

# Walton Flood Commission

## Preparing for Third Brook

### Watershed Management Plan

By Glenn Graves

WALTON — The Walton Flood Commission has received a New York State Department of State grant to prepare a watershed management plan for the Third Brook watershed and is preparing the request for proposals (RFP) document that determines the scope of work for companies bidding to assemble the plan. At a meeting of the commission last Wednesday, a draft RFP was handed to the commissioners, who will review it prior to the commission's January meeting.

Graydon Dutcher, the Delaware County Soil and Water Conservation District's (DCSWCD) stream corridor management program director, told the group that the purpose of the management plan will be to establish a long-term strategy to protect and restore water quality and ecological resources and enhance local land-use planning and appropriate development in an effort to support environmental protection and economic development in the watershed. He said the plan would encompass the entire Third Brook watershed, from its source to the west branch of the Delaware River, and all of its tributaries.

Dutcher also informed the commission that the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) had agreed to match the amount of the Department of State grant "with cash." He said the original plan was to match the amount of the state grant with in-kind services, but that the time limitations and amount of work coming into the DCSWCD office made that plan obsolete.

Dutcher said the next steps are to finalize and publish the RFP, receive bids by February, review the proposals in March and begin the planning process in April.

The company that demonstrates it has the technical expertise to complete the plan and meets all requirements, including a cost that can be afforded by the grants, will also be asked to lead the effort to get the community involved and to lead public information meetings, Dutcher said. He said it would also be a requisite that the winning bidder provide implementation strategies for any recommendations it offers, as well as a schedule for implementation. "We need to make sure we're looking at things like population density, land uses, aquatic habitat, anything that can benefit water quality," Dutcher said. He also stressed that the management plan must have a major focus on flood prevention and flood damage restoration and mitigation.

Walton Mayor Edward Snow suggested that while the RFP is being developed and that when the watershed management plan meetings are being held, an invitation should be sent to the management of the Kraft Foods plant, which may want to be involved. Third Brook crosses Delaware Street (state Route 10) alongside the Kraft plant and the brook has flooded the plant on several occasions. It was decided that invitations would also be extended to the Delaware County Office of Economic Development, the county Department of Public Works, the Department of State and the state Department of Transportation (DOT).

On another matter concerning Third Brook, the commission learned that there are few options to fund replacement of the Third Brook bridge that carries the brook under Route 10, next to the Kraft plant. Dean Frazier, commissioner of the Delaware County Office of Watershed Affairs, said the state isn't in a hurry to replace the bridge because "it's still in good shape." The commission had been looking at the possibility of replacing the bridge and rerouting the flow to the bridge, because it enters the sluice at nearly a 90-degree angle, which hampers the flow of water and causes the brook to leave its channel even during lesser flooding events.

The bridge was originally scheduled for replacement in the next four or five years, but with the economic difficulties the state is facing, there is the possibility the bridge project might be pushed back several years because it isn't failing or deteriorating, as many bridges in the state have. It was agreed that Dutcher and several members of the commission would visit the regional director of the state Department of Transportation in Binghamton to determine the DOT's intent and interest in developing a new design.

In an effort to lessen the impacts of flooding in the village and town of Walton, the flood commission was established about six months ago to identify areas of concern and projects that might reduce flooding incidences and damage. A joint partnership between the village and town, the commission also has members that represent the Delaware County Department of Watershed Affairs, the county Planning Board, New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Delaware County Soil and Water Conservation District (DCSWCD), which first suggested the idea to the municipalities and is facilitating its efforts.