

**Schoharie Basin Highway Department Meeting
March 2, 2011**

Present: Tom Hoyt (Windham), Charlie Sweet (VOH), Wes Thorington (Tannersville), Frank Hermance and Justin Kappel(Lexington), John Farrell (Town of Hunter), Dave Burns (DEP), Gary Harvey (Greene Co. Highway), Jeff Flack (GCSWCD), Dustin Truesdell (GCSWCD) and Michelle Yost (GCSWCD-WAP)

1. Update on approved highway/infrastructure projects through the Stream Management Implementation Program (SMIP)

- Second Vacuum Sweeper – on Catskill Watershed Corporation wait list, optimistic it will be funded, may take a couple of years before funds are available
- Culvert upgrades – applications approved for BG Partridge Rd (Ashland) and Cranberry Rd (Hunter); Glen Ave. (Village of Hunter) upgrade submitted for SWAC review on March 30, 2011. Jeff reviewed focus has been generally on larger culverts (5 – 6 feet) that are undersized and/or have poor alignments which are contributing to stream instability.
- Jeff reviewed the Stream Management Implementation Program and funding categories for new highway staff

2. Road Ditch Grant Proposal submitted on behalf of highway subcommittee & use of existing ditch treatment equipment

- a. A \$12,000 proposal to offset ditch maintenance material for highway depts. will be reviewed at the March SWAC meeting. Funds will be used to purchase material to assist highway departments with stabilizing ditches after selective cleaning.
 - Site visits with GCSWCD staff will determine type of treatment (vegetation, geotechnical material) based on ditch dimensions, slope, size of drainage area, and site conditions (soils, aspect, exposure)
 - As communities use the subsidy program, they would need to document where and what type of treatment was used
 - Vendor(s) may be brought in to conduct a ditch maintenance workshop at the Cairo Emergency Mngt. Building, showcasing different treatment approaches. This will be open to all county highway departments. Michelle will coordinate with Gary Harvey
- b. Separate from the grant, GCSWCD has equipment (hydroseeder and mulcher) highway departments can use with advanced coordination with District staff (Dustin Truesdell).
 - Although ditching is usually “fill in” work, as John F. pointed out, more can be done to improve coordination
 - Tom H. suggested at set times leaving equipment at Greene Co. Highway (Hunter) for the communities along 23A to take advantage of.
- c. A more structured approach to maintaining ditches (grant if approved, organized use of GCSWCD equipment, learning new techniques) should result in less cost in the long run and minimize impacts on receiving streams from runoff.

3. Existing Vacuum Sweeper Truck

- Municipal highway departments should call Greene County Highway to request the Vacuum Truck for yearly maintenance of stormwater structures. . Gary noted it is on a first come, first serve basis.
- Roads get swept first usually March – May. Cleaning stormwater infrastructure comes later, June – September and it is up to municipalities to check and call Greene County Highway to request pump outs. Randy Sutton is the operator and he keeps logs of what was cleaned and when.
- Tom H. noted having water and a place to wash out the truck (stock pile the debris) are two critical needs when using the truck
- Vacuum/Sweeper truck operation works much better if local department provides a staff person and equipment to assist, such as in Windham.
- CWC wants assurance the stormwater structures they approve are being maintained, that is part of the Operations & Maintenance agreement and funding they provide for each practice approved. Gary inquired if the WAP could assist with record keeping and scheduling the truck which it can. Randy S. completes a log book on maintenance and Jeff said that should be enough as long as it is being documented. Gary will send Michelle a sample of the log book and can formalize if necessary.

4. Engineering retainer fund and culvert workshop upcoming for Fall

- A \$50,000 SMIP grant to offset engineering services for culvert replacements that need to be designed and stamped by a licensed engineer, such as Glen Ave. and Cranberry Rd. These projects rely on GCSWCD staff to do the work internally (watershed analysis) and estimate the cost. If cost is beyond estimate, Jeff would like to use retainer fund to cover the difference.
- Dave B. noted original intent was to put an RFP out for design work to replace approx. 10 priority culverts across the watershed, working with one firm to potentially get a better rate. That would not guarantee funds to construct the problem culvert. However, the top priority replacements would have designs ready-to-go for an application to the SMIP, FEMA or other funding source.
- The highway/infrastructure category will be depleted of funds if the current applications are approved, though the SWAC and agency staff can request moving funds from under-utilized categories.
- More funds may be allocated to the SMIP through the Shandaken Tunnel permit renewal process this year. Tom H. emphasized asking for a lot as everything boils down to available funds.
- Last year communities were given a map with a roads layer and asked to rate the top problem spots with culverts. Gary said developing a list could be done easily and each department was asked to provide a list of 3 or 4 of their biggest problem spots.
- John inquired about assistance sizing culverts, ones that will be replaced this year. Highway depts. can send a list of their top 3 or 4 for ones to Michelle or Jeff and they will be put on a list for technical staff in Cairo to run the analysis.
- Dave noted having problem culverts designed also makes them shovel ready for FEMA to fund in the event of blow outs.
- **Culvert workshop** – coupling the projects above, a full day workshop on sizing and installing culverts for sediment transport, aquatic considerations and long term stability using natural channel design principles will be organized for local, county and state

highway departments this the Fall. The workshop will include leading experts in the field and US Fish and Wildlife and Universities will be contacted for potential presenters. As per the SWAC's approval, attendance at the workshop will be mandatory to be eligible for engineering support.

5. Highway depts. input in the *Mountaintop Better Site Design workshops* starting this year

- Michelle informed the committee this project will begin in the next one to months and will entail a review of local codes against model development principles that reduce, avoid, and manage impacts from stormwater runoff by using natural features and low impact development practices (practices closer to the source).
- Highway superintendents will be involved to provide direction on road specifications and suggested amendments that can reduce the amount of impervious cover required under current standards, such as width of roads and cul-de-sac radius standards.

6. Ideas for future workshops based on highway departments needs

- John F. questioned purchasing computer software to allow departments to run sizing analysis on own, citing example of Delaware Co. training.
- Would like more training on preventive maintenance involving stream work following emergencies, including hands-on component, getting contractors and highway personnel to stream demonstration projects to learn what conditions warrant partial dredging after storms (vs. full dredging)
- Certification for contractors on stream channel work, e.g. Briggs received training through Delaware County's emergency response training program. Delaware Co. received a state grant to conduct training and demo projects.
- GCSWCD can use in-house staff resources to conduct basin-wide training and the site demo could be one slated for upcoming field season, e.g. Holden stream restoration. This will be discussed further with staff to come up with a workshop schedule.