

Meeting Notes

Rensselaer County MS4 Communities Meeting

Schodack Island State Park

July 20, 2021

10:00 a.m.

The meeting started at 10:07 a.m. There being several new faces around the tables, introductions were made. Rick Williams is the new MS4 Coordinator for Castleton. Nadine and Mary will be retiring at the end of the year.

The second item on the agenda was Local BMPs. After the heavy rains of the previous week, it seemed that one of the most important things to prevent flooding damage was to make sure that drainage channels, ditches and other stormwater facilities are clear and able to perform as they should. There should be prioritization of areas known to have issues, with these areas being checked regularly and before major storms occur. East Greenbush checks and cleans all their basins yearly and basins in bad spots more regularly. Usually, the bad spots need cleaning out several times a year.

In Sand Lake on Oak Hill Road, Taborton Road area, there is a private pond that is missing. There needs to be education for pond owners. DEC has a webpage devoted to pond maintenance.

The discussion then drifted to operations and maintenance (O & M) plans. O & M plans are pretty simple and should be easy to put together. Infrastructure should be identified on a map, either digital or paper, and problem areas denoted. Maintenance protocols are written including those to address problem areas. Reporting systems are formalized. Places that often have problems are toes of steep hills and areas of regular flooding. Separate sewer systems without treatment plants (POSS) are required to have O & M plans. For combined systems, flooding is often caused by blocked screens. EPA does inspect POSS for O & M plans. Pretty much, you just need to write down what you are presently doing and address problems. Mr. Daley will forward O & M sample plans from the CSOs.

A question arose on what to do with utility-scale solar power systems and what stormwater strategies apply. Brunswick has had several moderate-size solar farms and found that the establishment of vegetation is very important. Soil tests should be performed right off in case the soil needs amendment. Some of their solar farms were located on less fertile soils and the cover crop did not take hold as well as it should have. Mr. Bradley stated that Dutch white clover should be increased in the seed mix as it improves the soil and seems to grow well (and doesn't grow that tall). #3 stone was used on the roadways and seems to have done a good job. Level spreaders for stormwater seem to be performing well. For sections that are wet, the seed mixture needs to be different or it won't grow. Schodack has developers that want to use bonds to cover decommissioning. Long-term funding coverage needs to be something that the developer will maintain or cash. On one site in Brunswick, the underlying property owner changed and challenged folks going to the solar farm – an easement needs to be established to allow the operator and community access to the farm.

For the proposal in East Greenbush, the site is forested and will need to be clear cut. The applicant states that a stormwater permit isn't needed since they won't be disturbing an acre. Removing stumps, etc. will probably disturb over an acre, although hydraxing isn't considered disturbing for some reason. Installing myriads of posts and installing cabling and access roads will probably disturb an acre or more. Keeping the brush down will also be necessary. Sheep seem to be the method proposed in Schodack (who's the sheep farmer?). Sheep also don't eat shrubby growth, but goats climb on the solar equipment and will probably also eat any exposed wiring.

Schodack has also run into developers selling approved site plans and the new developers wanting to do changes to the site plans and not realizing that the revised plans need to be reapproved. Communities who have solar developers inquiring about building in their community should inform the developer immediately that the solar project will have property taxes and notify Bill Film in the Rensselaer County Tax Services Office as well, so that he can start working on a tax PILOT with the company. Schodack allows solar farms only in special districts, which means that all solar farms require rezoning and approval of the Town Board.

Maryland Stormwater???

There is a book that was sent to all the town assessors from Bill Film that provides assistance in assessing the value of solar farms.

There is no news about the draft MS4 permit. Carol Lamb-LaFay is now Bureau Director.

Good Housekeeping Training needs to be done. Schaghticoke was snagged by the EPA for Minimum Measures 5 & 6 after the EPA reviewed their annual report.

The next meeting will be held on September 21, 2021 at 10 AM at the Brunswick Town Beach.

Attendees:

Bonnie Starr	DEC R4	Bonnie.Starr@dec.ny.gov
Nate Woodworth	Rensselaer SWCD	
Megan Myers	Rensselaer SWCD	Megan.Myers.renscoswcd@gmail.com
Kyle Woodard	City of Rensselaer	Kyle.Woodard@rensselaerny.gov
Mark Hendricks	City of Rensselaer	Mark.Hendricks@rensselaerny.gov
Linda von der Heide	Rensselaer County	Lvonderheide@rensko.com / 518-270-2921
Nadine Fuda	Schodack	Nadine.Fuda@schodack.org / 518-477-7938
Scott Gallerie	East Greenbush	SGallerie@eastgreenbush.org
Dan Fiacco	East Greenbush	DFiacco@eastgreenbush.org
Andrew Golden	Troy	Andrew.Golden@troyny.gov
Anna Feltham	East Greenbush	AFeltham@eastgreenbush.org
Adam Yagelski	East Greenbush	AYagelski@eastgreenbush.org
Philip Koziol	Laberge/Schodack	Pkoziol@labergegroup.com / 518-458-7112
Martin Daley	CDRPC	MDaley@cdrpc.org / 518-894-2195
William Bradley	Brunswick	Wbradley@townofbrunswick.org