

MINUTES
ULSTER COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
5 PARK LANE
HIGHLAND, NY 12528
June 26, 2024

1. OPENING MEETING - The **MEETING** was **CALLED TO ORDER** by Chairman L. Tantillo at 7:00 PM. Directors Present: J. Delaune, F. Wilklow, H. Litts and S. VanNostrand. SWCD Staff in attendance: J. Wedemeyer - Exec. Director, T. Ferry - District Technician, Christine DeGroot - Program Assistant, A. Doan - A.W.S.M.P. Stream Project Manager and B. Taylor – CSBI Program Coordinator.

2. WORK REPORTS

Written staff reports were mailed and emailed to Board Members and B. Luskin prior to the meeting for review (attached to the filed minutes).

a) SWCD

J. Wedemeyer - (see attached staff report)

AEM Round – Wedemeyer completed a cover crop plan for a farm in the Town of Hurley with the assistance of A. Barton, the new District intern.

AEM Round 17 was closed-out and a Claim for Payment was submitted.

Ferry and Wedemeyer worked on CRF Round 8 outreach to farmers.

Inventory and Evaluations - Worked on pond site enhancements, provided stream bank erosion stabilization and permit assistance.

Wedemeyer also provided riparian planting recommendations to a site in the Town of Rochester.

NYS DEP CAT-494 – Wedemeyer held a meeting with the AWSMP staff. An advance request for payment was submitted for CAT-494. Wedemeyer completed an Interim Staffing Plan and updated the personnel budget.

Wedemeyer is assisting with the Boiceville CSBI project.

AWSMP is using the District's F250 pickup truck for the summer. It will be auctioned off in the fall.

AG NPS Round 27 – Wedemeyer has been working with JESS Engineering on an agrochemical mixing shed design and a fuel storage design, which are now complete. NRCS is reviewing them.

CRF Round 7 – Wedemeyer met with a producer and completed a cost breakdown and discussed potential ARPA funding to assist them with an irrigation electrification project.

CRF Round 8 – Wedemeyer commended Ferry on the good job he did completing the CRF Round 8 grant application. The application includes the purchase of a new 12' no-till drill and row mulcher.

District Updates/Other Projects

Wedemeyer has been working with Economic Development on the ARPA funding and contract finalization for the \$200,000.00. He provided them with a budget for equipment and conservation practice expenditures.

Junior Technician – Wedemeyer recommends hiring Anna Barton for the Junior Technician position. Out of several that were interviewed, she has the most experience and skills. She assisted with the no-till demo and is learning how to survey. Anna has been volunteering her time at the District and splits time between the Shokan and the District offices.

Wedemeyer completed the 2025 Annual Budget.

The Department of the Environment is requesting the District's assistance with stormwater mapping in 2025 for their MS4 program and continuing the Arbor Day tree plantings with municipalities. There was discussion regarding the District contributing up to \$2,000.00 from Part C funding to assist the Arbor Day 2024 effort.

The County requested hiring a Watershed Administrator, to be housed at our office. The District will assist the County with implementation once we have a full staff in Highland.

Tantillo and Wedemeyer attended the District Managers Meeting earlier in June at the Dutchess County SWCD office.

Wedemeyer attended the Farmland Protection Plan review meeting and provided recommendations.

Wedemeyer is working with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for continued engineering assistance after receiving their commitment in writing to assist with various designs.

C. DeGroodt – (see attached staff report)

District's Annual Audit – The CAT-494 audit is scheduled for July 9, 2024.

The filing cabinets were ordered from Hudson Valley Furniture Company for a total of \$1,478.90. They are scheduled to be delivered July 22, 2024.

District's Insurance – The District's insurance increased to approximately \$28,000.00 for this year, an increase of approximately \$7,000.00. DeGroodt has been working with SIDLE Insurance to get quotes to switch companies.

T. Ferry – (see attached staff report)

AEM – Ferry continues to work on paperwork for the upcoming AEM projects.

Part C Cover Crop Program – Ferry has been reaching out to prior participants and sending out applications. Several applications have already been received back.

Inventory and Evaluations – There have been a lot of Japanese Knotweed control requests for advice.

Ferry has been working with a producer in Plattekill, He has soil sampled, given pasture seeding and no-till drill recommendations.

CRF Round 7 – Ferry is working with a tenant farmer to get an irrigation layout for this cropping season. He is working with an NRCS Engineer to get a design advanced.

CRF Round 8 – Ferry completed and submitted the CRF Round 8 application.

NYC DEP CAT-494 – Ferry attended a “How to Read a Stream” workshop taught by AWSMP.

No-Till Program – There have been six no-till users so far this year. 37.6 acres were seeded.

The District’s new banner and decals for the two trucks arrived.

b) **AWSMP**

A. Doan – Stream Project Manager – (see attached report)

Administration – Doan began the orientation/training of Acting Stream Project Manager B. Taylor.

Developed a classroom presentation and field based training for 2024 stream technical training. There were approximately 35-40 attendees, including Ferry and the new intern Barton.

Ferry and Lent wrapped up the final stormwater inspection on the Elk Bushkill Project.

Completed invasive treatments at the Woodland Project for mugwort control. Taylor inspected the site and found it successful so far, as it drastically reduced the mugwort. Treatment will continue through this season.

They received a 60% design report on the Hollow Tree Brook Project. Wedemeyer, Lent and Taylor are coordinating on design review.

B. Taylor – CSBI Program Coordinator – (see attached report)

CSBI –Boiceville Project - The hazard tree clearing has been completed.

Taylor notified participating landowners that there may be delays with their projects due to staffing changes, with the exception of one landowner who is adjacent to the Panther Kill Stream Restoration Project. Taylor met with the excavating contractor on-site last week to review the scope of work. He has been working with the DEP for approval on the invasive control.

Taylor began the kiosk construction at the Emerson buffer project. He brought a couple of the panels to the meeting to show the Board. They have a ten-year guarantee and exceeded expectations. Their intern Gabe will be setting the posts that the panels will attach to.

Since Taylor is now the Acting Stream Project Manager, he has been closely working with Doan the past few weeks to absorb the aspects of the job.

c) **NRCS**

O. Velez-Juarbe – There was no report submitted. Wedemeyer stated that Velez-Juarbe has been on vacation, but Wedemeyer knows that he has been busy working with the NRCS

Pathways intern Ava, he has been working on projects in Orange County and has been a great help to SWCD progressing our engineering designs. Wedemeyer added that Velez-Juarbe has been an excellent partner.

d) SWCC Report - submitted by Ben Luskin and reported by Wedemeyer (see attached report)

3. NEW BUSINESS

- a) **Board of Directors Annual Training Plan** – Board members receive an updated Training Plan annually as part of the Performance Measures. Wedemeyer reviewed the Director Training Policy with the Board. Items described in the Policy: A) Organizational Meeting, B) Develop Annual Work Plan, C) Water Quality Symposium, D) Employee Evaluations, E) Develop Annual Budget, F) Attend NYACD Meetings, G) Attend Manager Meetings, H) District Law Training, I) Attend NYSSWC Meetings, J) Attend UC D.O.E. Meetings. Wedemeyer stressed the importance of Directors attending Manager Meetings. He also noted that District Law Training is scheduled for November 2024.

(K. Nolan joined the Meeting at 7:27 PM)

2024-6-1 Litts made the Motion, VanNostrand seconded, to accept the 2024 Director Training Policy. All in favor.

- b) **Ulster County SWCD Proposed 2025 Annual Budget** – Included in the Board packet that was emailed to Directors prior to the Meeting. On this version, the District is requesting \$141,500.00 from the County for 2025. Discussion followed. The Board recommended that SWCD revise the appropriation request to the actual amount the District would like to request from the County (approximately \$30,000.00 more). Litts recommended that there be a breakdown listing how the additional \$30,000.00 will be utilized. Nolan said a slide/spreadsheet would be helpful when going in front of the Legislature. If a portion of the \$30,000.00 is for staff time, include mileage, benefits, additional equipment, etc. The Board suggested that the budget be revised and brought back to the Board at July's Board Meeting.

Ferry mentioned that he sat in on the Lower Esopus Meeting earlier in the day. He said that Dennis Doyle and Erik Stewart are pushing for a full-time Watershed Coordinator position. They discussed housing the position at the Department of the Environment office in Kingston.

- c) **Proposed ARPA Budget and Transfer of Part C Funds** – Wedemeyer explained the ARPA Funds spreadsheet to the Board. County funds will be used to support the Districts Local Cover Crop Program. Part C funds that would have been used for cover crop will now be used for other projects. An available spreadsheet shows different scenarios based on whether or not the District is awarded the CRF Round 8 grant. Discussion followed.

4. OLD BUSINESS

- a) **Junior Technician Applicants** – Wedemeyer interviewed a few applicants for the Jr. Technician position. One person, Anna Barton, is qualified and has been interning at the District and Ashokan offices. The Directors said that they would like to interview her early next month. Although Nolan said that she trusts Wedemeyer and Ferry to do interviews, after discussion the Directors would like to see a list of applicants that have applied for the position and have the District send out application forms that people can fill out moving forward. DeGroodt will request a copy of a standard application for employment form from the County. Litts recommended that

the District adopt a Hiring Policy. Wedemeyer stated that it's already included in our Personnel Manual. Litts would like everyone who is interested in a job, fill out and submit an application and a resume. Then Wedemeyer can determine whether or not the person meets the qualifications and then write up a summary page listing all the applicants that will be interviewed. Discussion followed.

- b) AWSMP Project Manager Position and Staffing Plan** – A letter was sent to the District Board from Wedemeyer regarding a Salary Structure update. Wedemeyer requested that B. Taylor be the Acting Stream Project Manager effective July 3, 2024, while a nationwide search to fill the project manager position is conducted. He recommends raising Taylor's salary to \$80,800.00 effective July 3rd during the period that he is Acting Stream Project Manager. This will conclude on September 30, 2024. In the event that Taylor is the most qualified candidate, he feels it is appropriate to hire Taylor as Stream Project Manager at the salary of \$85,000.00.

Wedemeyer also recommends that Lent receive a \$3,000.00 increase to her salary to compensate for the additional responsibilities she is assuming due to Adam's departure, and due to her professional certification and additional skills. He stated that based on Taylor's and Lent's increased responsibilities in the short and long term, he recommends the proposed salaries remain in effect as merit-based raises.

Doan submitted a letter to the District Board which states the proposed starting salary of \$85,000.00, annual COLA and a 10% merit raise that has been built into the successor SWP-101 agreement with DEP is consistent with appropriate compensation given the role and responsibilities of the Stream Project Manager position.

Adam Trescott, P.E., Project Manager for the Bureau of Water Supply for the Stream Management Program, sent a letter to Wedemeyer stating that the Project Manager position is approved for an annual salary up to \$91,792.50. The UCSWCD Board previously determined the posted salary for this position would be \$75,000 - \$80,800. The Board can adjust this range within the FY25 approved annual budget. If Taylor is not chosen or if he declines this position, his salary would return to the \$79,769.00 maximum salary level previously approved in the FY25 budget. Discussion followed.

2024-6-2 Litts made the Motion, Nolan seconded, to amend the previous salary range of \$75,000.00 - \$80,800.00 for the Stream Project Manager position to \$85,000.00 - \$91,792.50 commensurate with experience and education level. All in favor.

There was a brief discussion regarding the salary of the Stream Project Manager potentially being more than that of the Executive Director (who is the supervisor of both offices). He explained that they are not equal positions. Wedemeyer is in charge of the AWSMP program, he is responsible for the projects, finances and personnel. Directors stated that this can be revisited.

Taylor expressed his interest in the position of Stream Project Manager. With his professional experience, his knowledge of the watershed and excellent qualifications, he would like to be considered for promotion into this position. The Board told Taylor that he should fill out an application and submit a resume.

- 5. MINUTES APPROVAL – 2024-6-3 Litts made the Motion, Delaune seconded, to approve the May 2024 Board Meeting Minutes. All in favor.**

2024-6-4 Litts made the Motion, Delaune seconded, to approve the May 2024 Draft Board Meeting Minutes. All in favor.

2024-6-5 Delaune made the Motion, VanNostrand seconded, to approve the June 4, 2024 Special Meeting Minutes. All in favor.

6. FINANCIAL REPORTS AND ABSTRACTS – 2024-6-6 Nolan made the Motion, Litts seconded, to approve the Financial Report and May 2024 Abstract. All in favor.

7. NEXT MEETING - The next Board Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 24, 2024 at 7 PM.

8. ADJOURNMENT

2024-6-7 A Motion was made by Litts to Adjourn the meeting at 8:45 PM, seconded by Nolan. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine DeGroot
Program Assistant

JLW Activities May 15 through June 19, 2024

AEM: AEM Tier 5B – farm visit to update conservation plan, completed cover crop plan, T/O Hurley. AEM Round 17 final closeout and claim for payment. AEM Outreach – Farm outreach for CRF Round 8 grant applicants.

Inventory and Evaluations: Clayton Horsey, T/O Woodstock – site visit, stream bank erosion stabilization and permit assistance. Laura Segal, T/O Saugerties, pond turbidity abatement recommendations. T/O Ulster – Arbor day tree survival and tree wrap update and recommendations regarding damaged trees. Scott Goodinow, T/O Plattekill – soil analysis and pasture seeding recommendations. Patricia Deal, T/O Lloyd – site visit, storm water and property drainage recommendations. William Nitzberg, T/O Rochester – site visit, stream bank erosion and riparian planting recommendations. John Sczerba, T/O Lloyd – completed preliminary drainage design, reviewed with landowner, correspondence with County Exec’s office. Robert Mahar, T/O Esopus – site visit, stream bank erosion and riparian planting recommendations.

NYC DEP CAT 494: Staff meeting with AWSMP staff. DEP check in meeting with AWSMP staff and Chairman Tantillo. Financial reconciliations to receive advance requests. Submitted advance request for payment for Capital and Expense. Review and approval of invoices for software and equipment. Staff interim transition plan and updated personnel budget. Assistance with Boiceville CSBI project and assisted the Town of Olive with insurance documentation. Provided spare truck to AWSMP program. Updated Project Manager position description with DEP approval and posted position. Reviewed PM applications and answered emails garnering interest in the position.

Round 27: Working with NRCS and private engineer with design reviews and edits to designs.

CRF Round 7: Met with farmer and went through cost breakdown and potential ARPA funds to help with irrigation electrification project.

CRF Round 8: Working with Travis on completing grant application and budget.

District Updates/Other Projects:

- Working with Economic Development with ARPA funding and contract finalization for \$200,000. Provided budget for equipment and conservation practice expenditures.
- Junior Technician – Anna Barton is the best candidate and has the most skills and I recommend hiring her. Three in person interviews, numerous phone interviews.
- Farmland Protection Seminar/Workshop on June 11th. 47 municipal officials attended. Special thanks to Jim Delaune and his team for making this happen. The District assisted with conference space and catering.
- Completed 2025 annual budget.
- Met with the UC Department of the Environment – request for assistance with storm water mapping in 2025 and continuing the Arbor Day tree plantings with municipalities. District can devote up to \$2,000 using Part C funds to assist the County led Arbor Day 2024 effort.
- County/Legislature would like to have a Watershed Administrator housed at our office, we only have room for the Junior Technician as per the NRCS office agreement. We will assist the County with implementation once we have a full staff in Highland. Potential increase to County Appropriation.
- Len and I attended the District Managers Meeting at Dutchess County SWCD office.
- Attended Economic Development legislative meeting.
- Attended Farmland Protection Plan review meeting and provided recommendations.
- Working with NRCS for continued engineering assistance after receiving their commitment in writing to assist the District with various designs.

Christine DeGroodt

Activities May 15, 2024 – June 18, 2024

NYS Retirement – I continue to do the monthly reporting.

CAT-494 Contracts – I have gotten a jump-start on the next quarterly reports.

CAT-494 Audit – The CAT-494 audit will be on July 9th. We have not yet received a copy of the District's annual audit.

District's Insurance – We are still waiting on a quote from SIDLE Insurance.

County Quarterly Report – The 1st quarter 2024 report was completed and emailed to the County along with an Invoice.

Interns – Sent out and received back required paperwork from Ashokan's intern Gabe and Soil & Water's intern Anna in order for them to be added to payroll. Gabe was added to our vehicle insurance.

AEM RD 18 – Contacted M&T Bank to open a new bank account for the AEM grant round 18.

Posted the Stream Project Manager and Junior Technician jobs on the Conservation Job Board, SUNY New Paltz's Environmental Science department and emailed vacancies to Ulster County CCE.

Emailed the Sexual Harassment Training information, which included a link to the training videos, to Directors and staff on 5/28.

Assisted the Town of Shawangunk Assessor with a copy of a Soil Group Worksheet.

Took a Workplace Violence Training on June 6th.

Researched the Life Insurance Policy that is attached to our NYS Retirement. Sent copies of the policy to staff.

The five 3-drawer filing cabinets were ordered from the company that Herb suggested, Hudson Valley Furniture Company, for a total of \$1,478.90. They are scheduled to be delivered on July 22nd.

Ongoing- mail, bank deposits, bill payments/receipts, abstracts, Board Minutes, bank transfers, bank account reconciliations, supply orders, etc.

TRF Activities – May 16, 2024 – June 18, 2024

AEM: Tier 2 – T/O Saugerties – finish tier 2 and send to producer for stream crossing constriction. Tier 3A – T/O Marlboro – work on Tier 3A grazing plan. Tier 4 – T/O Gardiner – moved drill to producer for pasture overseeding. Tier 4 – T/O New Paltz – deliver drill and calibrate with producer for summer cover crop. Tier 1 & 2 – T/O Gardiner – complete tier 1 and 2 with sheep producer. Tier 5A – T/O Rochester – update tier 1 and 2 with grain/vegetable producer. Received final SHPO letter for AEM 18 Tier 4 package, SWCC approved the package, submitted our 25% advance claim for payment for Technical assistance staff time.

Part C Cover Crop Program: Outreaching to previous participants and sending out applications.

Inventory and Evaluations: Brianna Kane – Japanese Knotweed control advice. Lea – Japanese Knotweed herbicide advice. Tom Hurlbutt – wetlands information/questions. Scott Goodnow – T/O Plattekill – soil sampling results, pasture seeding recommendations, and no-till drill recommendations.

CRF Round 6: No activity.

CRF Round 7: Continuing to work with engineer/farmer on irrigation design. Worked with NRCS to survey for irrigation design.

CRF Round 8: Working on 1 application for soil health track, will include cover crop, no-till drill and row mulcher.

NYC DEP CAT 494: Attended how to read a stream workshop put on by AWSMP program. Delivered the F250 to Shokan office for AWSMP to use this summer.

Round 27: No activity.

No-Till Program: Six users this year so far. Seeded 37.6 acres seeded.

Misc: We received our new District banner and decals for the trucks.

Attended CDEA meeting in western NY.

Worked with Anna (intern) on surveying.

Updates June 2024

A. Doan – Stream Project Manager

- Administration
 - Began orientation/training of Acting Stream Project Manager
 - Developed classroom presentation and field based training for 2024 stream technical training
 - Participated as instructor in 2-day stream technical training
 - Attended DEP/UCSWCD status meeting
 - Replaced F250 battery

- Stream Management Implementation Program support- SMIP
 - Completed field visit with Town of Woodstock subcontractor regarding additional survey needs for Mink Hollow Bridge as-built
 - Bostock RSX design options call w/Town of Olive
 - Review/coordination on additional survey equipment needs for UAV
 - Plank Rd. culvert review meeting with DPW
 - SMIP status meeting to orientate Bobby and Allison to outstanding projects
 - Coordination w/CCE re: program areas and staffing for future review

- Assessment & Monitoring
 - Weekly to daily check-ins with Allison and Mark
 - Completed Simms wading gear orders for seasonal technician
 - USGS/SWCD fisheries study status meeting and field investigation

- Projects
 - Stony Clove SRP
 - No recent activity
 - Woodland Creek SRP
 - Spring treatment completed
 - Panther Kill SRP
 - No recent activity
 - Elk Bushkill
 - Final pay application review
 - Hollow Tree Brook
 - Received 60% design
 - Coordinated with Allison re: project management needs
 - Warner Creek Site 5
 - No recent activities

- CSBI
 - Completed permit application for herbicide on several Ashokan sites and submitted to DEP
 - Assisted Bobby with nursery maintenance
 - Weekly to daily check-ins with Bobby

Continued on back

Meetings/Site Visits

- FEMA quarterly meeting to discuss LOMR and modeling issues
- Site Visit – Ulster DPW at Esopus rail washout
- Technical assistance re: permitting to Woodstock highway
- Site visits – Ron/Nev stream program projects
- Hunter-Lanesville Flood Committee
- Shandaken Flood Committee
- CSAP Valuation Work Group meeting (multiple)
- Project Managers meeting
- Stream Technical Training development meeting
- Multiple check ins w/Bobby, Allison and Mark
- Environmental Planner check in w/Heidi and Leslie

Ashokan Watershed Stream Management Program

- Administration
 - Began orientation for Acting Stream Project Manager focusing on contracting, SMIP program, subcontractor approval, project management responsibilities, regular meetings, requests for funding, reconciliation, etc.
 - Coordination w/DEP and stakeholders regarding Stream Project Manager position and A. Doan departure
 - All Shokan SWCD staff participated in and instructed at 2-day 2024 stream technical training
 - FEMA meeting to evaluate FIRM model issues
 - CSAP meeting and orientation for B. Taylor
 - DEP/District meeting to discuss status and check in on projects and staffing
 - Met with partner SMP's to discuss CSAP program development and planning
 - Participated in Hunter-Lanesville Flood Remediation Committee meeting
 - Participated in Shandaken Area Flood committee meeting
 - Continued participation in watershed partner discussion over DEP LAP and CSAP programs

- Assessment & Monitoring
 - Meeting and site visit to evaluate additional site for the USGS/UCSWCD fisheries study and impact of A. Doan's departure to the project
 - Warner Creek Sites SRP sites 1 & 2: completed year 3 of project monitoring surveys including long-pro, XS, pebble counts, etc.
 - Panther Kill SRP: completed geomorphic monitoring survey to capture channel adjustment from recent high water events. This is off year monitoring but something we were interested in documenting. Survey included both traditional terrestrial survey and use of the UAV
 - On boarded Gabe Bonse for seasonal help supporting A&M and CSBI
 - On boarded 2 Watershed Conservation Corps summers interns

- - Projects
 - Stony Clove SRP
 - No recent activity
 - Warner Creek SRP
 - See update under Assessment & Monitoring above
 - Panther Kill SRP
 - See update under Assessment & Monitoring above
 - Elk Bushkill
 - Completed final stormwater inspection and will begin to close out SPDES permit
 - Preparing to release final payment to construction contractor

- Woodland SRP
 - Spring invasive treatment completed
 - Mugwort responded well to last years treatments

- Hollow Tree Brook SRP
 - Received 60% design and waiting on updated cost opinion and design report
 - Outreaching to landowners regarding 60% design

- CSBI
 - Boiceville project on hold awaiting DEP herbicide application approval
 - Hazard tree clearing completed
 - Meeting with contractor at Panther Kill CSBI project and working on DEP approval for invasive control
 - Began kiosk construction at Emerson buffer project.
 - 7 panels received, remaining 2 on way
 - Scheduling install of panel posts along pathway
 - Mink Hollow CSBI – site inspection to evaluate conditions
 - Submitted permit request for herbicide application at multiple AWSMP sites
 - Nursery maintenance
 - Notified participating landowners in potential for delay due to staffing change