

Rondout Creek Watershed Alliance

Rondout Municipal Center Room M15

Start time: 6:02pm

End time: 7:55pm

Agenda

7/18/19

Regular Business

1. Present at the RCWA meeting was Laura Finestone, Eric Steward, John Messerschmidt, Manna Jo Greene (arrived later), Haley Springston (new, from Rosendale), Adriana Magaña, Andrew Faust, Rebecca Martin (Riverkeeper).
 - a. Haley is also associated with the Rondout Neversink Stream Program. Adriana asked her to look into the affluent on Deniston road.
2. The group passed notes from 6/19/19 without any changes.

Old Business

1. Laura gave a recap of the recent Hudson River Watershed Alliance Roundtable event that both she and Andrew attended on behalf of the RCWA. It was well attended. They learned that Marist college is doing research on microplastics. A watershed management plan is being drafted for the Mohegan Brook in Orange County (for a 9 Element plan). Ulster County has 80 flood prone properties this year that are/were available for purchase. Scott Cuppett of the NYSDEC gave a presentation and discussed a ten year strategic plan for tributaries and watersheds. Grants may be available and the RCWA and WRWA discussed possibly partnering on a project.
 - a. **ACTION: Rebecca to reach out to Amanda at the UC Department of the Environment to retrieve list of properties in Ulster County along the Rondout Creek in the floodplain.**
2. Eric Stewart gave an update on the Marbletown Town Board. There are two projects in tandem: a creekside walk of an existing trail and the falls (on the Con Edison site) below the town and canal house. The goal is to improve the trail for a linear park. The town is working with Riverkeeper to do water

testing of tributaries that lead to the Rondout Creek. They hope to test several more times before the fall. A goal from the results might be to post bacterial counts on outdoor signage. There are also concerns about drowning at that location. The town took over three parcels of land adjacent to the creek and Central Hudson has a six foot wide boundary along the length of the creek. Sheriff Figeroa walked the land with Ramona, Eric, Jen and Supervisor Parete. Littering and graffiti has been a problem. It was determined that the town would miss the August 1st Trees for Tribes (TfT) application deadline, but are hoping to do something in the Spring.

3. Laura Finestone contacted the Rondout/Esopus Conservancy to start a conversation about building a future partnership to work on available lands along the creek with easements for rehabilitation projects such as TfT. Some members of the alliance have concerns regarding the investment of time and manpower to work on sites where there are not ongoing plans to protect the work and to build upon it.

Upcoming Events

1. The July 20 (10am - 1pm): “[Future Forests in the Rondout Creek Watershed](#)” Coxing Kill Clean-up / Maintenance Event was canceled due to heat. The group discussed rescheduling it on September 21st.
2. A discussion about sampling in the Rondout Creek was brought up by Andrew and Adriana with questions regarding possible sampling options outside of entero such as turbidity, temperature, DNA, biological (WAVE), macro invertebrates (Martha Cheo) and phosphorus. The alliance talked about hot spots and issues. Haley said that testing temperature would require consistency with time of day, depth, flow events, etc. Manna Jo Greene suggested that the alliance could do what Peekskill did by mapping out the SPDES picture of the watershed from data that exists. GEIS could be used to create maps of environmental justice inventory with a watershed report. Emily Vail may be able to help. Concerns were raised about whether or not PFOS or PFOA was still being used by Fire Stations in the watershed and how close those facilities were to the Rondout Creek throughout.
 - a. **ACTION: Invite Jen Epstein and Dan Shapley to present sampling process of the Rondout Creek and other future options.**

Old Business

1. RCWA Mission and Tagline

- a. The new RCWA mission tagline was read aloud and approved.

Rondout Creek Watershed Alliance. “Jump in it Don’t Dump in it”
There is no life without water. A creek we can swim in and eat from is both our right and our responsibility. The Rondout Creek Watershed Alliance was founded to restore the Rondout Creek and its tributaries to their prime, to act as the voice of the Creek, and to advocate for the protection and improvement of the watershed by increasing community awareness and implementing collaborative conservation efforts.

- b. “Water is Life” was discussed as a possible tagline alternative, but the group discovered that the phrase was trademarked and may require permissions to be used.

- i. **ACTION: Mission to be updated in RCWA guiding documents and facebook page.**

2. Committee updates.

- a. Project Committee: Communications

- i. Logo/Artwork/Brochure

1. The group still needs to finish the Rondout Watershed Map with layers for the brochure. Adriana volunteered to do the design, and will have a draft ready for the August meeting. The group decided to include the large roadways as a reference.

- a. **ACTION: Follow-up with Adriana for August.**

- ii. Social Media

1. The group discussed creating a social media policy with rules and procedures now that the group is using Facebook regularly. Adriana has volunteered to be the point person to edit the social media pages

- a. **Rebecca will work on policy for the fall. Adriana would like to have access to the communications document.**

- b. Project Committee: [Riparian Zone Planting](#) (RZP)

- i. The group is working on a map of existing Riparian Zone plantings to see what maintenance is required before starting

anything new. Hopefully, the group will be ready to submit an application to TtT in the spring.

New Business

1. The group tabled a discussion on the RCWA to discuss an [advocacy plan for a park at Port Ben Bridge](#). John might have opportunities for support and will share after doing some research.
2. A conversation about the USACE (Army Corps of Engineers) seeking input regarding their Draft Integrated Feasibility Study and Environmental Assessment for Hudson River Habitat Restoration Ecosystem Restoration Study by **July 26, 2019**. The group agreed to submit a letter.
<https://www.nan.usace.army.mil/Missions/Environmental/Environmental-Restoration/Hudson-River-Habitat-Restoration/>
 - a. **ACTION: Draft language to be sent to the group for review that applauds the ACE for investigating ecological projects for the Hudson Estuary. Although the preliminary study does not guarantee that any projects will go forward, the RCWA understands that the ACE is seeking input on whether or not to flesh out their initial findings enough to make recommendations up or down for each project (that would include the Eddyville Dam on the Rondout Creek).**
2. Eric asked if the RCWA would come to an upcoming Environmental Management Council meeting at the county to present its work. It is the last Wednesday of the month at SUNY Ulster from 6:30pm - 7:30pm.
 - a. **ACTION: Both Andrew and Laura volunteered to speak and will wait for an invitation.**
3. The alliance asked to see a link to Emily Vale's "Tannery Brook Project"
 - a. **ACTION: Rebecca will include link in next month's agenda.**
4. Brendon Wagner (CPESC/Certified Professional in Erosion and Sediment Control), Restoration Coordinator for the Rondout Neversink Stream Program reached out the RCWA. Haley works with him. He said, *"I work on stream/riparian restoration projects, research, and public education in the Upper Rondout for the DEP funded stream management program of Sullivan County SWCD. I'm very interested in becoming active in this group, but I live down in Warwick so a meeting till 8 pm in Kingston isn't really an option for me. If there was a possibility of having meetings closer*

to the southern end or heart of the watershed, or earlier in the day, I would love to attend and possibly present on the work we do. I'd also like to invite you to come see our work someday, I can give you a tour of our recent projects." The group discussed potentially holding their meetings in different municipalities throughout of the watershed, but no decision was made. They were all very happy to make a connection with a contact in the Neversink.

5. Haley discussed the possibility of analyzing severity of animal crossings and existing dam and culverts (level 1) with the NAACC.org and RCWA.