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Completed Stream Management Projects Will Protect Roads and Water Quality in Upper Esopus Creek Watershed

Stream Management Projects Help To Ensure High Quality Drinking Water for More than 9 Million New Yorkers

Photos of the Projects Can be Viewed on [DEP's Flickr Page](#)

The Ashokan Watershed Stream Management Program (AWSMP) on Friday announced the completion of two major projects that restored 1,620 feet of stream in the Town of Shandaken. The projects, with a combined cost of \$2.6 million, were designed to protect key roadways and water quality in the NYC drinking water supply.

The projects were funded with \$1.7 million from the federal Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) program, which is administered by the US Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The NYC Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) funded the remaining \$909,500 on behalf of the Town of Shandaken.

The Town of Shandaken secured EWP funding for stream projects with help from the Ulster County Soil and Water Conservation District (UCSWCD), which partners closely with area NRCS staff. The funds allow municipalities to share the burden of expensive stream repairs and stretch their limited dollars. Congress authorized EWP funding after Tropical Storms Irene and Lee, and Hurricane Sandy, caused extensive flood damage in the area. The current EWP appropriation for New York State will be depleted in 2015.

More Information

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"The Town of Shandaken sincerely values the efforts from UCSWCD, USDA and AWSMP in addressing long identified projects that threatened much of our infrastructure and a number of residents' homes and businesses in the Hamlet of Chichester," said **Town of Shandaken Supervisor Rob Stanley**. "The Town could never have envisioned performing these necessary projects within the limits of the Town's finances. We are grateful that this work has been and will continue to be funded without any financial harm to our residents or taxpayers."

"Projects such as these are beneficial for New York City, streamside towns like Shandaken as well as downstream communities," **NYC DEP Commissioner Emily Lloyd** said. "They protect water quality in the Ashokan Reservoir by addressing sources of sediment and debris, and they protect local infrastructure by improving the natural flow of streams and reconnecting them to their floodplains. I would like to thank the Ashokan Watershed Stream Management staff and all the partner agencies for the vast knowledge and dedication that they bring to these important efforts."

With these projects, DEP has also fulfilled a state requirement to fund the completion of two environmental benefit projects in the Ashokan watershed this year. That requirement was outlined in a recent consent order related to releases of water from Ashokan Reservoir into the lower Esopus Creek. The 2014 projects focused on repairing the Stony Clove Creek, which drains into the Esopus Creek at the hamlet of Phoenicia in Shandaken.

One project at the confluence of Stony Clove Creek and Warner Creek, employed strong measures to stabilize a historically unstable channel. Fast flowing water at the site had cut through the channel bottom, causing stream banks to slump. In addition, large cracks appeared in the banks, indicating the potential for mass failure beneath both Route 214 and Silver Hollow Road. The construction firm Baker Brothers Excavating of West Hurley, NY was hired to install a series of large rock structures to prevent channel erosion. The structures look like rock "steps" found in steep streams throughout the Catskills. To further stabilize the channel, thick metal sheet piling was driven 10-23 feet into the ground with one of the largest excavator-mounted pneumatic hammers available. The piling was buried under native boulders and fill that restored the bed to a stable elevation.

With the stream bed restored to a stable elevation, flows can now access a small floodplain along the bank. The rock steps and floodplain absorb the energy of fast flows. At project end, the stream banks and floodplain were re-vegetated with native trees and shrubs to hold exposed soil and provide cover for migrating fish. Although this steep section of the Stony Clove is believed to provide limited habitat for fish, the crews observed large trout using the site. The engineering firm Milone & MacBroom, Inc (MMI) designed the project. MMI and the Ulster County Soil and Water Conservation District provided construction oversight.

A second project took place on the Stony Clove Creek along Stony Clove Lane. This project stabilized a large failing hillslope which was shedding sediment and woody debris into the channel. The woody debris threatened to block a bridge and several culverts maintained by the Town of Shandaken. The construction firm Hubbell, Inc. of Margaretville, NY was hired to install a constructed riffle and rock vanes in the stream channel. The rock vanes turn water away from eroding banks. A pinned and stacked rock wall and floodplain bench were built to stabilize the bank. The NRCS and Ulster County Soil and Water Conservation District designed and inspected the project. The site was revegetated with trees and shrubs through the Catskill Streams Buffer Initiative.

The Ashokan Watershed Stream Management Program is a partnership between the Ulster County Soil and Water Conservation District, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County, and the New York City Department of Environmental Protection. Visit the AWSMP website, ashokanstreams.org, for more information and follow us on Facebook. Contact the program office at 845-688-3047. For more information about Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County's community programs and events visit our online calendar at www.cceulster.org.

Stay connected to CCEUC. “Friend” us on Facebook and “Follow” us on Twitter. CCEUC provides equal program and employment opportunities. Please contact the program office at 845-688-3047 if you have any special needs.

DEP manages New York City’s water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of high quality water each day to more than 9 million New Yorkers. This includes more than 70 upstate communities and institutions in Ulster, Orange, Putnam and Westchester counties who consume an average of 110 million total gallons of drinking water daily from New York City’s water supply system. This water comes from the Catskill, Delaware, and Croton watersheds that extend more than 125 miles from the City, and the system comprises 19 reservoirs, three controlled lakes, and numerous tunnels and aqueducts. DEP has nearly 6,000 employees, including almost 1,000 scientists, engineers, surveyors, watershed maintainers and others professionals in the upstate watershed. In addition to its \$70 million payroll and \$157 million in annual taxes paid in upstate counties, DEP has invested more than \$1.7 billion in watershed protection programs—including partnership organizations such as the Catskill Watershed Corporation and the Watershed Agricultural Council—that support sustainable farming practices, environmentally sensitive economic development, and local economic opportunity. In addition, DEP has a robust capital program with nearly \$14 billion in investments planned over the next 10 years that will create up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. For more information, visit nyc.gov/dep, like us on Facebook at facebook.com/nycwater, or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/nycwater.

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