

## Ausable Watershed Management Planning Public Input Meeting Combined Summary

### Top Issues of Concern:

Main (M)	East (E)	West (W)
Flooding from ice jams	Stream bank erosion	Education: Land use planning tools, local governments, state agencies, communities
Bank Erosion	Sedimentation	Road issues; relationship between DOT and local practices
Trash in the River and Unauthorized Dumping	Water quality	Boat Access (DEC) – expansions
		Stormwater Basin Mapping

**\*\*Statements in red are issues of concern listed in the “Characterization of the Watershed”**

### Education:

- Lack of broad public awareness on the importance of water quality
  - Solutions:*
    - Do not put trash in the river or near the river! (M)
    - General river education, how rivers work (M)
    - Don't Feed the Ducks (W, TU,
    - Educate residents of the watershed about the importance of a clean river for locals and the tourist economy (M)
    - Teach or make a display on the History of the river and industry (M)
    - No P fertilizers education for public and golf courses (W)
    - Boat washing education why, invasives, where, how to dispose of water (W)
    - Trout in the classroom (W)
    - Monthly education article in newspaper (W)
    - Public Service Announcements on radio (W)
    - Education of local government officials, planning boards, community organizations, Land use planning tools. (W)

### Impairments to Water Quality/ (Pollution):

**Trash** in the river and along banks (M, E):

- Tires, refrigerators, bags of garbage, shopping carts, plastics, bottles and cans,
- propane tanks from camps. (M)
- Unauthorized dumping (M)

**Road Salt** (W, E, M, TU)

- Too much road salt is applied to roads
- Contaminating groundwater and drinking water supply
- Affecting river water chemistry
- Affecting the Cascade Lakes and Chapel Pond (Clarkson Study)

*Solutions:*

- Work with Town Hwy. Depts. to ensure green road maintenance, reduce and sand find alternatives to salt (W)

### **Septage (W, E, M)**

- ASRA/DEC high coliform in W. Branch LP to Wilm suspected septic
- NYSEC PWL/IW East Branch Upper Jay to Mouth, Pathogens from septic or direct discharge
- Failing and failed septic tanks leaking septage into the river
- Septage from poor septic tank maintenance and leach field failures; specifically:  
Jay, Wilmington, North Elba, Keene
- Grey water from old and newly constructed houses

#### **Solutions:**

- Inform, educate, enforce septic tank pumping every 3-5 years,
- proper maintenance of septic tanks,
- replace old, failed septic tanks and leach fields
- locate the septage problem areas and educate the owners
- Build a Waste Water Plant in problem areas

### **Phosphorous loading (W, M)**

- Champlain Basin TMDL
- Fertilizers used on Golf Courses and lawns in the watershed
- Causing Excess Algal Growth

### **Pollution (general)**

- *Chemicals* added to the snow during snowmaking and onto ski trails during alpine races (W, E)
- From Lake Placid & North Elba into Chubb River;
- From junk yards (Keeseville, Au Sable)

### **Groundwater Pollution (E)**

- Possible contamination of GW in Keeseville area due to junk yard run off (test wells?)
- Groundwater Pollution, from specifically: Salt, Septage, and Grey water from old and newly constructed houses

### **Flooding:**

#### **Flooding from ice jams (ACOE, 1998 report), specifically:**

- Upper Jay
  - Ausable Forks
  - Jersey Bridge
  - Stickney Bridge
  - Upper Jay
  - Jay (Hamlet)
  - Clintonville, Dugway Road
- Flooding as a result of keeping the river out of its flood plane (both ice jam and high water flooding)
  - Houses on the flood plane (get flooded; they should not be built there!)
  - Local laws regulating building on the flood plane are too weak!

### **Streambank Erosions and Sedimentation:**

#### **Stream bank erosion (W, E, M, ASRA study)**

- Iron Bridge Parking
- Deerwood Hills to Basset Flats (North Elba)
- River Road (North Elba)
- Rivermede Farm (Keene Valley)
- St. Hubert's
- Inglenook (Keene Valley)

- John's Brook
- Gulf Brook
- Nicole's Brook
- Lacy Bridge to Upper Jay
- Jay to Stickney Bridge
- Carpenter Flats (Main Stem)
- Downstream of Ausable Chasm at Rt. 9N bridge to above mouth
- "Everywhere"

### **Sedimentation**

- ASRA Embeddedness Studies (East Branch) from roads and bank collapse
- Sand from winter maintenance (Town/County Hwy. Depts.)
- Road washouts on gravel/dirt roads and graveled edges of paved roads
- Sand from Whiteface Mt. Ski Area Bridge, roads, and parking lots
- Sand from turnouts on Rt. 86 that bank toward the river. (W)
- In the West Branch up river from Lake Everest (W)
- In Lake Everest (W)
- In river upstream from mouth of Styles Brook (Island there) (E)
- At the delta (in L. Champlain)

### **Stormwater Management (W, M)**

- Oil spills
- Illegal discharges
- Motor homes
- Car washing

### **Land use**

- Land use change/Development/Construction (W, TU)
- Construction in LP, Wilmington, Keene
- Loss of Wildlife Habitat due to encroachment (W)
- Loss of Biodiversity in the River (E)

### **Habitat**

- Loss of Wildlife Habitat due to encroachment (W)
- Loss of Biodiversity in the River (E)
- Too few fish on the East Branch, too few native fish (All)
- Degraded habitat due to widening and shallowing of the channel

### **Loss of Riparian Buffer (M, E)**

One tree wide buffers that do not adequately protect the banks (tree collapse causes bank scour that is not protected)

Due to Bank Beavers and causing stream bank erosion

### **Roads and Bridges**

#### **Bridge openings are too narrow (M, E)**

- Dugway Road Bridge at Edward's Flats
- Butler Bridge
- Rt. 73 between Keene and Keene Valley
- Rt. 9N in Upper Jay (at Land of Make Believe)

**Non-point source** pollution roads that line the river; specifically: Rt 9N, 86, 73

### **Junk Yards (M, E)**

Junk piled on river banks washes down stream during floods

**NYCEC PWL/IW Contaminants, oils and other toxic fluids, wash directly into the river and wash down storm drains during rainstorms and floods**

Ground water contamination as a result of fluids spilling out of junk yards

## **Agriculture**

- Impacts of agricultural land on the river:
  - Exotic Pet House
  - North Jay longhorn ranch – livestock in the stream
  - North Elba Horseshow Grounds – where does the manure go?

## **Public Access**

### ***Access Too limited (-)***

- Fishing access where private land borders both sides of the river (TU)
- Lack of Public Access (E,
- Lack of (Public Access for) Swimming(E,
- Limited access: Specifically failure to obtain public easements that could lead to better access to the river due to municipality veto's (W)
- overcrowded access (W, catch and release section)

### ***Good Access (+) (E, W)***

- Extensive public fishing access (W)

### ***Solutions:***

- Improve fishing access for youth and handicapped
- Boat Access (DEC) – expansions
- Increase access to the river and stimulate appreciation, for example build a trail from Keeseville to Ausable Chasm

## **Aesthetics of the Watershed**

(+)

- Scenic vistas (M, W, E)
- Scenic drives (M)

(-)

- Visual Degredation – houses in the scenic corridor (TU)
- Losing Scenic Views (W)

**Invasive species:** terrestrial and aquatic: (W, TU, **ASRA studies**)

- Didymo (Rock Snot)
- Japanese Knotweed – Upper Jay, Wes Valley
- Purple Loosestrife – everywhere!
- Milfoil
- Cross contamination by boat transport

## **Governance**

- Lack of Enforcement of Regulations
- Lack of zoning, land use enforcement (capacity, priorities, facilities)
- Lack of Code Enforcement (W, E,
- Local laws regulating building on the flood plane are too weak!
- Lack of coordination of regulatory jurisdictions
- Dams on private land not being maintained and releasing large loads of sediment; Lack or regulation (enforcement) Who is watching?

### **Funding and Support for the River**

- Lack of Funding
- Need for more funding for staff of the ASRA

### **Other:**

#### **Over use of the river**

- Specifically in the no kill section of the West Branch (resulting in bank impacts and proliferation of trails streamside) (W
- Cumulative affects of use/abuse by many users (W

#### **Bank Beavers**

- destroying riparian buffer
- bank beavers causing water to be contaminate with Giardia

#### **Acid Rain, Climate Change,**