



Schoharie Watershed Advisory Council Meeting March 30, 2011 Windham Town Hall

Attendance: Dennis Lucas (Town of Hunter Alt), Rebecca Wilburn (Chairwoman, Gilboa Alt.), Steve Walker (Town of Windham), Liz LoGiudice (GCCCE Educator), Judd Weisberg (Fisheries Guide), Eric Dahlberg (Conesville), Leigh McGunnigle, Jr. (Tannersville), Jim Lawrence (Ashland), Mike McCrary and Steve Jacobs (Jewett Primary and Alt.), Jim Hitchcock (County Legislator), and Joe Farleigh (Roxbury)
Others: Jeff Flack, Michelle Yost, Robyn Worcester (GCSWCD WAP), Dave Burns (DEP), Zachery Thompson (Schoharie Co. Planning), Joan Kutcher (Mountain Top Arboretum), and Ron Urban (Chairman, NYS Trout Unlimited)

1. Review and adopt October 2010 meeting minutes

- a. Motion to adopt October, 27 2010 SWAC meeting minutes by Jim Lawrence, seconded by Steve Walker with all present in favor

2. Review applications received for Round 4, February 1, 2011 (summary provided)

- a. Landowner Stream Assistance category (motions were made after projects were presented)
 - i. *Nikolaidis Stream Restoration Project, Jewett*
 1. Amount requested: \$150,000 for project costs that involve addressing erosion and stream instability issues by removing a berm, installing a floodplain bench, and re-vegetation
 2. Large amount of exposed clay throughout the ~ 250' reach, significant cause of turbidity determined by the East Kill Stream Management inventory
 3. Should the costs exceed \$150,000 (cap), additional funding sources will be sought, such as the Water Resources Development Act
 4. Project scored high enough to be eligible for funding
 5. **Resolution #1 of 2011** – motion to approve request by Steve Walker, seconded by Joe Farleigh, all present in favor
 - ii. *Kozak Streambank Stabilization & Riparian Planting, Jewett*
 1. Amount requested: \$150,000 for project costs that involve addressing erosion and stream instability issues by grading the bank, stabilizing the toe with rock, and planting a 50 foot wide riparian buffer
 2. Project site is located approx. 3 miles below the Deming Road bridge on the Schoharie Creek, near the cemetery
 3. Project scored high enough to be eligible for funding
 4. **Resolution #2 of 2011** – motion to approve request by Judd Weisberg, seconded by Dennis Lucas with all present in favor
- b. Education & Outreach Category (motions made after project presentations)
 - i. *Mountain Top Arboretum Outdoor Classroom, Town of Hunter*
 1. Amount requested: \$41,800 to construct an outdoor classroom composed of two seating areas: a large, upper area (seating ~30 people), and a smaller, lower area (seating ~15 people) at the Mountain Top Arboretum (MTA) on Route 23C

- a. Design plans for the MTA Outdoor Classroom were funded through a Round 2 SMIP E/O grant
2. Joan Kutcher explained that the seating would be very natural in appearance, constructed from large boulders, many of which are already located within the ‘natural amphitheater’ classroom area
3. Jeff Flack noted that the review staff thinks this is a great project, but the funding amount requested would take a big chunk out of the E/O category
 - a. Would like to cap project funding at \$25,000
 - b. Receive bids for constructing the two classroom components separately; decide from there whether to construct only the upper classroom or include the lower as well
4. Joan K stated that the MTA board of directors is very interested in completing the project and if needed will be able to generate additional funding over the \$25,000 SMIP funding
5. Joe Farleigh inquired about the MTA in-kind contribution of \$21,160 which Joan responded includes site supervision by a landscape architect during construction and \$10,000 in native plantings
6. The outdoor classroom, located at the headwaters of the Sawkill Creek, is a rich ecological environment that would be available for other agencies, school & community groups to utilize for natural resource programming
7. Motion to cap MTA Outdoor Classroom funding at \$25,000 by Mike McCrary, seconded by Joe Farleigh with all present in favor
8. **Resolution #3 of 2011** – motion to approve MTA Outdoor Classroom funding at an amount of \$25,000 made by Mike McCrary, seconded by Joe Farleigh with all present in favor
- ii. *Schoharie Watershed Month Environmental Film Series & Panel Discussion*
 1. Amount requested: \$2,300 to host an environmental film series (3 movie showings) at the Doctorow Center during Schoharie Watershed Month that will include panel discussions, informational tables/displays, and farm goods sampling
 2. Liz L. inquired about the number of films for \$2,300 (two or a series?) and Watershed Agricultural Council’s in-kind contribution of \$2,150 which includes film screening rights, food samples, WAC staff time, and advertising. There will a minimum of 2 films on watershed and/or sustainable agriculture and the grant will cover a portion of the screening rights (split with in-kind), speaker reimbursement, and theater rental which is the majority of the cost. Extended screenings will take place throughout the watershed during the summer months including at the Batavia Kill Stream Celebration
 3. **Resolution #4 of 2011** – motion to approve request by Liz LoGiudice, seconded by Judd Weisberg with all present in favor
- c. Recreation/Habitat Improvements – no applications
- d. Innovative Stormwater & Critical Area Seeding
 - i. *Mountaintop Highway Ditch Re-Vegetation Program*

1. Amount requested: \$12,000 to initiate an organized approach to roadside ditch maintenance that includes funding for, and training on, appropriate techniques and materials to assist local and county highway departments with ditch maintenance based on site conditions, early detection, prioritizing areas, and coordinated use of hydroseeding and power mulcher equipment.
 2. Michelle noted a half day workshop is being planned this summer for municipalities to learn about new techniques applicable to the Mountaintop environment
 3. Dennis Lucas inquired if \$12,000 is enough money for this program
 - a. Jeff F and Michelle Y. responded that this grant will be a start to improve coordination of practices and equipment, the highway subcommittee will likely apply for more funding once the program is established
 4. Mike M. suggested before and after photographs be taken to document the effectiveness of different practices. Michelle noted as the program progresses it can be presented at one of the Watershed Summits.
 5. Liz LoGiudice noted that there is a high school curriculum with Cornell to map roadside ditches that could be coordinated with this project.
 6. **Resolution #5 of 2011** – Motion to approve request by Jim Lawrence, seconded by Eric Dahlberg with all present in favor
- e. Highway & Infrastructure (motions made after project presentations)
- i. *County Route 6 Slope Failure, Lexington*
 1. Amount requested: \$75,000 (cap) towards stabilizing the 260 foot long slope failure with exposed clay deposits along CR 6 and the West Kill in Lexington
 - a. GCSWCD will review the design plan for consistency with stream functions
 2. The failure poses an imminent threat to the stability of the sole egress from the upper valley
 3. Project scored high enough to be eligible for funding (scored highest out of all projects this round)
 4. Greene County Highway hired an engineer and will complete soil borings soon which will give a better idea of the overall scope/cost of the project, projected to be a minimum of \$350,000 according to the preliminary budget
 - a. County is currently working on acquiring additional funds
 5. **Resolution #6 of 2011** – Motion to approve request by Dennis Lucas, seconded by Steve Walker with all present in favor
 - ii. *Glen Avenue Culvert Upgrade, Village of Hunter*
 1. Amount requested: \$74, 662.91 to replace an undersized culvert near the entrance of Camp Loyaltown in the Village of Hunter
 2. Current culvert threatens public safety, causes downstream erosion, and limits fish migration and habitat connectivity.
 3. Project scored high enough to be eligible for funding
 4. Dave Burns requested that the grant award be rounded to \$74,663.00

5. Judd Weisberg impressed for any culvert upgrades that fish passage be considered a priority. Jeff noted all permitted culvert projects are required to be embedded 20% to allow fish migration.
6. **Resolution #7 of 2011** – Motion to approve request at \$74,663.00 by Steve Walker, seconded by Dennis Lucas with all present in favor contingent on reallocation discussion below.

3. Budget status, balance for each category and recommended reallocation based on usage (handout provided)

- a. Approval of the two Round 4 H/I projects puts the category at -\$123,931.00
- b. In order to cover this overage GCSWCD and DEP suggested transferring \$100,000 from Innovative Stormwater/Critical Area Seeding and \$100,000 from Recreation/Habitat Improvements to Highway/Infrastructure
 - i. Resulting balance in H/I: \$76,069
 - ii. Resulting balance in SW: \$143,025.50
 - iii. Resulting balance in Rec/Habitat \$70,800
- c. Judd W. shared he would not want to see too much eliminated from the Rec/Habitat Improvement category, anticipating more improvements to Lexington Pocket Park, including programming
- d. Mike M. inquired about the status of Carr Road stream access, if anything needs to be done there. Jeff F. responded access was created, plantings were done but it requires maintenance based on flood impacts. The grade makes handicap access challenging but it is not impossible.
- e. **Resolution #8 of 2011** – After discussion on how the committee feels about the recommended reallocation, a motion to accept fund reallocation was made by Jim Hitchcock, seconded by Jim Lawrence with all present in favor.
- f. *Vista Ridge Floodplain Restoration funding increase*
 - i. The Vista Ridge project was originally approved by SWAC under the Landowner Stream Assistance category in Round 1 for \$76,637 to fund assessment and design, with an unevaluated idea of placing floodplain drains under the road.
 - ii. The assessments and design have now advanced to the point where it has become evident that floodplain drains alone will not be effective. Full-scale channel realignment has become the chosen alternative to maximize stream stability and infrastructure protection (both Colgate Lake Rd and Vista Ridge Rd). To fund the design, technical staff requested that the project funding be increased to the category cap of \$150,000 (increase funding amount by \$73,363)
 - iii. Upon closer examination, the channel realignment will improve the hydrology of the reach, create a natural meander pattern, move the stream away from Colgate Lake Road, reduce flooding risk, and improve wildlife and fish habitat, essentially resulting in greater long-term water quality and infrastructure benefits
 - iv. Judd W. questioned whether the new approach will help fisheries, which it will.
 - v. Jim Lawrence questioned if this was a private road, which it is. Jeff noted the way it was built reduces the stream from accessing the floodplain and

the channel re-alignment will correct that. The project was approved many years ago and likely would not be approved under current codes and review.

- vi. Dennis L. questioned the bridge width conveying flood waters after the project is done, which Jeff responded with the realignment and restoration of wetlands the flows are meant to convey the water directly under the bridge as opposed to making the 90 degree turn in the channel now, preventing adequate passage and effecting the roads. Modeling shows the potential to reduce flood elevations but the primary benefit is improving the efficiency of the bridge opening to pass flows thus reducing erosion of silts and clay soils and flooding in the area.
- vii. This project has the potential to cost upwards of around \$350,000, but this grant would cover only the \$150,000.
- viii. Mike M. noted in the long run it would save the county money as it moves the stream away from Colgate Lake.
- ix. **Resolution #9 of 2011** – motion to increase Vista Ridge project funding by \$73,363 by Mike McCrary, seconded by Joe Farleigh with all present in favor.
- g. *Remaining Category Balances*
 - i. Landowner Stream Assistance: \$200,000
 - ii. Education & Outreach: \$33,783
 - iii. Recreation & Habitat Improvements: \$70,800
 - iv. Stormwater & Critical Area Seeding: \$143,025.50
 - v. Highway & Infrastructure: \$76,069

4. Next steps in action plan updating

- a. A requirement of the Filtration Avoidance Deliverable (FAD) is to submit an updated Action Plan every 2 years for all the WOH basins to EPA, DOH, DEC
- b. Deadline: May 1
- c. Currently have a first draft compiled for the Schoharie basin that includes all GCSWCD & DEP work in this watershed (not just SMIP/SWAC activity)
- d. Michelle Y will send out the 2011 Action Plan to SWAC members for their comments before the deadline.

5. Potential renewal of SMIP funds

- a. Michelle reviewed the SMIP funding is provided through the Shandaken Tunnel SPDES permit which is being renewed this year (expires September 2011). The GCSWCD is recommending continuation of SMIP funds for 2011 – 2016.
- b. The process entails the applicant (NYCDEP) applies for a permit renewal, regulators respond, the application is put out for public review and comment and negotiations begin on terms of the permit.
- c. Michelle also reviewed two other proposals GCSWCD is recommending for inclusion in the permit – funding for a major stream restoration along the Lower West Kill (approx. 5,000 feet) and for a Stormwater Technician who would work closely with local communities, landowners, developers, highway departments and regulating agencies on permits, SWPPP and use of green infrastructure practices. To provide transparency, updates and accomplishments on what projects have been funded and advanced, GCSWCD and DEP created www.catskillstreams.org/grants and www.catskillstreams.org/projectmaps/schoharie (map of completed projects)

- d. Dennis shared it is important to highlight past and current accomplishments in order for the program to continue, and to link these accomplishments to the FAD mid-term review which gets underway this year.

6. Subcommittee Updates

a. Education & Outreach

- i. Liz L stated that in the January 2011 E/O meeting the discussion centered on formulating more focused, targeted E/O applications. Decided to potentially develop a Request For Proposal (RFP) for the August 2011 round to seek proposals to develop a short film on the watershed that could be used in a variety of educational and public applications
- ii. In March 2011 a subset of the E/O committee met to discuss Schoharie Watershed Month (May 2011) activities and promotional methods

b. Highway Superintendents

- i. Michelle Y gave an overview of the 3/2/11 highway superintendents meeting that included updates on approved H/I projects (culvert workshop & retainer fund, vacuum truck, different culvert upgrade projects), ones under review (Ditch Revegetation Program, Glen Ave. Culvert and the County Route 6 applications) and ideas for future workshops.
- ii. Dennis L. inquired about technical assistance for highway departments with sizing culverts which GCSWCD can do contingent on staff availability. One was done recently on Spring Street in Tannersville.

c. Recreation & Habitat

- i. Judd W stated that the Lexington Pocket Park will continue to be developed and is a very exciting project for the town
- ii. Robyn W gave an overview of the February 2011 R/H committee meeting that included discussions on loach infestation in the Manor Kill, retrofitting perched culverts with inexpensive devices (aprons) to assist with fish passage, and creating handicapped accessible fishing access at Dolan's Lake. The latter two were Walt Keller's ideas.

7. Upcoming meeting dates and activities

- a. Schoharie Watershed Month, a month-long celebration of the Schoharie basin and its natural resources will be taking place on the Mountaintop throughout May 2011. The theme of the event is *action*, so there will be many hands-on activities such as workshops (CCE, CWC), stream cleans, plantings, ash tree inventory (CCCD) as well as an environmental film series, art exhibit, Family Day, and more. Complete SWM activity listings can be found at www.gcswcd.com/swp/eo/swm.
- b. **June 29, 2011 SWAC dinner meeting** debriefing on SMIP program, WAP office. GCSWCD & DEP staff and SWAC members will discuss and evaluate the SMIP program. Questions will be sent out in advance in survey format.
- c. Batavia Kill Stream Celebration, August 6, 2011
- d. Round 5 SMIP grant deadline: August 1, 2011

Motion to adjourn meeting made by Judd Weisberg, seconded by Joe Farleigh with all present in favor.