

## Stream-Side Land Owner Focus Group Summary

Event Date: Thurs., Feb. 2, 2006, 6:30-8:30pm

Number of Participants: 8 people participated from a reasonably wide distribution along the Esopus.

Process Summary: The group was an open-invitation focus group advertised through the newsletter, flyers and some newspapers. Presented with opening questions, the group brainstormed issues and solutions related to stream-side landowners on post-it notes. They then categorized and prioritized the ideas into groups through a facilitated process. A short survey was also completed by the group.

The categories are listed individually and then with the full list of brainstormed ideas. The top three issues were identified by each person voting for their top two issues (approximate #'s in parenthesis).

### 1) "As a stream-side landowner, what do you see as issues or problems related to the Esopus Creek?"

#### Main Categories:

Physical Losses: (6)

Socio-Economic Impact: (4)

Recreation & Wildlife: (2)

Individual VS. Community Perspectives:

Emergency Management Planning

Waste Water

Flood Hazards

#### **Physical Losses: (6)**

- Where are the trees?
- Erosion (noted 4 times)
- I don't want to lose my tree...
- My Home...
- My Land...
- Loss of large rocks
- Dredge Esopus & Feeder Streams
- Rip-rap and dike around streams
- Rip-rap all clay banks
- Clean-out by intake of Shandaken Tunnel in Gilboa - dredge out diversion dam
- Non-native Invasive Plants
- Saving Trees/vegetation
- Stream bank stabilization
- Is it becoming an angry creek?

#### **Socio-Economic Impact: (4)**

- Loss of community – selling homes...

- Loss of recreation/tourism
- Rights of Property Owners
- Government Restrictions/Interaction w/ Public
- Flood Insurance Information (*needed- new home owners espec*)

### **Recreation & Wildlife: (2)**

- Sound of water & fun will go away
- Injuries to tubers, canoers, kayakers
- Landowner liability for injuries
- We want TROUT not perch & bass – tastes crappie
- Beavers
- How the Trout are affected by the open portal
- My cat's water bowl

### **Individual VS. Community Perspectives:**

- Cooperative View
- Question: How can this community (citizens, landowners, regulators, recreators, animals, etc) come to a cooperative interdependent view of the esopus creek?
- Better Stream Control by Government Agencies
- DEC/DEP gets a bigger EAR (diagram of ear)
- This group, cooperative

### **Emergency Management Planning**

#### **Waste Water**

#### **Flood Hazards**

2) **What do you see as possible solutions or ways to resolve to these issues?**

### **Education/Public Outreach:**

- Local Citizen Stream Stewarding
- Erosion Control Rock Parties
- Look at properties individually
- Look at Properties Individually
- Stream Education
- Communication
- Creative Presentations of information

### **Physical Solutions:**

- Natural plantings/ native species
- Clean Schoharie Reservoir
- Vegetation for bank erosion

- Planting trees
- Rip Rap Clay Banks
- Stream Clean-ups involving community (citizens & agencies)
- Removal of Exotics
- Rip Rap Hamlets
- Dredge
- Cane Toads (*biological solutions?*)

**Other:**

- Lobby Hinchey for “Pork” for Esopus Stream Management

**Conclusions:**

Erosion and bank stabilization are seen as the major issue to be dealt with and also the one that the group sees the greatest need for information on. The group sees the health of the stream and associated wildlife as directly related to the local economy and sense of community – primarily through fishing and whitewater recreation. Better information and/or local organization seems to be needed in regard to flood risk/hazards, emergency management planning, and waste water treatment.

However, proposed solutions reflect a lack of knowledge of stream processes and channel evolution (dredging, rip-rap, etc). Some knowledge of the need to protect riparian habitat and trees for their role is clear.

At the same time, some solutions do show some understanding of the need for adjacent landowners to work together systematically to care for the stream. Many suggestions were made toward neighborhood-type stream stewardship activities. This group also sees the need for collaboration between local landowners, local government, and New York City, and State agencies. It is clear that they generally do not feel listened to by the New York City Department of Environmental Protection nor the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.