

Esopus Creek Stream Management Plan Hazard Mitigation Plan Working Group

**Shandaken Town Hall
June 6, 2005**

Attendance

Gary Capella	Ulster County SWCD
Kathy Capella	NRCS/USDA
Ed Cleveland	Whitewater enthusiast
Dan Davis	NYCDEP Stream Management Program
Mark E. Ferrari	NYSEMO Region II Director
Harry Jameson	Town Tinker Tubes; CMRR
Jeremy Magliaro	Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County
Mike Malloy	Town of Shandaken Zoning & Floodplain Officer
Joe Munster	Town of Shandaken – Town Board
Joseph Nalepa	Ulster County Highway
Art Snyder	Ulster County Emergency Management – Director

1. The meeting/workshop began at 10:07 am. Jeremy outlined his role as Project Coordinator for the development of an Esopus Creek Stream Management Plan, and how the Focus Group identified hazard mitigation as a necessary component of that effort. Introductions followed.

2. Flood Response Updates from attending Agencies

Members of agencies present at the table provided updates on flood-response activities. [Editor Note: The exact details of response, cleanup, and restoration efforts were not captured verbatim. Summaries are below.]

- (a) **Joe Nalepa, UC Highway:** Much repair/replacement work has been performed in the watershed to date. Most notable was the extensive repair and repaving done on Rte. 42 in the Town of Shandaken. Debris from the Woodland Valley bridge was being cleared, and Phoenicia bridge debris would be cleared tomorrow. Nine culverts between Mt. Tremper and Phoenicia will be replaced. In the future, he would like the DOT to be allowed to remove more gravel from the Esopus Creek bed, and for DEP to be more accessible.
- (b) **Dan Davis, NYCDEP:** DEP initiated the Stream Management Planning process in the Catskills as part of the Filtration Avoidance Determination (FAD). The Esopus and Schoharie basins suffered extensive erosion from the April 2-4 flooding. The Army Corps of Engineers Waterway Experiment Station is conducting a stream assessment of the Esopus Creek basin to provide data for stream management recommendations. Field data from the stream assessment should help to identify

erosion hazard information for a Hazard Mitigation Plan, should the Town wish to pursue it. He supports for the development of a stand-alone Hazard Mitigation Plan as part of the management plan.

- (c) **Mike Malloy, Town of Shandaken:** His office has been collecting structural and property damage information from residents. Most recently, the multi-agency “Stream Team” visit to the Town has targeted sites during their recent visit: (1) Peck Hollow debris field; (2) Stony Clove underneath 214 bridge (received permission to explore removing gravel and construct headwalls); (3) Fox Hollow bridge; Mike also believes that Parts of Rte 212 & 214 need examination by State DOT.
- (d) **Kathy Capella, USDA/NRCS and Gary Capella, UCSW:** Have performed much work and assistance under Emergency Watershed Protection funding. In the Town of Shandaken, projects include sites on Panther Kill, Fox Hollow, Brown Road, and Woodland Valley.
- (e) **Art Snyder, Ulster County Emergency Management:** The whole county received a disaster declaration. There have been two opportunities for municipalities to engage his office through Flood Response and Hazard Mitigation workshops earlier this month. The County had previously explored producing a county-wide Hazard Mitigation Plan, but the effort proved infeasible and not cost-effective. He is supportive of HMP development on the municipal level.

3. **Mark Ferrari, SEMO Region II:**

Mark discussed how the NYS Emergency Management Office can assist in the development of a Hazard Mitigation Plan.

- 17 Counties have been recently declared as Disaster Areas. There is a total of \$2.5 Million in funding available, 7.5% of which will be earmarked for Hazard Mitigation planning funding.
- The goal of Hazard Mitigation Plans is to have hazard sites pre-identified for mitigation work should funding become available. It also allows the Town to participate in property buy-out programs. Mitigation projects are selected on a competitive basis, however, based on a Cost/Benefit Analysis (CBA) relative to other mitigation projects. Some projects are able to be approved “pre-disaster” based on imminent danger that would not otherwise be approved under a CBA. The Town needs to demonstrate extent and damage of previous disasters as part of the plan to be more competitive.
- FEMA has hired full-time planners for SEMO to assist the Towns with producing Hazard Mitigation Plans. So now is a unique opportunity for the Town to pursue this with much state agency resources and support. There are also Hazard Mitigation Planning grants available. CCE could help the Town put a grant application together. The SEMO Region II Office will be able to provide project planning and assistance as well.

Conclusions:

Joe Munster expressed his support for exploring the development of a Hazard Mitigation Plan for the Town. He will provide a liaison with the Town Board. Mike Malloy also expressed support for the concept. Jeremy will follow-up as recommended by SEMO/FEMA, and will explore the necessary steps to formally initiate the process at the Town level.

4. Debris Maintenance/Removal – Recreational Aspects

Harry Jameson estimates that between 50,000 and 75,000 public water recreation trips are made down the creek each year. Tubing/kayaking is an economic engine for the Town in the summer months. He has historically removed debris along the stretch that his customers recreate on. There have been 2 deaths in the last 3 years outside of the area that he maintains. The creek is a navigable water way. Precedent and liability issues have resulted in organizational inaction on coordinated debris maintenance. Harry and Ed are hopeful that this planning process will result in more coordinated debris maintenance for the mutual benefit of all parties involved.

- Ed began a slide show showing typical debris maintenance scenarios on the creek. Most of the debris is between the Portal and Woodland Valley.
- Harry made the analogy of the river being a navigable waterway equivalent to Route 28, and that if a tree fell on Route 28, some public authority would quickly remove it. The county has been instrumental in providing machines and operators to manage some larger debris projects over the years around bridges and other public infrastructure. Access to the river has been an issue for getting more county assistance.
- Ed and Harry have begun a map to identify public and limited access points, and would like to explore producing a keyed map for search and rescue, debris removal, access points, and other data.
- According to Mark Ferrari, recreation-related hazards are not components of hazard mitigation plans. Economic impacts from loss of recreation-related business are also not applicable.

Conclusions:

It appears that recreation-related debris maintenance will not fall under the formal Hazard Mitigation Plan process, should the Town decide to pursue it. Jeremy will pursue further research into the issue. How the house in Bushnellsville Creek is removed may provide some insight.

[Editor's Note]: The Next Meeting of the Hazard Mitigation Working Group will take place on Tuesday, June 28th at 1pm, Town of Shandaken Town Hall.