



Schoharie County Soil and Water
Conservation District

Stream Program

Background

Schoharie County has had a long history of stream problems. From yearly localized flooding, to major events, such as the flood in 1996. And, while flooding may be the major concern for most residents, loss of property, clean drinking water and recreational uses are all common concerns as well.

In October, 2007 the Schoharie county Soil and Water Conservation District took a pro-active step and sought approval from the Schoharie County Board of Supervisors to hire a Stream Program Manager, the position was met with approval, and the process of hiring an individual began. In May, 2008 Peter Nichols, a SUNY Cobleskill Alumni, was selected as the candidate for the job.

The Plan

While still in its infancy, the plan is to assist county landowners with problems along their waterways. The Schoharie County Soil and Water Conservation District decided that the best method of approach was to take a conservative, back to nature type of approach, suggesting the most effective, less invasive and cost effective techniques. To do this, specialized training in Fluvial Geomorphology is critical. Peter began a hands-on training while conducting a through walk-over on the Manor kill in the town of Conesville. With assistance from the Greene County Soil and Water Conservation District and the New York City DEP, Peter has already begun his first plan. To complete the training, Peter will be attending a series of trainings over the next several years.

Implementation

Creating plans is just the beginning. Implementation of the plans will be the next step. The Schoharie County Soil and Water Conservation District is already starting to gather the materials and resources necessary to implement the plans. Some of these include:

- Creation of plantations for harvesting plant materials needed for use on landowner's critical areas.
- Create volunteer groups that will be able to
 - Assist with Plantation maintenance

- Assist with plantings on landowner's critical areas
- Perform Water Quality testing to determine baseline health of streams and document successes
- Find ways to streamline the permitting process for projects that exist on protected waterways
- Research and develop the newest and most successful stream bank stabilization techniques for implementation in Schoharie County

Funding

Of course the major hurdle in most implementation projects is funding. While ultimately, it is the landowner's responsibility to maintain their watercourses, the Schoharie County Soil and Water Conservation District will continue to look for sources of funding to assist with these projects. Peter has also indicated that he will work with landowners to come up with ways to reduce costs, and even suggesting how work can be done in stages, to help spread the cost out over time.

Peter has already been successful in obtaining a grant for funding for the Village of Middleburgh to assist with a stream side planting. We believe that this is just the beginning.

If you are interested in providing input, or maybe you have the time to volunteer, we'd love to hear from you. Please contact Peter Nichols at (518) 234-4092.

Volunteers may also fill out the volunteer registration form available on this website.