

March 2009, Program Highlights – Ashokan Watershed SMP

NEW OFFICE

At the end of February the AWSMP moved into its new office in the Town of Shandaken. The office layout was designed by SUNY Ulster students in an Architectural Drafting course and the space is both beautiful and functional. Our new address is 6375 St. Hwy 28, Phoenicia, NY 12464 and our phone # is 688-3047. The office is staffed at least 4 days a week, and will be staffed five days a week when the new Project educator is hired.

STAFFING UPDATE

New project staff:

Colleen Griffith was recently hired as the AWSMP Administrative Coordinator. She has worked for the Watershed Ag Council in Delaware County as well as CCE Delaware County in administrative roles and is knowledgeable about watershed issues and DEP contracting. Her hours are M-Th 8:30-4:30 in the Phoenicia office.

Kristen Wilson, the 4-H Resource Educator will be working with the AWSMP 1 day a week to provide youth education programming to the project.

Staff to be hired:

SCA Intern: We received permission to hire a Student Conservation Association (SCA) intern. The funding for the internship will come from DEP. The SCA program is similar to Americorps and the intern will work with our program for 1 year. We are in the process of developing the job description for the intern.

Educator and Community Liaison: We are hiring a full-time educator to develop educational materials and programs and coordinate outreach efforts supporting stream stewardship in the Ashokan Watershed. The position will replace Laura Weyeneth, who left at the end of December, but will have a more outreach and publications focus than her position had.

Soil and Water Conservation District will also be hiring 2 new staff for the project this spring.

PROGRAM UPDATE

Completed Tasks

The Ashokan Watershed Project has formed the Advisory Council and the first meeting was at the end of February. The Town of Shandaken has approved the three Stream Management Plans that have been completed to date. Volume 1 of the Esopus Creek SMP was rewritten for public consumption and outreach efforts. The watershed youth program has been meeting at Onteora High School. Several community programs have been offered including a video of the annual Esopus Creek flyover, a presentation to the Catskill Chapter of Trout Unlimited and a native plant workshop.

Upcoming Tasks

We are in the process of forming the four Working Groups, which will meet in April. The groups are:

- Erosion and Flooding, Ecosystem, Recreation and Tourism, Outreach and Education

The second Advisory Council meeting will take place at the end of April. The 2-year Plan of Work is due to EPA by May 15th. The Working Groups and Advisory Council will help to inform the plan. We are also in the process of working with these groups to develop the process for distributing grant funds. The request for funds will be (hopefully) offered by the end of the summer. Kristen is working with Michael to enhance the youth program, the stream stewards will begin their program again this spring.