

**Schoharie Watershed Advisory Committee (SWAC)**  
**Meeting Minutes, October 29, 2008**  
*Next Meeting 1/28/2009-- location Tannersville Project Office*

Attendance: Linda Kline (Tannersville Trustee), Dennis Lucas, Paul Dibbell (Town of Hunter Councilmen), Mike McCrary (Jewett Councilman), Janet Orlando (Gilboa representative), John Valenti (Educator), Rebecca Wilburn (Gilboa representative), Rebecca Platel (Schoharie County Planning Department), Jim Lawrence (Ashland Councilman), Steve Matheke (President, Columbia-Greene Trout Unlimited), Ron Urban (Chairman, NYS Trout Unlimited), Dan Zielinski (Aquatic Biologist, NYSDEC)

Facilitators: Michelle Yost (GCSWCD Watershed Assistance Program), Jeff Flack (GCSWCD Director), Abbe Martin (GCSWCD Project Coordinator), Dave Burns (NYCDEP)

*[Note – a large snow storm the day before prevented some participants from attending.]*

Application and program materials

Review of draft program materials including an application, application guidelines, flow chart and a brochure announcing the Stream Management Implementation Program; discussion followed with the following highlights:

1. How to evaluate and rate projects – question # 3 on application needs more direction as the question was raised whether anyone would not give themselves a “10.” Giving examples of projects based on funding categories and relationships to the Stream Stewardship Principles along with sample rating scores would help in establishing a reasonable framework for evaluating proposals. It would also help applicants think about how their proposal fits in the project categories (#4). Applicants not familiar with guiding principles in stream management plans will have a hard time grasping the purpose of the program and will need help. Agency support will be available and assisting applicants will partly be a function of a new Streamside Assistance Program coordinator who will be hired in the next one to two months.
2. suggestions for rating criteria to add to the form include:
  - o project would receive increased score if compatible with another project on an adjoining property (conversely the proposal could rank lower if potential for conflict exists with other efforts on neighboring properties)
  - o proposal would benefit fish population and habitat
  - o proposal encourages inter-municipal cooperation and partnerships with other organizations
  - o cost-effectiveness and ability of proposal to leverage additional funds
3. It was suggested that applicants could list what stream stewardship principle(s) their project fulfills (listed in guidelines) which would reinforce the relationship of the principles to program implementation. Include in project summary under number 10.
4. When and how to publicize the program – before material is distributed throughout the basin, the funding contract needs to be in place (sometime in early January). Brochures will be available through municipal halls, libraries, area organizations, [www.catskillsstreams.org](http://www.catskillsstreams.org) website, even the WAP webpage too. Having a box at municipal halls for individuals to propose projects on public utilization and protection of streams/public education was suggested. Doing a mass mailing to property owners along the streams was also suggested, but this may result in more proposals than can be handled, so will not be done right away.

5. Submission deadlines – discussion centered on having deadline dates of 2/1 and 8/1 annually to allow time to incorporate into the basin work plan. Applications could be submitted anytime but applicants will need to know there will be an approx. 3 month review period following the deadlines (e.g., February, March, April for proposals submitted by Feb. 1<sup>st</sup>) to allow for staff, SWAC & subcommittee (as relevant) review and time to address questions or concerns. The SWAC will establish a meeting to vote on proposals after the review period. The only application cycle for 2009 will be 8/1/09 to allow enough time for program development.

Updates to 2007-2009 Action Plan (handout provided)

The action plan was discussed and it was clarified that all the items in the 2007-2009 action plan are already funded – these tasks will not be funded through SWAC implementation funds. It will be important to incorporate future SWAC projects into action plans to assure projects are completed in a timely manner and do not fall through the cracks.

Subcommittees

We will try to hold meetings of the three subcommittees (education, habitat and recreation and highway supers) before the next SWAC meeting (1/28/09). A list of subcommittee participants was handed out, please contact Michelle if you would like to be added to one of the groups. Tapping into members’ areas of interest and expertise, subcommittees will be expected to brainstorm ideas for possible implementation projects.

General Funding Categories – the following was provided as a framework from which to work and will be used as a guide to get the SWAC started. In addition to the \$2 million for this program, there are other separate commitments by the DEP as part of the 2007-2011 filtration avoidance waiver which will maximize and complement this program’s effectiveness, e.g., new positions (Streamside Assistance Coordinator, Education and Outreach coordinator).

<b>Funding Category</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Funding</b>
Education and Outreach	5	100,000
Highway/Infrastructure	15	300,000
Landowner Stream Assistance	40	800,000
Stormwater Implementation and critical area seeding	15	300,000
Recreation-based opportunities	5	100,000
Habitat Enhancements	5	100,000
Planning and Assessment	5	100,000
General Project (something not anticipated, or doesn't fit in another category)	10	200,000
	100	2,000,000

Topics for Speakers for SWAC

The group felt many educational topics can be provided through public seminars, such as the Schoharie summit (see below). It was suggested, however, that key people be involved to guide the SWAC in how a project should be reviewed, what aspects to look for in relation to stream management principles, etc. For example, for educational proposals, staff from other organizations (Catskill Center, GC Cornell Cooperative Ext., CWC) could be tapped for their expertise. Another possible presentation topic would be what makes a successful watershed program. This would show various components beyond the application process that the SWAC should consider.

Presentation on SWAC at watershed summit

Another water quality summit is being planned for Saturday, 1/24/09 at the elementary school in Hunter and providing an overview of the SWAC and stream management plan implementation program would be very timely, especially with the contract being finalized early that month. Ideally having SWAC members participate in the short-review and announce the opening of the application process would be a nice way to unveil the program. Subcommittee members will be asked if they feel comfortable participating along with staff from the GCSWCD. Doing a condensed presentation on fundable projects, similar to the one Joel DuBois gave at the kick off meeting for SWAC in May, was suggested. The line up for this year's presentations include speakers on invasive species, SWAC, Mountaintop resource strategy and training for code enforcement officers and planning board members on stormwater and floodplain management.

The next meeting for this group will be **Wednesday, January 28, 2009**,  
at the Tannersville WAP office.

SAVE THE DATE!  
WATER QUALITY SUMMIT  
SATURDAY, JANUARY 24, 2009  
9 AM – 2 PM  
HUNTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL