right for imagery to be useful. Came close in April, shooting for early August or Fall.
 - 2. Town of Hunter Land Use Review – due to original consultant not having the time to take this on, it was suggested the Town of Hunter use the recommendations from the MBSDW Workshop as a starting point, decide which code recommendations to focus on, and hire the consultant from the MBSDW project to assist in further detailed planning if necessary. It is expected the Town will not need the full \$35,000

3. Budget Status / Summary of 2012 Grant Requests (Round 6)

- a. A copy of the SMIP budget was provided (see budget summary) including funds allocated by grant category in the first five rounds and requests for Round 6 (below)
- b. Two applications were received for Round 6 (open round for Local Match for Hazard Mitigation projects post Irene, see November meeting notes) from the Town of Conesville – 1) FEMA cost share on post flood stream restoration on the Manor Kill, and 2) FEMA cost share toward a Manor Kill acquisition project. The post flood stream restoration project received funding (\$15,000) from the sub-contract with GCSWCD.
 - i. Berger-Manor Kill Acquisition – Conesville applied on behalf of a landowner for acquisition funds and was approved for FEMA [Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program](#) funding (75%) in 2010; a 25% local match is required and Conesville

needs help meeting that. SMIP request is for survey and site restoration assistance (\$9,413) which will go towards the 25% match

1. Dave Burns reported the property is in a bad location, sits at the corner of two streams, has two eroding banks and the house is extremely close to the stream.
 2. Steve Walker questioned whether there would be good fishing access, while the site is being restored that should be considered
 3. Judd Weisberg agreed noting fish habitat improvements should always be a consideration for any stream work, and to take advantage of post flood recovery work in this way
 4. Zach will share the recommendation with the Town, but the parcel is small, approx. 1/3 acre.
 5. Lynn B. questioned if towns could apply to SMIP on behalf of buyout candidates for restoration work. Michelle noted that is already included in the budget for buyout applicants.
 6. **Resolution #1 of 2012** – motion to fund project at \$9,413 made by Steve Walker, seconded by Lynn Byrne, with all present in favor
- c. Cost share for Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) projects
1. Jeff reviewed two small EWP projects (Windham Town Wells and Jewett Mill Hollow) need support to meet the local 25% match. Costs are estimates based on Damage Survey Reports (DSR):
 - a. Windham Wells – involves bank erosion along Batavia Kill effecting one well, 25% cost-share for municipality is \$27,500.
 - b. Mill Hollow (Jewett) – cost share estimated at \$12,500 for armoring the East Kill bank below bridge that washed out
 2. The cost share on larger EWP projects is expected to come from NYS (Empire State Development funds) or other DEP funding the GCSWCD has and include the Lower West Kill in Lexington (area where state bridge washed out) and the County Route 6 slope failure.
 3. Jeff shared County Route 17 washout (East Kill) in Jewett does not have an estimate on EWP funding yet, and will need funds to support the 25% cost share should the County apply for EWP funding. That could lead to an additional proposal to SMIP in the future.
 4. Expenses are subject to change as they are in the design phase. Without knowing how much the costs may change once the projects are bid out, the committee was asked if they want to allow discretion above the estimates for approval, or be informed and decide at that time. The committee opted to be informed via email when GCSWCD knows what funds, if any, may be needed above what is approved at this meeting.
 5. The projects are under pressure to be designed and built within 227 days from March 1st (federal requirement), extensions are granted for environmental reasons, e.g., permit to work in streams expires on Sept. 30.
 6. **Resolution #2 of 2012** – motion to fund the Windham Well cost share request at \$27,500 was made by Judd Weisberg, seconded by Beverly Dezan, with all present in favor.
 7. **Resolution # 3 of 2012** – motion to fund Mill Hollow bank repairs in Jewett cost share at \$12,500 was made by Steve Walker, seconded by Lynn Byrne will all present in favor (Mike M. recused himself)

- d. Culvert projects under Highway/Infrastructure approved for SMIP
 - i. Glen Ave. culvert upgrade – approved in Round 3 for \$74,663, however, design shows upgrade will cost more, depending on which design option is chosen, the original estimate could be double. The Village of Hunter is trying to get FEMA mitigation funds through the Public Assistance program for Hurricane Irene damage, if successful FEMA may cover the difference. If not SMIP funds will be requested.
 - ii. Cranberry Rd. Culvert upgrade – approved in Round 3 for \$69,512, however, initial design shows a larger structure is needed, potentially doubling the cost. Site is challenging with significant slope change from inlet to outlet, may need additional funding.
 - iii. As with the EWP projects above, after final cost estimates are established, the committee decided they would like to be informed through an email noting what the final costs are, how much is requested from SMIP, and the SWAC members will respond by email – yes or no to approve cost changes, or to express if they feel a meeting is warranted.
- e. Discussion on State Rt 42 – Lynn B. inquired about removing the debris below Pushman’s bridge, and whose responsibility it is. This section of the West Kill is part of the EWP streambank repair and is currently being designed, however, whether it will be constructed this year remains to be seen. It will depend on the final design and processing all steps within the September 30th timeframe (permitting, bidding, hiring, landowner agreements). It is a very difficult site to work with given the steep slopes on both sides. Dave Burns noted it is an important project, very visible from the road and feels it needs to get built this year. More information will be known within the month when the design is finished.
 - i. The Town needs to sign the project agreement as sponsor, which will be covered at their July 3 town board meeting

4. SMIP categories, potential to expand flood hazard mitigation supports with next contract cycle

- a. West of Hudson contract agencies are working with state agencies and DEP on expanding supports under the Stream Management Program to focus more on flood hazard mitigation.
- b. After Hurricane Irene there has been a push for additional supports to work proactively with communities to reduce flood risks, such as buying out structures in floodplains
- c. Using the SMIP as an established program, future funding requests may be funneled through each basin’s watershed committee. The process may start with conducting local flood hazard mitigation analyses of flood prone areas to identify mitigation options.

The next five year contract with DEP is anticipated to commence in January 2014, with additional funding allocated to the SMIP.

5. Meeting schedule, upcoming events

- a. The next SWAC meeting will be Wednesday, October 24, 2012 and will be a pizza dinner/working meeting. Location to be determined.