

Esopus Creek Stream Management Planning Process
Project Advisory Council
CCE Phoenicia Office
Thursday, November 10, 2005
Meeting Report

Meeting participants

Name	Affiliation/background
Amanda LaValle	Ulster County Community College
Berndt Leifeld	Town of Olive Supervisor
Beth Reichheld	NYCDEP - Stream Management Program Manager
Dan Davis	NYCDEP - Project manager for Esopus Creek stream management planning
Ed Cleveland	Kayaker, Local resident
Glenn Debrovsky	Trout Unlimited Ashokan Pepacton Chapter
Harry Jameson	Town Tinker Tubes, Catskill Mountain Railroad
Jack Isaacs	NYS DEC Region 3 Bureau of Habitat
Jeremy Magliaro	Cornell Cooperative Extension – Ulster County Project coordinator for Esopus Creek stream management planning process
Joe Munster	Shandaken Town Board
Lydia (Lee) Reidy	Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County
Michael Courtney	CCE Community Educator
Michelle Spark	Esopus Creek landowner
Pat Rudge	CCE Volunteer, Oliverea Landowner, former DEC Ranger
Ros “Jiko” McIntosh	Zen Environmental Studies Institute
Virginia Craft	Ulster County Department of Planning

1. **Introductions.** Welcome Michael Courtney, newly hired Community Educator for Cornell Cooperative Extension. Michael will be working 30 hours per week planning and coordinating education activities in the Esopus corridor. Also welcome new landowner representative Jiko McIntosh from the Zen Environmental Studies Institute, and SUNY Ulster (Ulster Co. Community College) representative Amanda LaValle, who coordinates their Student Conservations Corps.

Announcements:

- Virginia Craft (UC Planning) announced that between 22-25 families (flooded out in April) will be receiving new residential trailers under the Governor's office for Small Cities, HUD, Community Development Block Grant program. RUPCO is coordinating program delivery. Ulster County initiated the process. The families are not limited to the Town of Ulster.
 - Dan Davis (DEP Stream Management) announced that the Shandaken Tunnel or "Portal" will be operating at increased capacity due to emergency repair work needed at the Gilboa Dam. He distributed a one-page press release from DEP on the issue. Harry Jameson questioned what Schoharie Reservoir levels can be expected for next summer, should the reservoir be drawn down for repair work? Will there still be capacity for recreational releases weekends? Will there be enough cold-water for sustaining trout habitat? Many agreed that increased communication was needed so that business owners, landowners, and other managers could plan accordingly. Jeremy agreed to write a letter on behalf of the Council to the DEP Tunnel Operations.
 - CCE scheduled a public meeting for Monday, November 14th at 7:00 pm at the Shandaken Town Hall to introduce this planning process to the public. PAC members were encouraged to attend. Pat Rudge suggested that CCE identify and be prepared for questions from the audience, and to bring maps. The Ulster Townsman and Phoenicia Times should be invited.
2. Project Advisory Council – Overview "Where are we now"
- Basic ground rules were reviewed for the Esopus Creek Stream Management Planning process, which included:
 - Only Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County (CCE) can speak to the press on behalf of this process.
 - PAC participants are acting as representatives on behalf of a particular segment of stakeholders (such as: tubers, kayakers, anglers, landowners, water quality managers, fish habitat managers, highway managers, etc...). By next meeting, CCE will provide each PAC stakeholder representative with a binder for compiling information. This binder will help to build continuity should PAC stakeholder representatives change over time.
3. Project Update
- A proposed project timeline was discussed. A draft plan is still scheduled to be completed by December 2006. Berndt Leifeld and others suggested a more user-friendly timeline with clear objectives.
 - The 3rd Quarter 2005 Project Update was distributed. CCE will provide this project update to the PAC on a calendar-year quarterly basis. Please let Jeremy or Michael know additional/other information to include in future quarterly reports.

4. **Lunch Break (good food from Russ’s Country Kitchen)**
5. **Work Group Updates**

- a. Education & Outreach Work Group: Michael discussed his planned approach to education & outreach in this process. Highlights from the Ed Outreach Work Group held 9/15/05 were read aloud. Michael intends to perform an assessment of both the general public and professionals to discuss educational needs & opportunities. A website will also be developed. Suggestions for Michael included: including USGS data from the April 2005 flood and other flood histories on the website; looking at the American Whitewater website for how they educate people on stream terminology (such as what “cfs” stands for); starting a phone tree for flood warning; utilizing planning boards as good sources of information about problem areas; having information telling landowners who they need to contact to do certain kinds of stream(bank) work, and others. Perhaps a stream watch program like neighborhood watch would be of interest to stream landowners?
- b. Watershed Assessment Work Group: Dan discussed the status of the watershed assessment work being performed by Craig Fischenich and him. He referred to a map depicting stream features collected from the stream walk-over that has been in-process since this summer. All but a few stream reaches have been walked to-date. Data collected from the reconnaissance includes: the locations of previous stabilization work, gravel bars, prevalent invasive species, clay deposits, and other stream features and obstructions. The data is logged on a GPS recorder out in the field, which is then downloaded into map form. Analysis of historical aerial photos is also helping to identify areas where the channel has shifted, and other areas of repeated problems. A fluvial erosion hazard map will be produced from the data. Craig Fischenich will then prepare conceptual designs for best management practices to apply to some of the problem areas identified as priorities.
- c. Hazard Mitigation Work Group:
This working group has not met since the summer. Mike Malloy, previous Zoning and FP Officer for the Town of Shandaken, was championing this at the Town level and has since moved to Oregon. Jeremy stated that hazard identification and mitigation is still a priority. He has met with representatives from SEMO personally and by phone a number of times and they are willing to assist the Towns in producing Hazard Mitigation Plans.

Harry Jameson (Town Tinker) and Ed Cleveland (kayaker) questioned the status of “in-stream” hazard mitigation? It has been identified as a priority since the beginning and it appears little has been done to find answers to debris removal & liability issues. Jeremy agreed that more needs to be done, but he has had trouble finding knowledgeable legal experts through his contacts at Cornell University and the Attorney General’s office. Virginia Craft suggested contacting the

Department of State. Having a “plan of action” for responding to the next flood, including responsibility and liability for debris removal, was reinforced as a goal for this Council by next spring. Jeremy will discuss issues further with Harry and Ed.

- d. Cultural Resources Work Group: This work group will document the economic, social, and historical relationships of the community with the Esopus. CCE discussed approaching individual user-groups (kayakers, tubers, anglers, etc...) individually and then identifying enthusiastic stakeholders for multi-use discussions via a Work Group. Pat Rudge and others asked how the Esopus compares with the Delaware River, a heavily fished and paddled stream, and whether we can glean any lessons from there. The two streams behave very different but it would be worth exploring.

CCE was asked to meet with Delaware Engineering about the proposed Riverwalk in Phoenicia. They were inquiring about potential matching fund availability. Jeremy discussed the possibility of funding educational kiosks or a riparian planting demonstration project as a potential contribution through the Esopus Creek Stream Management Planning process.

CCE is currently discussing contracting with a local writer for an informational / educational piece on the April 2005 flood. The PAC agreed that it would be worthwhile.

End.