



# Schoharie Watershed Advisor Council Meeting

## October 24, 2012

### Schoharie Watershed Program Office, Tannersville

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Attendance: Rebecca Wilburn, Chairwoman, and Val Reidman (Gilboa), Liz LoGiudice (Columbia-Greene CCE Educator), Judd Weisberg (Fisheries Guide), Eric Dahlberg (Conesville), Jim Lawrence (Ashland), Mike McCrary (Jewett), Lynn Byrne and Beverly Dezan (Lexington), Erik Allan (Highway, Town of Ashland)  
Others: Erica Allan, Jeff Flack, Michelle Yost, Abbe Martin (GCSWCD), Dave Burns (DEP)

#### 1. Review June 22 2012, meeting minutes

- a. Motion to adopt June 22, 2012 meeting minutes by Judd Weisberg, seconded by Lynn Byrne with all present in favor

#### 2. Stream Management Implementation Program (SMIP) funded projects (slide presentation)

##### a. Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) projects

- i. Jeff F. reported final designs will determine the amount needed for the local cost share for these projects. EWP is a federal program that is funding 8 projects in the Schoharie Watershed as a result of catastrophic flooding damages caused by Irene and Lee; the program funds projects that protect threatened infrastructure from continued stream erosion and pose imminent threats to lives and property.
- ii. At the June 22, 2012 SWAC meeting, it was decided to use the remaining balance for local cost share to be eligible for federal funding (75% - federal, 25% - local).
- iii. Two projects approved at the June meeting (Windham Wells and Mill Hollow, Jewett, Resolutions 2 and 3, respectively) do not need SMIP funding (total allocated \$40,000) and will be put back in the balance (see budget discussion below)
- iv. *Apple Hill, East Kill, E. Jewett (includes three landowners funded under the Landowner Assistance category – Nikolaidis, Kirk, and Rotella Stream Restoration Project)*
  1. Amount allocated from SMIP Landowner Stream Assistance category for all three: \$300,000. The project is addressing erosion and stream instability issues by removing a berm, installing a floodplain bench, and re-vegetating the banks. The \$300,000 SMIP grants, pre-Irene, are going toward the local cost share.
- v. *County Route 6, West Kill*
  1. Previous SMIP grants from Highway and Infrastructure (\$75,000 - resolution #6 of 2011) and Landowner Stream Assistance (\$150,000 resolution #10 of 2011) will be put toward the local match for this project, which is estimated to receive approx. \$779,000 from EWP.
  2. The project will stabilize an approx. 260 foot long slope failure with exposed clay deposits along CR 6 and the West Kill in Lexington. This failure poses an imminent threat to the stability of the sole egress from the upper valley

- vi. *Lower West Kill, State Route 42*
  - 1. EWP funding approximately \$1.7 million, with local cost share estimated at \$575,000. Project will address approx. 1,500 feet of bank instability and erosion on eastern side
  - 2. Judd W. emphasized addressing the widespread clay soils prevalent in this reach, which the restoration is intended to do.
  - 3. Final designs will be completed in the next few months, and once put out to bid, cost estimates will then be known.
- b. *Holden stream restoration, Batavia Kill, Ashland*
  - 1. The Holden stream restoration project was a SMIP approved grant in Round 1 for \$150,000. The project is being constructed at this time and will be completed within the next month. Jeff F. reviewed the components of the project in a power point presentation, the primary goal of which is to restore a stable meander pattern to this highly unstable reach
  - 2. The area that was worked on before Hurricane Irene last year held up well considering the force of the flood flows.
  - 3. Japanese knotweed is a major problem along the Batavia Kill and this reach as well. A controlled herbicide treatment, contracted through a licensed applicator, was used. Due to the extensiveness of the JK in the area, a spray was used to give the native plants a chance to survive.
  - 4. Members questioned under what circumstances herbicide should be used to control Japanese knotweed. Individual injections work well, but they are very labor intensive and are suitable for small plots. Cornell Cooperative Extension of Colombia-Greene Counties should be contacted for more information. Persistence on individual properties is necessary to keep it from growing – mowing, digging out the roots and burning
- c. *Ashland tributary* – Jim Lawrence expressed concern with a tributary to the Batavia Kill in Ashland. An absentee landowner was not aware of work that took place on his property that changed the direction of a stream along N. Settlement Road. GCSW assessed the property before Hurricane Irene and intended to do a redesign of the stream. It is possible repairs could be done providing the landowner agrees. An easement is needed.
- d. *Summary of SMIP projects* - Michelle showed a sample of previously awarded SMIP grants that have been completed (the slide show can be found at [www.gcsxcd.com/swp---](http://www.gcsxcd.com/swp---)). Projects updates included:
  - i. *Habitat and Recreation*
    - 1. *Windham Path* – Jim Lawrence updated the group work has begun on the Windham Path, boardwalk material has been installed, sod and item 4 have begun to be laid. The committee working on the Path hope to have most of the work done by November.
      - a. Judd W. inquired about fish habitat and the possibility of having the Batavia Kill stocked in this location. He noted wild reproduction boxes, which would lay eggs in the stream, could be considered if the habitat is conducive. DEC fisheries biologist, Dan Zalienski, also expressed interest in assessing the location for possible fish stocking potential.

2. *Lexington Pocket Park* – Lynne Byrne reported the pocket park survived Irene, volunteers planted the site in May 2012 under Schoharie Watershed Month. The Master Gardeners donated plants and helped replant the site after the flood.
  - ii. *BG Partridge Road culvert replacement* – Erik Allan reported this culvert held up well during Hurricane Irene. There was no repair work needed at this site, which normally overtops and washes the road.
  - iii. *Mountaintop Arboretum Classroom, Town of Hunter* – project site completed and being used by various groups.
  - iv. *Schoharie Watershed Month activities* – 2012 had many well-attended activities including stream clean up, plantings, amateur photograph art exhibit, riparian buffer walk, and streamside concert to close the month out.
  - v. *Vista Ridge Floodplain Restoration* – funded under two rounds to the maximum of \$150,000, this Landowner Stream Assistance project realigned the East Kill channel to 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.
- e. Members expressed interest in defining beneficial vs. detrimental flood debris, what should be removed following a flood and what is beneficial to leave. Judd W. and Lynn pointed out a pile of woody debris across from the Lexington pocket park that served as cool pockets for trout and a refuge for geese during the summer. More guidance is needed to educate landowners and municipalities on this as well as coordinating with FEMA which funds debris removal for public infrastructure.

### 3. Update on SMIP Budget approved after June 22, 2012 meeting

- a. A budget spreadsheet was handed out (see attachment) incorporating the \$40,000 back in the balance that was not needed for the EWP cost share (see 2 a iii above). The current balance of the SMIP program including the Contingency line item is \$399,512.
- b. The money will be held until cost share estimates are known for the EWP projects.

### 4. Subcommittee Updates

- a. Education & Outreach
  - i. A sub-set of the E/O committee met on September 12, 2012 to plan the 7<sup>th</sup> annual Watershed Summit. The group will meet in the new year to plan Schoharie Watershed Month in May.
- b. Highway Superintendents
  - i. Michelle suggested organizing a training for highway department personnel to review the post flood stream work seminar that was given in March 2012, and to use that time to orient highway staff to the importance to channel sizing tools.
- c. Recreation & Habitat
  - i. This group meets on November 15, 2012 at 10AM to review projects in this category and get an update from USGS on the thermal flyover which was done in August.

5. **Watershed Summit 2013** – Michelle reviewed the agenda for the 7<sup>th</sup> annual watershed summit scheduled for Saturday, January 26, 2013. Format can be found at [www.gcswcd.com/](http://www.gcswcd.com/).

- a. Lynn B. suggested setting up the stream table to show different fluvial concepts in relation to dredging and undersized infrastructure. She also suggested videoing the table in use for longer term programming. Science teachers for instance would be a good audience to use in teaching.
- b. Suggestions for posting the snow date were offered – website, phone calls, radio, email blasts

**6. Watershed Tour**

- a. A presentation and tour of forestry management practices in relation to water quality and flood attenuation was recommended as a follow up from the Summit in January 2013. The tour would be planned with Columbia-Greene CCE, CSBI, and SUNY ESF which has done a lot of research in this area.

**7. Schedule for 2013** – SWAC members should keep these dates open:

- a. Watershed Summit, Saturday, January 26, 2013 (snow date, February 2, 2013)
- b. Schoharie Watershed Month 2013 – activities to be planned throughout the month of May. If any member would like to participate in the planning and/or implementation of an activity, contact Michelle.

**8. Future SMIP funding and emergency management planning and response**

- a. A focus for the next round of SMIP funding will be flood risk identification and mitigation. Local Flood Hazard Mitigation Analyses will be conducted in areas of concentrated growth (villages, hamlets) to help communities understand and minimize flood risk.
- b. Chairwoman Rebecca Wilburn works for SEMO and is a good resource for this group. She reiterated studies like flood hazard mitigation analyses can be used to leverage other sources of federal and state funds. In the competitive world of hazard mitigation, such reports can give a community a leg up.
- c. A training workshop for the SWAC will be organized in 2013 with Rebecca presenting.