

Schoharie Watershed Advisory Committee (SWAC)
Meeting Minutes, May 14, 2008
Next Meeting – June 25, 2008 – 6 to 8 PM – location TBD

Attendance: Erik Allan (Highway Superintendent Rep Ashland)), Nancy Allen (Town of Hunter), Lynn Byrne (Town of Lexington), Eric Dahlberg (Town of Conesville), Joseph Farleigh (Town of Roxbury), Larry Gardner (Greene County Legislator), James Hitchcock (Greene County Legislator), Allan Higgins (Village of Hunter), Linda Klein (Village of Tannersville), Dennis Lucas (Town of Hunter), Mike McCrary (Town of Jewett), Richard Morse (Town of Prattsville), Kory O'Hara (Town of Prattsville), Janet Orlando (Town of Gilboa), John Valenti (Education Rep - Retired educator), Rebecca Wilburn (Town of Gilboa), Steve Walker (Town of Windham), Rebecca Platel (Schoharie County Planning Dept), Emily Morse (Town of Prattsville), Peter Nichols (Schoharie County SWCD), Steven Hoerz (Schoharie County SWCD), Charlie Silver (NYC Watershed Inspector General Scientist), Jim Lawrence (Town of Ashland), Michelle Yost (GCSWCD Watershed Assistance Program), Joel DuBois (GCSWCD Stream Technical Assistance Coordinator), Jeff Flack (GCSWCD Acting Director), Abbe Martin (GCSWCD Project Coordinator), Tom Snow (NYSDEC), Paul Dibbell (Hunter Councilman), Steve Mathheke (Trout Unlimited), Dave Kukle (Town of Hunter), David Burns (NYCDEP), Carrie Miles (GCSWCD)

- Jeff Flack, Acting Director, GCSWCD opened the meeting with general introductions and stating the meeting was designed to introduce participants to the Committee and participants.
- David Burns followed with an abbreviated background of the stream program that led to the current focus on stream management plan implementation and the development of SWAC.
- Abbe Martin, Project Coordinator from the GCSWCD presented examples of the action planning framework which will guide stream management plan implementation. Abbe also reviewed the proposed design for the operation of the SWAC, which was developed by the Schoharie Watershed Project Team utilizing inputs from the smaller project advisory teams and Consensus Building Institute. Ultimately, the SWAC is encouraged to provide input into the overall framework of the committee. (*proposed framework below*).
- Joel Dubois, GCSWCD Stream Technical Assistance Coordinator presented an overview of the types of stream management plan projects that could fall under the Implementation Program. Many techniques will take into account geomorphic principles (underlining science and physical rules) that consider up-and-down stream impacts of particular projects. Joel's examples were based upon the six proposed funding categories: education/outreach, infrastructure, stormwater implementation, community and landowner assistance, recreation and stream habitat and planning and assessment.
- Michelle Yost, GCSWCD Watershed Assistance Program Coordinator then led the SWAC in discussion of the SWAC concept and components. The following points were discussed, but decisions were postponed until the next SWAC meeting:
- The SWAC has 15 voting members - How will voting will be decided? By majority (majority of committee or attendees?), consensus, ballot? Possibility of voting via e-mail was raised. It was mentioned that the action plan framework has specific dates so voting may not be continual, but rather may be once or twice/year. To be discussed further.....

- The question was raised as to SWAC's role? Project advice or to determine how the 2 million is spent? SWAC bring ideas from committee to the public and vice versa. Is the committee's purpose is to prioritize projects already in progress (with respect to the community) or bring new ideas? New ideas. Tie in public to activities we do. Determine what is important to communities.
- One participant suggested developing matrix-components of projects that meet particular concerns. Numerical grade to determine value of project.
- The question was asked if there should there be an application process? The feeling seemed to be yes, but kept reasonably simple. Develop a quick application or form containing fields such as what the problem is, where it is, etc for the public to complete and give to their SWAC representative
- Projects must be in sync with stream management plans, not necessarily directly from the plans or only in the main stems that have SMPs. The municipalities have to adopt the stream management plan that covers their municipality. All the municipalities are on the way to adoption of the relevant plan, where they exist.
- The two million for SMP implementation from DEP is designated for future projects, not projects in the 2007 action plan – they are already funded.
- There was a feeling that this funding is meant to implement smaller scale projects (not larger full-scale stream restoration projects). DEP and GCSWCD budgeted separately for this type of project.
- Other funding sources available outside of the 2 million should be utilized to stretch the 2 million: CWC programs, GCSWCD WRDA funds, FEMA funding, SAP funding – Project staff should make every effort to plug in where possible.
- CWC has limited funding available for stream projects in population centers that are a hazard. This was raised in the context of an example in Prattsville of a landowner in need – where would this person turn. CWC/DEP recently funded a similar project in Prattsville, and the CWC program may be most appropriate for this individual. There were questions about the population center criteria. The program was limited to population centers to maximize the effects of the limited funding in the program. Project areas would either have to be in a population center, or the property should it fail would have to threaten the population center.
- A gave an example of knotweed - knotweed problems-would each landowner have to apply for assistance or can the town apply? Consensus seemed to be that knotweed is a basin-wide problem; a plan should be developed to educate individual landowners on how to deal with it.
- Project staff needs to develop a handout of basic information on the SWAC – details to be decided at next meeting. Town may send mailing to streamside landowners and this would make the public aware of the committee, allow the public to give input to their SWAC representative. Need to educate the public on criteria to allow public to identify problems and report them to their SWAC representative.
- Education important - educate community—inform that management plans exist, educate on stream processes, make education more grassroots. Possibility of subcommittees for particular types of projects. Subcommittees exist for recreation and highway supervisors and one needs to be developed for education and outreach.

- How did SWAC reach this point? Smaller committees elected to have one larger committee; GCSWCD and NYCDEP internal planning do develop draft SWAC guidelines.
- Meetings should be held at alternate locations – possibilities – Hunter elementary, Jewett community center, West Kill community center, Tannersville watershed project office.

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Proposed Schoharie Watershed Advisory Committee Structure and Principles

The following items have been put forward by the Schoharie Project team as a starting point for discussion and are based upon past experience and watershed planning efforts and knowledge gathered to date (including the 5/14/08 SWAC meeting).

SWAC Structure

- Meetings will be open to public, but there will be fifteen locally-based voting members representing: Hunter, Windham, Jewett, Lexington, Ashland, Prattsville, Gilboa, Roxbury, Conesville, Village of Hunter, Village of Tannersville, Highway Representative (appointed by subcommittee), Educator (appointed by subcommittee), Recreation/Habitat Representative (appointed by subcommittee), and a County Legislator. Rationale being that the voting members should have a constituency they answer to.
- There will be a voting member and an alternate appointed for each group/municipality.
- Meet bimonthly to start with meeting locations moving throughout watershed.
- Individuals will be appointed for 2-year terms, but there are no term limits. The three subcommittees will elect one representative each to the SWAC.
- Advisory Members - Schoharie County Reps, Delaware County Reps, ACOEs, GCHD, GCPD, CCEGC, CWC, Catskill Center, Greene Land Trust, Catskill Mtn Foundation, Hunter Foundation, Windham Foundation, Trout Unlimited.
- Project Staff – GCSWCD, DEP Stream Management Program

SWAC Stream Management Plan Implementation

- DEP committed 2 million specifically for stream management plan implementation, plus a variety of other funding sources are available.
- Project staff/technical advisors will assure multiple funding sources are employed to stretch the 2 million as far as possible.
- Projects/programs funded through SWAC must be either recommended in a stream management plan or consistent with the recommendations/science presented in stream management plans. Most importantly, projects/programs can not be detrimental to stream system stability or ecological integrity.
- SWAC will develop a simple application form for potential projects.
- Project staff will review project ideas and sites and present a recommended alternative(s) to the SWAC.
- SWAC will vote either silently or verbally by consensus or majority on whether a project should go forward (this requires further discussion).
- GCSWCD staff, in coordination with DEP, will draft action plan updates and revisions in close coordination with the SWAC.

- SWAC and Project Team (GCSWCD) will operate under annual action plans – updated annually, but map activities for 2-year period.

Action Plan Timeline

Subcommittees meet to review accomplishments, begin discussing next yr’s priority Actions	Subcommittees	Annually, mid-January
Compile and Distribute report on previous year’s Action Plan accomplishments	Project Coordinator	Annually, January 31st
SCs meet as necessary on new Action Plan rec’s, prepare budget estimates	Subcommittees	February-early March
SWAC meets to review accomplishments, discuss and prioritize new plan items	SWAC	Annually, Mid-March
SWAC, prioritize basin recommendations for Action Plans	SWAC	Annually by April 15
Complete biannual Action Plans to guide SMP implementation	Project Coordinator, SWAC	Annually by May 1st.
Complete annual Action Plan review/update	Project Coordinator, SWAC	Annually by May 1st.

Possible Funding Categories and Percentages of total funds % of Funding

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|---|----|
| 1. Recreational improvement/access and Habitat | 10 |
| 2. Education/Outreach | 5 |
| 3. Highway/Infrastructure | 5 |
| 4. Community and Landowner Stream Assistance Projects | 40 |
| 6. Stormwater projects (not stormwater plans) and Critical Area Seeding | 15 |

Potential Criteria for Funding Decisions

1. Project lies within a municipality that has adopted the relevant SMP (this is a must – majority of municipalities on board)
2. Effects on stream stability and sediment transport
3. Water quality benefits
4. Public benefit to broader basin communities
5. Protects infrastructure
6. Improves habitats, general ecology or increases recreational access
7. Feasibility of project, including that the approach is consistent with principles set forth in stream management plans
8. Project Cost
9. Promotes inter-municipal cooperation
10. Level of partnership support (i.e. cost share with CWC or other agency)
11. Matching funds (cost share from applicant...financial or in-kind)