



## Schoharie Watershed Advisory Council Meeting October 27, 2010 Windham Country Club

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Attendance: Janet Orlando (Gilboa), 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), Linda Kline (Tannersville), Jim Lawrence (Ashland), Mike McCrary (Jewett), Lynn Byrne (Lexington), Erik Allan (Highway representative), Kory O'Hara (Prattsville), Jim Hitchcock (County Legislator), Joe Farleigh (Roxbury), Paul Dibbell (Town of Hunter)

Others: Robyn Worcester, Jeff Flack, Michelle Yost (GCSWCD), David Burns and Beth Reichheld (NYCDEP), Mike and Jane Avella (Community of Windham Foundation applicant), Bob Scott (Windham resident), Zachery Thompson (Schoharie Co. Planning)

### 1. Welcome new SWAC members

- a. First meeting since initial members' 2-year term ended
- b. Most members were reappointed with some new members and alternates joining the committee
- c. New members present: Liz LoGiudice, Educator, Greene County Cornell Cooperative Extension; Judd Weisberg, Fisheries Guide
- d. Brief SWAC overview
  - i. Basis of group: Stream Management Implementation Program
  - ii. Watershed-wide committee
  - iii. Want to have local communities participate in identifying quality projects

### 2. Review March 2010 meeting minutes

- a. Motion made by Dennis Lucas to accept meeting minutes, seconded by Kory O'Hara with all present in favor.

### 3. August 2, 2010 application reviews

- a. Landowner Assistance category - No applications
- b. Education & Outreach category
  - i. *Greene County Cornell Cooperative Extension Water Quality at Home workshops*
    1. Amount requested: \$2,850.45 for workshop material & staff costs
    2. Series of workshops to be held on Saturdays during Schoharie Watershed Month (May 2011) within the Schoharie watershed, locations TBD
    3. Rain barrel building, holistic pond management, eco-landscaping workshops
    4. **Resolution # 8 of 2010** – motion to approve request by Steve Walker, seconded by Joe Farleigh, all present in favor. Liz LoGiudice abstained.
  - ii. *Culvert design and stream crossing workshop for local highway departments (submitted under the Education and Outreach Subcommittee)*
    1. Amount requested: \$7,600 for presenter fees, workshop print materials, catering

- Dual application with Highway & Infrastructure category, \$50,000 for engineer retainer, voted on separately (see below)
- 2. Leading culvert design personnel will present at full day workshop
- 3. Education on culvert design was rated high as an unmet need by local highway departments
- 4. Mike McCrary recommended that town council members attend the workshop as well to gain more technical understanding of projects. Suggested a representative be present from each municipality.
- 5. Mileage & meals will be covered for program attendees
- 6. Town highway superintendents will have to attend the workshop in order to receive funds for engineer assistance from the \$50,000 Highway & Infrastructure aspect of this grant
- 7. **Resolution # 9 of 2010** – motion to approve request by Lynn Byrne, seconded by Mike McCrary with all present in favor
- iii. *CD Lane Family Day, Community of Windham Foundation*
  - 1. Amount requested: \$800 for water-focused family activities
    - a. Adaptive Sports Foundation kayak/canoe demonstrations, guided nature walk, water-related art activity for kids, possibly some water quality testing with Schoharie River Center
  - 2. Coordinate efforts with Windham Chamber of Commerce for scavenger hunt and BBQ (grant funds will not be used for food)
  - 3. Involve local experts in activities (nature guide, fishing demonstrations, etc.)
  - 4. Mike M. noted there may be commercial sponsorship opportunities through Windham Chamber of Commerce if enough time is allowed for scavenger hunt planning
  - 5. **Resolution # 10 of 2010** – motion to fund proposal for \$630 (less \$170 food cost) by Joe Farleigh, seconded by Kory O’Hara with all present in favor

*iv. Amount left in category after Round 3 funding approval: \$61,082.55*

c. Recreation & Habitat Improvement category

*i. Lexington Pocket Stream Access Park*

- 1. Amount requested: \$4,200 for park improvements
  - a. Riparian buffer plantings, plant species interpretive signs, walkway material, stream access, educational kiosk
- 2. Lynn Byrne reported this is the first recreational & habitat improvement in the Town of Lexington in a long time and is a shared community goal
- 3. Park was planted Saturday, Oct. 23, 2010 with seedlings from GCSWCD’s Plant Materials Center with the help of local volunteers
- 4. Long term goal is to get kids & local community out to the stream to enjoy it and investigate its aquatic life
- 5. The highway department currently maintains the parcel and will continue to do so in the future
- 6. Since this parcel is completely in the floodplain, anything installed will have to be securely anchored down or a plan to remove items when flood waters threaten to overtop the bank

7. Suggestion to do a park dedication in May 2011 during Schoharie Watershed Month
8. Judd W. said the park has great potential to be a focal point for the community and impart stream and watershed information
9. Lexington will purchase and build benches for the park, and contractors will be approached for donated walkway material.
10. **Resolution # 11 of 2010** – motion to approve funding request made by Judd Weisberg, seconded by Janet Orlando with all present in favor.

*ii. Amount left in category after Round 3 funding approval: \$170,800*

d. Stormwater category

*i. Mitchell Hollow Road Stormwater Sewer on County Route 21*

1. Amount requested: \$75,000 for project costs (design, engineer, contractor, materials, etc.) is based on previous estimate obtained by Greene County Highway Dept.
2. Stormwater problems are partly from miscalculated drainage design from DOT, which they are willing to address
3. Install stormwater sewer to alleviate flooding, include drop inlets, improve conveyance, incorporate water quality treatment (bioswale, wetland, infiltration basin)
4. There are topographic & infrastructure restraints making this project difficult & costly
5. GCSWCD & GC Highway Dept are currently working with Delaware Engineering on full budget including project design. It is expected Greene County Highway will provide in-house engineering services.
6. Project was evaluated by internal technicians and supported noting it will alleviate health & safety issues
7. Funding cap/project in this category is \$75,000, with this project having the potential to cost much more. If project overruns budget, will need to acquire alternate funding.
8. **Resolution # 12 of 2010** – motion to conditionally approve funding request until more information is provided made by Eric Dahlberg, seconded by Jim Lawrence with all present in favor

*ii. Amount left in category after Round 3 funding approval: \$180,025.50*

e. Highway & Infrastructure category

*i. \$50,000 retainer for culvert engineering & design throughout the watershed (submitted on behalf of the Highway subcommittee)*

1. GCSWCD will hire an engineer firm(s) to be on retainer for local highway departments to apply for culvert designs. Towns will submit to GCSWCD a problem culvert for design (must attend culvert workshop) to determine if the culvert is a top concern for water quality or fish passage, and if it so, the community can receive funding for design work. As time allows, GCSWCD staff will do the design work in-house and work with firm(s) to review design plans and sign off.
2. Kory O'Hara stated that there should be a cap on the engineering services for each project: 15% of project cost, which was previously established by the SWAC.

3. Lynn Byrne noted that \$50,000 would not be enough money to resolve many of the culvert issues in the watershed and the initiative could use more money
  - a. Jeff Flack agreed, but said that it is always possible to submit another grant application to receive more funds
4. **Resolution # 13 of 2010** – motion to approve funding request made by Jim Lawrence, seconded by Lynn Byrne with all present in favor
- ii. *Cranberry Road Culvert Upgrade*
  1. Amount requested: \$69,512.40 for project costs (design, engineer, contractor, materials, etc.)
  2. Project involves an undersized culvert on Cranberry Rd. in Town of Hunter (off County Route 23C) causing infrastructure, water conveyance & fish passage constraints
  3. Jeff Flack reported internal staff reviewed, identified in conjunction with highway superintendent and feel this is a good project. The drainage calculation still needs to be defined which will put a more exact cost on the project.
  4. **Resolution # 14 of 2010** – motion to approve funding request by Steve Walker, seconded by Joe Farleigh with all present in favor
- iii. *Amount left in category after Round 3 funding approval: \$100,731.60*

#### 4. Program evaluation

- a. How do you feel the program is going overall? What suggestions do you have for improving local input?
  - i. Dennis Lucas stated that he feels the program is going very well. The SWAC is touching on a number of watershed issues, and is incorporating a wide range of programs and projects
  - ii. Linda Kline brought up the issue of children's education on watershed topics and whether that is an area SWAC should invest more time and money
    1. Chairwoman Wilburn replied that there are water-quality focused school programs/curricula (example: Gilboa schools)
    2. Joe Farleigh reminded the group the CWC has a watershed education grants program that is far-reaching and used by many local schools
    3. Judd Weisberg stated his experience has shown there never can be enough focus on education and would like to see more
  - iii. Michelle Yost stated that this meeting was the best attended since the initial SWAC meeting and that it is important to keep the momentum going
  - iv. Overall, everyone seems comfortable with the direction the SWAC is going in and the information that goes out before meetings is helpful
- b. Committee input in the SPDES permit review for next year. Are there project categories you feel should be enhanced or expanded that address water quality and community sustainability?
  - i. Current SPDES permit will be up in September 2011. Chairwoman Wilburn noted there is typically a six month window for review before issuance.
    1. Money to fund the SMIP program originally came from the SPDES permit from Sept. 2006 that DEC issued to DEP for the Shandaken Tunnel permit discharge

2. Although there is no guarantee future funding will be forthcoming, the committee hopes and expects there will be more to implement the locally-based initiative
- ii. Michelle Yost noted that the Hunter Corridor Study meeting on Oct. 20, 2010 was well attended by regulator agencies and fostered a productive discussion. One important topic relevant to all is the need for a designated Schoharie basin stormwater specialist to be a resource for the local communities.
- iii. One attendee noted that there is a severe lack of jobs in Greene County (especially on the Mountaintop) and questioned was there anything that this program can do to create jobs.
  1. Michelle Yost replied that there are other economic development grant programs, and the SWAC funds are primarily for water quality improvement projects. However, some of the SMIP projects do generate some economic benefits for the basin in contracting jobs and public events, such as the Batavia Kill Stream Celebration and Schoharie Watershed Week
  2. Dennis Lucas noted that it is important to use the SWAC funds to maintain failing infrastructure in order to feed the Mountaintop's tourist economy.

#### **5. Existing Project Updates (refer to handout)**

- a. Dave Burns stated that there have been no cost overruns to date on existing projects, and GCSWCD and DEP are working with applicants on Scopes of Work and Project Agreements. However, if a project is going to go over budget, it will be brought back to the committee to discuss. One potential for this is the Vista Ridge Road project in Jewett because the design has changed.
- b. Mike McCrary shared concern with infrastructure projects noting that sometimes the scope of these projects change due to natural events, and we need to amend existing projects as needed in response to flood events in particular
- c. Chairwoman Wilburn responded that there are also other disaster clean-up funds if there has been a declared disaster (hazard mitigation funds). However, if the damage is not documented municipalities can lose out on funding, so it is important to document any and all damage from storms
- d. Dennis Lucas stated that the Town of Hunter land use review is in progress, the Scope of Work and Agreement should be completed this winter
- e. Chairwoman Wilburn wanted to know if any projects had come in under budget
  - i. Mauro Property Bank Stabilization (Aug. 2009 round) –came in ~ \$14,000 under budget (assessment much lower than expected)
  - ii. Request to have budget status with funding categories at next meeting
- f. The Planning & Assessment category had \$14,000 in overruns, which initially was taken out of the general category, but in light of the extra funds from Mauro's, the category essentially balances itself
- g. Erik Allan inquired about BG Partridge Road Culvert project – Jeff reported it is delayed because an easement agreement is needed with a landowner who is recently deceased. GCSWCD is trying to get in touch with an heir, but has had no luck. Contractor site showing conducted, waiting to send out scope of work until easement is signed, still hoping for project completion Fall 2010.

- h. Thermal Refuge Study – USGS flyover is scheduled for the first week in December 2010. The flyover is stream flow & weather dependent, so an exact date has not been set. Temperature loggers have been installed in the streams, but need to wait for the water temperature to come down before doing flyover. Will let SWAC know the exact date of the flight as soon as it is decided.

**6. Calendar of upcoming meetings & events**

- a. 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Watershed Summit, January 22, 2011
- b. Next SWAC grant round deadline: February 1, 2011
- c. Next SWAC meeting: March/April 2011 to review round 4 proposals
- d. Action plan update due May 1, 2011

Motion to adjourn meeting made by Kory O’Hara, seconded by Linda Kline with all present in favor.