

STC REGION TODAY

Chemung, Schuylers and Steuben Counties

New York State

Fall / Winter 2010

Telecommunications Update

STC is going forward with its plan to create a fiber optic infrastructure, in spite of the disappointing news that the NTIA (National Telecommunications Information Administration) did not have sufficient resources to fund this project.

“We are too far along and this is too important to the region to stop the process now,” said STC’s Executive Director, Marcia Weber. “The counties are strong supporters of this project, and we have a great plan that is ready to go.”

The day in late September that she heard that the NTIA grant did not come through, Marcia contacted elected officials and various funding sources to locate the funds needed to build the fiber optic infrastructure. She is pursuing options and is very optimistic.

The project is designed to connect public safety towers and 911 centers across the region and make fiber available even in rural areas that have had to rely on dial-up service.

The fiber would be available to “anchor institutions,” which include business and industry, schools, health care facilities, government offices, libraries, and other organizations. It would be a major economic development boost for the region.

The other telecommunication application submitted by STC was to make the greater Corning area a “Google community,” providing fiber to the home in the Towns of Erwin, Corning, and Big Flats and the City of Corning. No word has been received from Google yet.

STC continues to work to bring high speed broadband to the Southern Tier and thanks the counties and other partners for their participation in the effort.

Jennifer Fais Retires



Jennifer Fais, STC’s Principal Planner, retired in September 2010 after more than twenty-five years with Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board. During that time, Jennifer has provided assistance in community planning, wind farm regulations, environmental planning, GIS, historic preservation, water

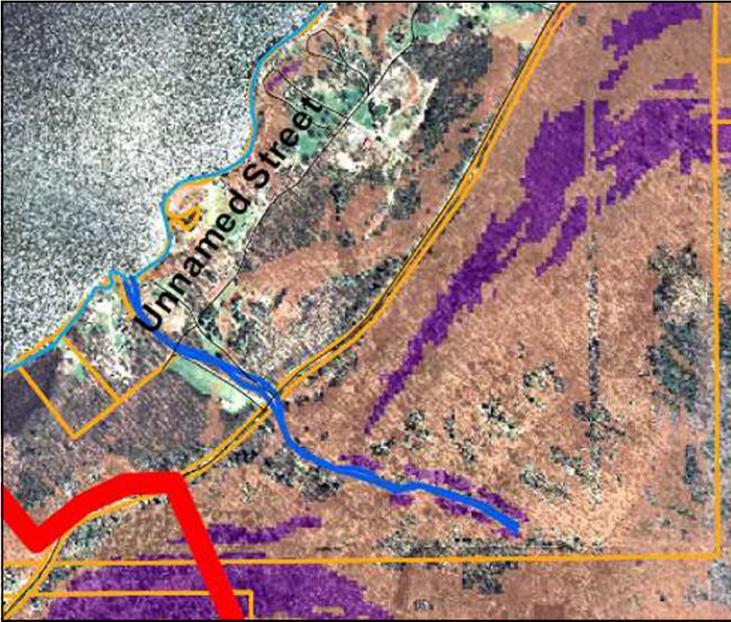
quality protection programs, watershed planning, and aquifer and wellhead protection. Most recently, Jennifer helped staff the Rural Stormwater Coalitions in Chemung, Schuylers, and Steuben Counties and has prepared outreach material on rural driveway construction and homeowner runoff issues. She authored the “LID Sampler” and the “Rural Design Workbook.” Jennifer co-chaired the Chemung Basin River Trail Partnership, created by agencies and interested residents in August 1999 to improve access to the river system for everyone’s enjoyment while promoting the protection of the watershed. She is a founding member of the Friends of the Chemung River Watershed.

After retirement, she plans to stay in the area to continue watercolor painting and serving on the Friends’ Board, among other interests.

“Jennifer has been a tremendous resource to STC and the region,” said STC’s Executive Director, Marcia Weber. “We will miss her years of experience, her ability to respond to current needs, and her foresight in preparing for future water quality issues. She has been both an asset to the agency and a good friend to all the staff.”

This report has been funded in part by the following Federal and State agencies: Appalachian Regional Commission; American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (AARA) (administered by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC); U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) through Section 604(b) of the Clean Water Act (administered by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC); New York State Department of State; NYS Department of Transportation - Federal Highway Administration; USEPA Chesapeake Bay Program.

Small Lake Associations Receive Mapping



Construction on steep slopes can lead to sediment in our small lakes

Conversation at the Steuben County Water Quality Coordinating Committee often turns to the concerns of the member small lake associations. Recently, because of the state stormwater permit for construction activity, more attention is being paid to land disturbance on steep slopes that drain directly to the lakes. Uncontrolled, this runoff can cause pollution in the lakes. Often, just understanding where problem areas are can help solve the problem. These discussions led to the creation of a series of maps showing such useful information as parcel boundaries, municipal borders, aerial photography, contours, and areas of steep slopes and steep soils within each lake watershed.

Hard copies for distribution to lake property owners as well as large posters, as requested, were given to the lake associations of Cayuta Lake, Demmons Pond, Lake Salubria, Lamoka/Waneta Lakes, Loon Lake, Smith Pond, and Tanglewood Lake. Similar materials are also being developed for the Meads Creek Watershed Association. All mapping is available on STC's website: Program Areas: Stormwater, then "small lake associations."

Funding for this project was provided in part through the NYS Water Quality Improvement Program (WQIP) Round 9.

Southeast Steuben River Vision Project Wraps Up

Local officials from the City of Corning, Villages of Riverside and South Corning, and the Towns of Corning and Erwin are considering resolutions of support at their fall board meetings as the River Vision project comes to a successful conclusion. Painted Post took action at their October meeting.

The year-long project has identified "gaps" in the network of river-related trails, launch sites and amenities in southeast Steuben County and recommends new projects. The effort dovetails with the recently released "Chemung River Comprehensive Master Plan" developed with LWRP funds in neighboring Chemung County and helps expand regional, state and interstate blue and green trail systems.

The project has resulted in a Southeast Steuben "River Vision." Over the long term, communities hope to improve public access to the Chemung River, protect the River's natural resources, generate jobs/revenue for outdoor sports/water-related businesses, and strengthen community cooperation. The Friends of the Chemung River Watershed, a grass-roots river organization, is offering to help the municipalities as they move forward. The project totals \$52,860 including match provided by the communities.



Bill Cornell, Mayor, Village of Riverside; Kris Pashley, City of Corning Recreation Dept.; and Gerry Morse, Deputy Mayor, Village of South Corning, look over maps of the River Vision Project.

STC Staff Takes Flood Model to Area Schools



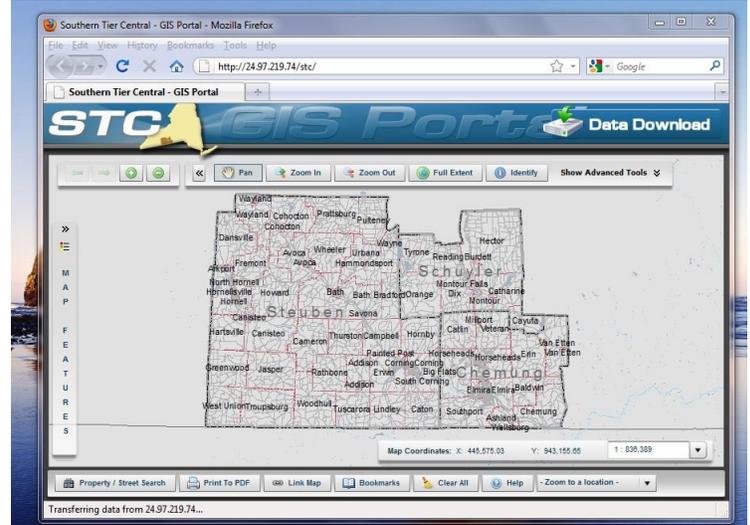
Students participating in Steuben County's Outdoor Education Field Day watch to see whether the flood mitigation measures they've implemented will be effective. This Stormwater Flood Simulation Model is a great hands-on tool for demonstrating the impacts of land use on

downstream flow and experimenting with ideas for addressing flooding problems. The model was purchased by Environmental Emergency Services, which is seeking volunteers to take the model to schools and other settings. Anyone interested in participating in train-the-trainer workshops may contact Janet Thigpen at 607-737-5271 or jthigpen@co.chemung.ny.us.

STC is Preparing to Begin the 2012 CEDS Process.

Although the 2011 CEDS was recently completed, STC has begun the update process early this year. STC staff will begin calling and meeting with local leaders to devise a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for 2011-2012. The 2012 CEDS will function as a recommendation for how to guide development in Schuyler, Chemung, and Steuben Counties in order to achieve the desired outcome in 2012. The 2012 CEDS will include new informational and engaging graphics, along with the topic-specific recommendations of the Economic Development Policy Committee. Victoria Ehlen, STC's Economic Development Coordinator, will begin meeting with local organizations to discuss the CEDS in December 2010. STC looks forward to your participation.

STC Data Warehouse is Up and Running



The STC Data Warehouse is up and running. The project budget was cut significantly, so instead of getting a turnkey product, STC staff was trained to finish the site, training that will be valuable for future updates. STC is currently loading data into the database.

STC Hires Consultant



Richard Lasko has accepted a temporary position of GIS Technician/Consultant with STCRPDB. He is a 2000 graduate of Kutztown University of Pennsylvania with a Bachelors degree in Geography. For the last 5 years, Rich has been working for the James W. Sewall Company in Elmira, specializing in cadastral, zoning, and E911 mapping. Also while with Sewall, Rich developed 3-D maps for the Town of Big Flats that were used to compare tax parcels relationships to hillsides and ridgelines and see how they might be affected by zoning changes. Rich's role with STC will be creating data including mapping impervious surfaces for the Susquehanna-Chemung Action Plan. Rich is also assisting local municipalities with mapping of culverts as part of Round 9 Water Quality Improvement Project. He looks forward to working with the STC staff as well as the local municipalities.

Susquehanna-Chemung Action Plan

The Susquehanna-Chemung Action Plan for the Susquehanna-Chemung River Basins of New York is in full swing. In May the Susquehanna-Chemung Action Plan announced its new website: www.susquehanna-chemung.org. The website is chock full of information on the Plan, its progress, existing applicable information, meeting minutes and agendas. Very shortly a Susquehanna-Chemung Action Plan GIS viewer will be available. The website is always changing, so make sure to check it out.

Progress continued in October with the first focus group meeting, held on October 4th in Owego to discuss Flood Hazards. Turn-out was wonderful, and a great conversation ensued. Information gathered at this focus group session will be incorporated in the Flood Hazards section of the Susquehanna-Chemung Action Plan. Within the next month an additional focus group session will be held to discuss another one of the 11 target topics of the Susquehanna-Chemung Action Plan. So keep your ears open and your eyes peeled for the next meeting date.

Please visit the website at www.susquehanna-chemung.org. We encourage you to join the Advisory Committee, share comments, attend focus group meetings, or provide additional information by calling Chelsea at 607-962-5092 ext. 204 or email at www.plan.stny.rr.com.



Buffer Setback Flags Now Available

Saying that development should be set back fifty feet from streams and creeks and making sure that developers know where that line is on the property can be two different things. STC, as part of its rural stormwater program, has purchased 2000 “buffer setback” stakes for distribution to municipal code enforcement officers. **These will be available at the November 4, 2010 Stormwater Symposium** sponsored by the Chemung County Stormwater Coalition and **by contacting STC**. *If your laws do not protect streams*, please consider adopting new drainage / stormwater management sections – handy model language is available from STC at www.stcplanning.org Program Areas: Stormwater.

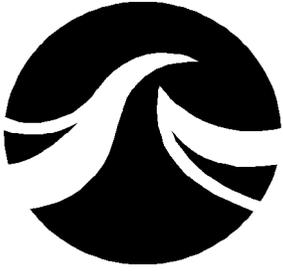


Seneca Lake Watershed Management Plan

The “Seneca Lake Watershed Management Plan” is a three year grant awarded to the City of Geneva and funded by the NYS Local Waterfront Revitalization Fund. This Plan will build upon the 1999 Plan, *Setting a Course for Seneca Lake*, once again bringing together the five Counties and over 40 municipalities that fall within the Seneca Lake Watershed. This plan will serve as a long-term strategy for the protection and restoration of water quality and will ensure compatible land use development.

Partnered with the city of Geneva to complete this plan are: Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council, Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board, The Finger Lakes Institute and Hobart and William Smith College. SLAP-5, a group formed in 1999 while working on *Setting a Course for Seneca Lake*, will be integral to the completion of the Seneca Lake Watershed Management Plan. The Plan will be a permanent agenda item on the SLAP-5 agenda at their bi-monthly meetings, and the SLAP-5 advisory committee will also serve on the Seneca Lake Watershed Management Plan Project Advisory Committee.

Rethinking the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)



STC prepared a position paper for the New York State Floodplain and Stormwater Managers Association with a comprehensive set of recommendations for improving the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

The NFIP consists of three components: (1) mapping of flood hazard areas, (2) insurance, and (3) floodplain development standards. Association members have identified serious deficiencies in each aspect of the program. Maps provide an overly simplistic, and sometimes inaccurate, assessment of flood hazards.

Escalating insurance costs result in premiums that are no longer affordable, with an unreasonable price structure. And the program has not prevented escalating flood damages. In the first decade of this century, yearly flood losses have increased from \$6 billion to \$15 billion. The position paper recommends sweeping reforms to the nation's flood policy and presents specific recommendations for revising all aspects of the NFIP. This position paper can be downloaded at www.stcplanning.org.

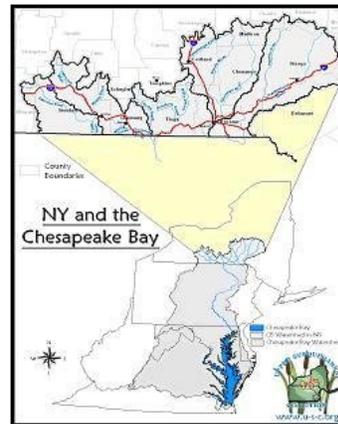
Water Quality Improvement Projects Round 9 (WQIP)



Work that began in 2007 has continued into this last year of the three year grant. STC continues to prepare its rural, non

Municipal Separate Stormwater Sewer System (MS4s) communities to meet the same six Minimum Control Measures (MCMs) as the MS4 communities. In addition to encouraging and engaging in Public Information and Outreach, Public Involvement, Trainings and Recommendations of language for local laws, STC staff has been working vigorously to map drainage in its rural municipalities as an initial step towards creating Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination (IDDE) programs. This drainage system mapping has also helped highway staff identify potential problems. Most recently, STC worked with Chemung and Schuyler departments to map their County Highway culverts. STC is also interested in working with rural Towns to map their town culverts. The Town of Reading has already completed this. If your rural Town is interested in participating in the WQIP Round 9 grant by having your Town's culverts mapped, please contact Chelsea Robertson at 607-962-5092 x204.

STC Comments on Draft Chesapeake Bay TMDL



Many of the rivers and streams in the STC region drain into the Susquehanna River and eventually into the Chesapeake Bay. Efforts to improve water quality in the Bay thus involve the Southern Tier of New York, as well as five other watershed states and the District of Columbia. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency prepared a draft strategy for reducing

pollution loads into the Chesapeake Bay, called a Total Maximum Daily Load, or TMDL.

The STC Board submitted comments on the draft document, expressing concerns that the allocation assigned to New York is unfair and probably unachievable. The draft document would require significant and costly implementation measures in New York, with any economic benefits being limited to states adjacent to the Bay. New York's water quality far surpasses that of any other jurisdiction within the Bay watershed. And due to the distance from the Chesapeake Bay, New York would derive no direct benefit from improvements to its water quality. The Board thus requested that EPA revise the draft TMDL so that it is both equitable and achievable.

The letter is available at www.stcplanning.org. The draft TMDL document and other information can be found on the EPA website at <http://www.epa.gov/chesapeakebaytmdl/>.

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*left during the year

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