

## **Esopus Creek Management Plan Program Highlights, March & April 2006**

### New Employees:

- Sarah Tarallo, SUNY Ulster graduate began work April 5<sup>th</sup> as project intern. Sarah will be assisting in data collection/dissemination and project support through the summer.
- Walt Keller, Fisheries Biologist and retired Regional Fisheries Manager, DEC Region 4 (Stamford) began work on April 28. Walt's primary task will be to produce a "Phase 1" Aquatic Habitat Assessment of the upper Esopus Creek that will consist of developing a complete annotated bibliography of all studies performed to date, and analysis to identify trends, information gaps, and recommendations for further study. Study completion date: Fall 2006.

### Project Developments:

- One Project Advisory Council meeting was held on 4/19/06. Participants critiqued and refined planning process assumptions drafted by CCEUC. Next meeting revised assumptions will (hopefully) be adopted and discussion will shift to outcomes. The group also decided on short and long term actions for addressing/incorporating the "Shandaken Portal" into the Esopus Creek Management Plan. DEP will be asked to provide a representative from "Portal Operations" on the Advisory Committee, and to work with stakeholders in addressing the current uncertainty over operating conditions the next 3 years. Long-term goals include revising the statute (Part 670) that governs portal operations to reflect multi-objective management.
- Two (2) Education & Outreach Work Group meetings were held on 3/8/06 and 4/12/06. A draft work plan has been created identifying stream-side landowners along the main-stem (not tributaries) of the Esopus Creek as the primary audience (this is also reflected in our contract language). Methods of informal interaction with landowners, such as pot-luck meetings among landowners along a "reach" of stream have been identified as preferred methods to help incentivize and build community along the creek.
- Landowner Survey: Working with Cornell University Professor Max Pfeffer (Chair, Department of Rural Sociology), Linda Wagenet (CCE Agent, Rural Sociology), and Tommy Brown (Chair, Human Dimensions Research Unit, Department of Natural Resources), a survey of 250 property owners along the creek is under development.
- Newsletter: Spring Edition was mailed to ~1200 streamside landowners in watershed on April 28. CCEUC staff instrumental in creation of mailing list and layout.

### Public Events & Presentations:

- Bob Titus, Visions of Catskill Geology lecture at Phoenicia Elementary School held March 29 attracted 106 people.
- Jeremy presented at the Catskill Mountain Chapter of Trout Unlimited on April 19.
- CCEUC direct-mailed Esopus landowners flyer promoting "Banks & Buffers" workshop held by Greene County Soil & Water Conservation District. Michael and Jeremy attended and chatted with streamside landowners about needs and opportunities in the Esopus basin.
- CCEUC successfully outreached to Town, County, and State highway departments on our advisory council to attend Training seminar held by Greene County SWCD.

*Jeremy Magliaro, Coordinator  
Walt Keller, Aquatic Habitat Specialist*

*Michael Courtney, Educator  
Sarah Tarallo, Project Intern*