

## Section 7 Plan Implementation

A preliminary Action Plan for this Plan was created in February (Appendix). The Program Team worked with key Rondout leaders and advocates (i.e. a newly formed Watershed Advisory Group – WAG) to prioritize the recommendations in the Plan together. The SCSWCD will then be asking Towns of Denning and Neversink to adopt the Plan by resolution to demonstrate local commitment and leadership to the Plan implementation. In doing so, the SCSWCD and NYCDEP will work with the Town, the County and State agencies to develop an agreement for cooperation that will ensure that decisions made and actions taken that affect the Rondout Creek will be consistent with the spirit and content of the Plan. With adoption of the Plan, local groundwork will be completed for drawing technical and financial resources into the watershed. Working cooperatively to implement the plan recommendations will potentially improve both the human interaction with the stream and the ecological integrity of the Rondout Creek.

Addressing the plan recommendations will require ongoing collaboration between agencies, community organizations and the public at large. The first step in that collaborative effort will involve taking the Plan to the public for review, comment and revision. As noted in Section 6, no priority or time table has been established for the General Recommendations as it is the intention of the Program Team for watershed stakeholders to evaluate these issues. The Team intends to review the Plan with a wider range of watershed stakeholders and to develop a prioritization of these recommendations together.

Outreach has been conducted throughout the two communities on a more personal level since the opening of program Field Office in January. The Program Team will work closely with the WAG, Towns of Denning and Neversink and landowners to hold a series of formal and informal sessions during which stream management can be discussed in greater detail. A useful workshop meeting format was established in April to bring together the small group of key advisors and staff to discuss the Plan in greater detail, including the Highway Superintendents and Town Supervisors. Presentations were also made to the Town Boards and staffs as the second stream study for the Neversink River was introduced.

The Watershed Advisory Group is still evolving as representatives emerge from landowner groups being introduced to the Stream Program. The Action plan states that the organization, will meet at least bi-annually to review progress towards implementing the Plan and to assess new issues and opportunities as they arise. In the absence of a watershed landowner's association, it is expected that the SCSWCD will continue to play an active role in coordinating the WAG and other partners, enhancing opportunities for landowner input into the Plan and its implementation.

The following guidelines are suggestions to the Project Team and Watershed Advisory Group for effective implementation of the Rondout Stream Management Plan:

- Many recommendations in this Plan can benefit all the streams in the Rondout Basin, and may be implemented basin-wide. However, it is important to ensure that the Rondout Creek maintain its identity as a unique stream; and one with unique management issues;

- Consider the relative risks and benefits to each project when prioritizing the recommendations in Sections 4, 5 and 6 of the Plan;
- Carefully identify the obstacles to accomplishing these projects;
- Evaluate Plan recommendations periodically;
- Develop proposals and applications for grants available for stream work and stewardship;
- Update resource and contact information;
- Identify emerging issues that require new recommendations for integration into the Plan over time;
- Remove recommendations that, due to changing conditions, are not practicable, or are no longer relevant;
- Evaluate and incorporate data from ongoing monitoring;
- Conduct additional assessments as necessary to make final decisions on the feasibility of certain recommendations. These assessments may include fisheries habitat as well as geotechnical evaluations in critical areas;

As active members of the WAG, the Sullivan County Soil and Water Conservation District and New York City Department of Environmental Protection will continue to be key partners in the actual implementation of this Plan. These agencies have direct stream management responsibilities, and it will be important that each integrates the findings and recommendations in their day to day activities. It is also important that the Program Team continue to outreach to local, county and state highway departments to develop collaborative projects and programs, and to ensure that when highway departments undertake projects in the valley that they tap the Project Team for specific information to take into consideration, or consult the management unit of relevance in the Plan. Demonstrated local commitment to implementing the measures recommended in the Plan will be the most effective means of ensuring that agency funding and other resources are available to assist with projects or other needs.

Whether during routine technical assistance to landowners, new program initiatives, stream permitting or other tasks, the Program Team can play a key role in the effective implementation of the Plan by:

Proactively providing the other members with up-to-date information regarding funding and other resources available for stream related activities;

Changing regulations, guidance on best management practices (BMPs);

Offering training workshops; and

Providing important contact information to address the needs of the Towns

As members of the WAG change over time, leaving members and staff will be responsible to retaining the "institutional memory" through proper orientation of new members to the committees and to understanding how the plan was developed, including its goals and strategies. As policies change and other issues arise that impact the management of the stream, these changes should be reflected, where necessary, as amendments to the Plan.

This Stream Management Plan will work most ideally if it evolves with the goals and values of the community, the policy makers and those policies that affect stream management. The Plan and the more detailed prioritization of recommendations that will be refined over the next year are meant to serve as the primary guidance documents for future management of the Rondout Creek. In order to ensure that the Plan continues to be useful to the community, it will need ongoing maintenance and updating in the months and years ahead. While a good planning document sets a solid framework for future activities, it also recognizes change, whether physical, institutional or programmatic, and it has a mechanism - the people working the plan - to evolve. As the watershed and its stream networks change, so must the Plan.

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