

Intermunicipal Planning for Black & Oatka Creek Watersheds

08/10/09 Organizational Meeting – Town of Wheatland, NY

In Attendance

George Squires, Genesee Co. SWCD
Larry VerWeire, Black Creek W.C.
Robert Kelley, Oatka Creek W.C.
Tom Ryther, Black Creek W.C.
Bob Kiley, Monroe County SWCD
Rochelle Bell, Monroe County Planning
John Hovanesian, USDA NRCS RC&D
Linda Dobson, Town of Wheatland
Esther Leadley, Genesee Co. Legislature

Maureen Leupold, GCC/Oatka Creek W.C.
Felipe Oltremari, Genesee Co. Planning
Karen Cox, Monroe County DOT
Ray Cipriano, Bethany Planning Board

Staff

Brian Slack, G/FLRPC
David Zorn, G/FLRPC

Meeting Summary

The meeting began with a short power point presentation delivered by Brian Slack. Mr. Slack introduced himself and noted that he will be acting as the project leader throughout the course of the project. He provided an overview of the purpose of the Project Advisory Committee Organizational Meeting, which is to provide a comprehensive overview of the project and to form the Project Advisory Committees. Before Mr. Slack went further with the presentation, he asked everyone to introduce themselves.

Mr. Slack reviewed some of the progress that has occurred through this current watershed planning grant as well as through previous projects.

Regarding this specific watershed planning project: the NYS DOS Div. of Coastal Resources EPF grant awarded the Town of Wheatland the grant in 2006, with G/FLRPC acting as the project coordinator; an elected officials breakfast was held in the winter of 2008 in anticipation of contract delivery; contract delivery occurred in spring 2009; at this point in time the remainder of watershed planning work may commence.

Regarding previous projects: it was noted that a fair amount of work has already been completed outside of this watershed planning project; all of these watershed reports and scientific studies will be taken into account during this process and play a direct roll in contributing toward project task fulfillment.

Mr. Slack stressed that each watershed will have its own unique watershed plan document at the end of the project, which will be led by the individual Project Advisory Committees that are being created for each watershed. Ideally, each group will be able to work closely together and capitalize off of each other's work, knowledge and expertise. Mr. Slack then went on to describe the six primary components that this watershed management project entails. These include: (1) Characterization; (2) Sub-watershed Prioritization; (3) Regulatory/Programmatic Evaluation; (4) Identification of Management Strategies; (5) "Phasing Plan" or Issue Prioritization and Implementation. Together, these five components constitute a full watershed plan. They will be produced separately and may be combined at the completion of the project into one full document or they may remain as separate volumes. Each component is intended to be completed in a linear timeline, with subsequent components building off of the work compiled in the previous component.

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The sixth component of the project is referred to as Intermunicipal Coordinating Organizations. This refers to the need to describe and organize an active body that will be responsible for maintaining the initiatives and recommendations that will be outlined in the watershed plans.

Mr. Slack then went on to describe what will be the first major component of the project – the watershed characterization. He described all of the information that will likely go into watershed characterization reports for each watershed. The drafting and review of these reports will rely on existing data in most cases, but some new data will have to be generated in order to address gaps. The process will likely take a full year before an approved final draft will be completed.

Mr. Slack emphasized that we may need to hire a third party contractor to assist us with technical and scientific data gathering and analysis. At a later point in the evening, Rochelle Bell asked a question regarding schedules of the five components to be completed. In some instances, scientific data may have to be collected in the field, which may affect timelines. Dave Zorn noted that, in such cases, it will be necessary to note that further research is warranted. As such research is conducted, it may be retained for entry into the final full watershed management plan at the completion of the project.

After answering some questions, Mr. Slack continued with a discussion of the Project Advisory Committees. Sign-up sheets were circulated; individuals were asked to sign up for a particular watershed Project Advisory Committee. Discussion ensued regarding individuals who were not present that should likely be included on either committee. Names that were raised included Charlie Knauf (Monroe Co. Health Dept), Greg McKurth (Wyoming SWCD), and Rick VenVertloh (Chair, Oatka C.W.C.).

Rochelle Bell asked about the format that the meetings are to take. Mr. Slack explained that this is a question that is up to the committees to ultimately decide, but G/FLRPC has some recommendations. As the process begins, meetings will likely be joint, with each group working together. As individual Characterization reports begin to be developed, the committees can decide upon a format that suits them best. One possible option may be to have three hour meetings, with one Project Advisory Committee meeting for one hour, then allowing both groups to meet for one hour in order to discuss any issues common between the two, then have the second Project Advisory Committee meet separately for the third hour. ***This is simply an option;*** more than likely, some type of alternative meeting format will be adopted and used. Furthermore, the meeting formats will likely change over the course of the project in order to suit the situation.

Mr. Slack drew the audience's attention to a draft document that was circulated, entitled the "Community Outreach Plan." Both Project Advisory Committees are required to produce their own Community Outreach Plan. The draft document that was circulated is intended to act as a basic starting point. Project Advisory Committees were asked to review these documents and offer any revisions at the next meeting. Once revisions are made, the documents will be submitted to DOS for review and approval.

Near the conclusion of the meeting, Mr. Robert Kelley inquired about financial reimbursement. Specifically, he asked when the watershed groups could be reimbursed for work completed that

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is related to this watershed planning project. Dave Zorn and Rochelle Bell noted that watershed groups would not be eligible for reimbursement for any work completed. Any work that may be completed for this project by any member of the Project Advisory Committee or other volunteer is considered to be “in-kind” and will be credited toward meeting the local match.

The next Project Advisory Committee meeting has been scheduled for August 24th, 2009 at 6:30 in the Wheatland Town Hall Senior Center. Mr. Slack noted that other locations that may be more centrally-located may be considered for meetings in the future. He further noted that meetings will likely be held on a monthly basis hereafter.

Agenda items include: (1) Review and approve the Community Outreach Plan(s); (2) Address the RFP for third party contractor; (3) Begin to develop a Characterization of the watershed(s).

~bcs