

**Schoharie Watershed Advisory Committee  
Education & Outreach Subcommittee Meeting  
12/18/08, Tannersville Office**

Attending:, Rebecca Wilburn and Janet Orlando (Gilboa representatives to SWAC), Ben Murdock (Watershed Educator, CCCD), Liz LoGiudice (GC Cornell Cooperative Ext.), Stephanie Orlando, Michelle Yost & Jeff Flack (GCSWCD-WAP), Mark Vian (NYCDEP), Diane Galusha (CWC, via intermittent electronic cane conference call) Notes: Mark V., Michelle

**1. Review of committee functions and activities in relation to Schoharie Watershed Advisory Committee (SWAC) and the Stream Management Implementation Program (SMIP)**

Michelle described the history of the SWAC, its purpose and composition, and how it evolved from the smaller project advisory committees that participated in the development of stream management plans throughout the Schoharie watershed. Three subcommittees, of which this Education & Outreach (E&O) is one, are being organized to provide input into work plan projects the SMIP would fund. The other two are Highway Superintendents (for water conveyance, infrastructure-related projects) and Habitat/Recreation improvements. Task for this group – provide input and direction on E&O activities to be included in annual action plans (with 2 year horizons) that would be funded by the SMIP. Thee '07-'09 Action Plan was highlighted as an example. Proposals could originate with subcommittee members as sponsors as well as be critiqued by the subcommittee for review.

❖ Inter-basin efforts to coordinate educational initiatives across the west of Hudson watershed

Mark described the relationship between the process of developing basin-specific Action Plans, such as the SMIP Action Plan and the Interbasin E&O Strategy developed by the west of Hudson (WOH) partners (five county region). The next Interbasin E&O mtg will be held in later January, date TBD. Some recommendations within the Interbasin E & O Strategy may be coordinated locally, such as ideas this group identifies, and some will entail west of Hudson-wide collaboration.

**2. Existing E&O program activities were reviewed to give the group an idea what is happening:**

- a. Batavia Kill stream celebration
  - b. January Summits
  - c. Watershed tour during summer
  - d. Use of kiosks at project sites as an avenue to inform, educate the public
- Jeff – demonstration projects in current action plan (pg. 5) will include kiosks with material on site specific work (stream systems, riparian buffers, stormwater mngt.), goal – tie them all together, come up with a uniform design and theme that conveys stream management principles and agencies involved.
  - A new Education/Outreach person will be hired by GCSWCD in the spring and will take lead in developing kiosks as well as all E & O activities

**3. Brainstorming ideas, initiatives:**

What could we be doing more of? What aren't we doing yet? Using the E&O recommendations from the stream management plans as a guide to prioritizing activities, the following were discussed for follow-up:

- 1) Conduct watershed survey (6.4.7) to determine E & O needs, with sub-surveys for targeted audiences:
  - o gaps in watershed education programming K-12, survey science, elementary teachers – what would they like to see more of? (combine efforts from other agencies – CWC, DEP and CCCD, know what already exists)
  - o community groups, educators, legislators, business groups, real estate and building associations, second homeowners
  - o Do it quickly in the Spring to support programming decisions (DEP might be able to Support this: should be interbasin)
  - o Hire professional surveyors (through Cornell)
- 2) Web-based Outreach (6.4.3), better use of internet for E&O activities (site exists for watershed – [www.catskillstreams.org](http://www.catskillstreams.org))
  - o conducting surveys/needs assessment (re: # 1 above)
  - o publishing extension info

- documenting E&O activities (summits, public workshops, stream celebrations, school work)
  - use other ways to promote websites: radio PSAs, school newsletters, libraries, links from town and county websites, billboard campaign (direct people to website)
    - the billboard idea was championed by some (if used for beneficial purpose like environmental education) and offended others, who felt that we shouldn't support billboards in the watershed/park. If done on WOH scale, cost could be spread out.
- 3) Identify existing resources
- Integrate existing and proposed programs across counties, e.g., Youth Summit CWC will be organizing (winter/spring '09-'10)
  - Investigate opportunities to integrate E/O activities, e.g., Watershed Environmental Education Alliance (WEEA), <http://www.nycwatershed.org/pdfs/WEEA%202008.pdf>
  - This could fall under Community Networking (recommendation 6.4.2)
- 4) Schoharie Watershed week (recommendation 6.4.8 ). Whereas this has great potential, much work would be involved in planning and execution. Does not necessarily have to be a full week initially but could be gradually worked into one.
- Mid-October, fall event better than spring, tie into fall foliage, tourism
  - Multiple events to be identified
  - Model activity after Hudson River Snapshot day (students, educators share data collected on same day) – could be expanded to include community groups with students, both investigating stream health, compare data – way to get all involved.
  - Tie into other watersheds, how to identify healthy from impaired water bodies
  - Could use watershed summit as avenue to get information out on these activities (if not ready for 1/09 summit, then 1/10) as well as mailings through schools
  - Could integrate with World Water Monitoring Day, global effort, need to have results by Dec 18<sup>th</sup> <http://www.worldwatermonitoringday.org/>
  - Could lead to project at Youth Summit, perhaps a video or powerpoint produced by students documenting various watershed events (funding available through CWC Round 12 grants: [www.cwconline.org](http://www.cwconline.org))
  - Field days, mid-October, have students from previous year lead activities in the following Fall.
  - Careers in watershed protection
- 5) Other ideas that emerged
- Use of criteria in determining project approvals, try to relate Action Plan priorities to recommendations in the Management Plans
  - Work watershed education into curriculum for Heavy Equip Operators at BOCES/Northern Catskills Occupation Center (NCOC), time of year critical to planning (winter when less busy).
  - Youth Summit being organized by CWC, participate in planning, expand opportunities
  - Continue to host Stakeholder Workshops, specifically technical ones for groups like contractors, equipment operators, planning boards → develop year-round schedule of trainings for certain audiences (e.g. winter for contractors) and incorporate needs identified through survey results (#1). Some are funded in the current Action Plan, some not.
  - Identify funding needs for training workshops (some more expensive than others)
  - Leveraging other resources for maximum benefit should be a consideration with recommendations

#### **4. How to organize our sub-basin E&O strategy?**

For the coming year, to support the new E&O educator at GCSWCD, we'll meet every other month, alternating with the Inter-basin E&O working group in the off months. Continue discussion on prioritizing recommendations, and identifying agencies, programs that may already be fulfilling some of these needs.

#### **5. Next SWAC E&O subcommittee meeting:**

Tuesday Jan 27<sup>th</sup>, 3:30 pm in Tannersville, in preparation for the next SWAC mtg. on Jan 28. From this discussion what does the E&O subcommittee want to recommend to the SWAC? If enough can be accomplished before then by email, we will skip the 1/27/09 date and meet Wednesday, Feb 18 at 9 am.