

Environmental Emergency Services, Inc.

Chemung, Schuyler & Steuben Counties, NY



Fred Marvin and Tom Shugars prepare the new Scudder Bridge River Gauge for installation on the Cohocton River in Erwin.

2007 Annual Report

ENVIRONMENTAL EMERGENCY SERVICES, INC.

2007 ANNUAL REPORT

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Mission Statement Environmental Emergency Services (EES)

To advise and inform the populace of Chemung, Schuyler and Steuben Counties in an effort to reduce the adverse effects of severe flooding, drought and hazardous material incidents which contribute to environmental emergencies.

EES Responsibilities

1. Provide local emergency response agencies with early warning information.
 2. Maintain communication and coordination among agencies, through its Board of Directors, who share concern for environmental issues.
 3. During emergencies maintain communication with local, state and federal partners.
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Mission Statement Flood Warning Service (FWS)

To collect pertinent rainfall, climate and river data and to use this information to assist Emergency Management Offices (EMO) in determining areas of concern for potential high water or drought problems in Chemung, Schuyler and Steuben Counties.

FWS Responsibilities

1. Provide the EMO in each county with accurate and updated severe weather information during flooding emergencies, whenever possible.
 2. Develop fail-safe communication links with the EMO in each county, with the National Weather Service, US Army Corps of Engineers and with the Region 8 NYS Department of Environmental Conservation.
 3. Organize, train and maintain a volunteer corps of rain gauge readers and a volunteer operational staff for the Gustina Emergency Operation Center.
 4. Maintain and service those sensors for rainfall, climate and river levels, which are under Flood Warning Service control.
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Mission Statement Chemical Hazard Information Team (CHIT)

To provide chemical and safety information and guidance to local emergency responders in the event of hazardous material incidents.

CHIT Responsibilities

1. Maintain a cadre of local specialists in related disciplines to assist emergency responders.
2. Provide funding and training opportunities for CHIT members and local emergency responders.
3. Supply specialized materials such as: software, equipment and a reference library.

January 8, 2008

TO OUR FRIENDS AND ASSOCIATES

2007 has been another quiet year for the Chemung River Basin. We all should know from experience that this trend will not last much longer. Perhaps this is a good time for a look at our floodplain management practices. Are we paying attention to the smaller streams and tributaries? Is there debris in the smaller streams that we should be clearing? Maybe this lull in the action is a good time to contact the local Soil & Water Conservation District and talk about maintenance; talk about channel issues; talk about developing a “mitigation” strategy that could be employed on a particularly troublesome stream. There have been several mitigation funding releases in recent years that we could take advantage of locally. When the water is flowing it’s not a great time for considering options.

Of interesting note is the considerable activity that is still going on as a result of the 2006 flooding on the North Branch of the Susquehanna. The 2006 flood was on par with our 1972 flood. People from Waverly to Albany and into the Catskills were heavily impacted by this event. These communities are struggling through the issues of returning people to their homes from temporary housing; through stream management; through discussions on flood detection/flood warning; and debates over the installation of flood prevention techniques. Many of us remember the long, hard road back to normalcy after such an event. Perhaps we should be listening to these discussions and comparing notes to see if we have addressed these issues in our own area before such an event returns to our region.

On a lighter note, I have had the treat of working with a young gentleman by the name of Michael Hitchcock. Mike lives in Campbell, one of our most flood prone communities. He approached me last spring with the idea of making road flooded signs to warn the community for his Eagle Scout project. This was like a breath of fresh air. Mike is working diligently to raise funds to make his project a reality. I eagerly look forward to the fruits of his project.

The success of an organization is wholly dependant on those people who work behind the scenes to keep it going. EES is no different. We are blessed with a group of volunteers who continue to give of their time and talents. I need to recognize the members of our flood warning group, which meets monthly to keep up to speed on flood operations and the changes in technology that we continue to throw at them. Also, our CHIT volunteers, who go to training and work at exercises to keep their expertise at the ready in case of a hazardous materials incident. Hats off to the maintenance team, which keeps the gauges and the computers running to the high levels of performance we have come to expect. And last, but surely not least, my management team, Joy Brewer, Scott Rodabaugh and Janet Thigpen, 3 people that keep this organization running on an everyday basis. Genuine thanks to all.

Michael A. Sprague
President – EES

MESSAGE FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT

Looking back, 2007 was largely uneventful for the Chemung, Schuyler, and Steuben County watersheds. Other than a few moderate high-water events, most notably in March, the area's creeks and rivers were largely on good behavior. It was, on the whole, a very good weather year for the residents of the three counties.

Environmental Emergency Services continued to build on its strong foundation (namely, the dedication of volunteers and support of communities throughout its service area), and accomplished a good many things. A short list of accomplishments includes the following:

- Installation of new sensors, most notably a new river gauge in the Town of Erwin. The new gauge was added at the request of Corning Incorporated, and will play a key role in Corning Inc.'s flood emergency plans and operations.
- Continued development of rating curves and stage relations for the Meads Creek gauges (installed 2006), for the intent of improved flood forecasting and emergency operations in this flood-prone watershed.
- Development and publication of a brochure containing information on floodplain management, flash flooding safety tips, and historical flood information. The brochure was designed not only to provide important information to area residents, but also to satisfy requirements of the Community Rating System (CRS), potentially helping to lower flood insurance rates for residents in communities participating in the CRS program.
- Meetings with the National Weather Service Middle Atlantic (MARFC) and Northeast River Forecast Centers (NERFC), to improve interagency coordination and understanding of our respective roles in emergency operations during flooding events.
- An expanded roster of volunteers for operating our Flood Warning Service operations center, with increased participation in monthly training sessions.
- Ongoing maintenance and upkeep of our expanding list of sensors (river gauges, climate stations, rain gauges, etc.), with a continued high degree of operational status.
- Several Chemical Hazard Information Team meetings.
- Outreach, including presentations at community board meetings, presentations for the State Floodplain and Stormwater Managers Association (including a tour of our FWS Operations Center), and support of a local Eagle Scout Project developing "Turn Around, Don't Drown" signage for communities in our area.

More information about accomplishments may be found in the respective reports of our FWS, CHIT, and PIE (Public Information & Education) representatives, who as always merit a sincere "Thank You" for their many and continued efforts to advance the goals of the EES organization. They deserve a large share of the credit for this organization's continued growth and success.

It is our hope that we enjoy another "quiet" year of cooperative weather and good fortune. However, good weather or not, EES will strive to continue to fulfill its mission and enhance the services it provides. The continued support of our communities and volunteers gives us the means to do so. Thank you for that support!

Scott Rodabaugh
Vice President – EES

FLOOD WARNING SERVICE (FWS)

Thanks to Mother Nature, 2007 was pretty uneventful. In addition to routine maintenance throughout the year, system upgrades and enhancements have kept the volunteers busy. During the fall we made great progress in updating and expanding our system. This year we challenged Tom Shugars and Sue McLaughlin with new PCs for the Operations Center (EOC) as well as a new gauge installation on Scudder Bridge in Erwin. The amount of work, specifically the programming that Sue has accomplished this year, was instrumental in making our system the best that it has ever been. It has been several years since the EOC has seen new PCs and this will only enhance our system and make it more accurate and reliable. Our third database, affectionately named "Aardvark," had previously been the most reliable database; but since installation of the new PCs the consistency between all three systems has been excellent.

Our new volunteers have continued to come and join the monthly training events. Pete Wilson and Dave Colvin have even stepped up to come in every Wednesday, joining Bob at the helm of operations for the weekly system check. They have even managed to "fly solo" while Bob took some time off to visit Mickey Mouse following the Thanksgiving Holiday. This has been a pretty big commitment for these guys and I would like to thank them for their assistance. I hope that all our volunteers will continue to support our operations over the upcoming year and will continue to make an effort to understand the system and keep up to date on Flood Warning issues.

2008 will bring more gauge installations as we look to expand and enhance the network in Chemung and Schuyler Counties. We will continue to focus on training and work on procedures for our volunteers to work events from home if they can't make it to the Operations Center during flash flood events. Mike Sprague has been experimenting with some web based applications and we hope to enhance this over the upcoming year.

Here is hoping that 2008 will be as quiet, weather wise, as 2007 was. If not, rest assured that the Flood Warning Volunteer Staff and the Flood Warning System will be ready to go. I would like to take this time to thank everyone for their continued support and time put forth to make this a quality and successful operation.

Respectfully submitted,



Timothy D. Marshall

CHEMICAL HAZARD INFORMATION TEAM (CHIT)

The Chemical Hazard Information Team consists of volunteer professionals with expertise in the management, handling and use of chemicals. The CHIT will act in a “good Samaritan” role as an advisor to the Fire Department’s HazMat Response Team and the Incident Commander during a chemical related emergency.

2007 was a very good year for the CHIT. No response was required to any incidents within the region. Minor incidents, like fuel spills, were handled in a routine manner in conjunction with the NYSDEC spills group and private contractors. Time, of course, is the great equalizer and we will try to be prepared for the inevitable through updated education, training and special drills.

CHIT members observed the Elmira Fire Department training at the Elmira Water Board Filter plant for a simulated chlorine cylinder leak and subsequent mitigation using a special kit patching device.

CHIT members participated in a demonstration of the AREA-RAE gas detection devices that will be deployed during an incident that involves a plume of toxic vapors or the potential for one. The detectors will provide the Incident Commander at the scene with information about oxygen levels, as well as four other selected vapors. This information will aid in developing a response that protects responders and the local population. The device is scheduled for a 2008 delivery.

CHIT also participated in a demonstration of the Ahura Scientific First- Defender Raman Spectroscopy chemical detector. This handheld detector is a laser-based device that can identify thousands of different chemicals from a liquid or solid sample. This device will provide responders with a chemical identity of unknown substances to aid in determining the appropriate response. A grant application for purchasing this device is currently awaiting funding.

A CHIT training meeting included a presentation by Deputy Chief Dave Jessick about the status of the Elmira Fire Department HazMat Response Team and their response equipment cache. Chief Monroe from Corning Fire Department was also available to answer questions.

Finally, a demonstration at the Southport Fire Station brought volunteer firefighter companies ‘up to speed’ on the capabilities of the Elmira Fire Department HazMat Response Team and the role of CHIT. The demonstration also provided familiarization training for volunteer firefighters who may be used for support tasks outside of the “Hot Zone,” such as unloading the equipment trailer, decontamination aid, equipment/personnel preparation and lighting.

CHIT participates in the Central NY Hazardous Materials Response Consortium, which consists of eight counties (Cayuga, Chemung, Cortland, Ontario, Seneca, Steuben, Tioga and Tompkins) and one federal facility. Bimonthly meetings of the Consortium include: demonstrations, technical dissertations, response videos, federal and State response agency information and training. In addition, discussions of HazMat responses in each of the counties are always enlightening.

Reeve Howland
CHIT Volunteer

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND EDUCATION (PIE)

The Public Information and Education (PIE) committee of EES had a busy year in 2007.

In 2006, some of the communities we serve requested a new informational brochure that would assist them in achieving Community Rating System points to lower policy holder costs for the National Flood Insurance Program. The PIE committee completed work on the brochure in 2007. This color brochure is now available for distribution by communities to residents in flood prone areas. The layout allows space for local officials to insert their own contact information. Many thanks to Joy Brewer and Janet Thigpen for their assistance with the project.

Another need that PIE is working to fulfill is the education of local residents about preparing for and responding to emergencies. Concerns stemming from the Hurricane Katrina response, worries about a Pandemic Flu, and the devastation closer to home from past flooding and winter storm events, prompted requests for a media campaign to help educate residents about what they can do to stay safe and be self sufficient in an emergency.

A media campaign was designed and PIE sought media outlets to participate in this much-needed program. Unfortunately, our local media have not expressed interest in participating. Therefore, you can look for our informational offerings on the web in 2008. Stay tuned... or stay on-line in this case... our videos will be appearing on the EES website soon!

Over the course of the year, EES and PIE have responded to many requests for presentations to senior citizen groups and community organizations regarding who we are and what we do. Presentations about EES, the Flood Warning Service operations, the CHIT group, and general emergency preparedness were given in 2007. If your group or organization would like to know more about EES, flooding issues, or chemical hazards, please contact us! PIE also continues to help the Flood Warning Service recruit new volunteers for its operations center. If you or someone you know is interested in getting involved, please ask for information about volunteer opportunities as well!

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristin A. Card
PIE Chairwoman

2007 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Funding:

Cash on Hand January 1, 2007	\$ 66,102
Chemung, Steuben & Schuyler Counties	18,400
Local Government	13,350
Interest Income	<u>686</u>
Sub-Total	\$ 98,538
PSCIM	473
IFLOWS Grant	<u>537</u>
TOTAL	\$ 99,548

Expenditures:

Operating Expenses	
Communications	3,585
Accounting Fees & Tax Reporting	900
Bank Charges, Contingencies and Miscellaneous	1,285
Clerical	3,215
Flood Warning Service Equipment Maintenance & Repair	9,893
Equipment	10,246
Equipment Rental	1,628
Flood Warning Service Education and Meetings	2,670
CHIT Training and Reference Materials	1,037
Public Information & Education (PIE)	<u>2,149</u>
Sub-Total	\$ 36,608
PSCIM	0
IFLOWS Grant	<u>488</u>
TOTAL	\$ 37,096

CASH ON HAND JANUARY 1, 2008 **\$ 62,452**

2007 FINANCIAL SUMMARY (continued)

FORECAST 2008

Estimated Funding:

Cash on Hand January 1, 2008	\$61,979
Chemung, Steuben & Schuyler Counties	18,400
Local Government	13,350
Interest Income	<u>750</u>
Sub-Total	\$94,479
PSCIM	<u>473</u>
TOTAL Funds	\$94,952

Estimated Expenditures:

Operating Costs for Flood Warning Service	34,500
Equipment Reserve Fund	31,000
Equipment Rental	4,500
Training Fund	
Flood Warning Service	10,000
CHIT Training and Reference Materials	4,000
Public Information & Education (PIE)	<u>10,000</u>
Sub-Total	\$94,000
PSCIM Expenses	<u>473</u>
TOTAL	\$94,473

FORECASTED SURPLUS: **\$ 479**

Joy Brewer
Treasurer

2007 CONTRIBUTORS

The Board of Directors is grateful to the following local governments for their financial contributions to operating expenses of EES:

Chemung County
Steuben County
Schuyler County
Ashland (T)
Bath (V)
Big Flats (T)
Corning (T)
Erwin (T)
Elmira (T)
Elmira (C)
Horseheads (T)
Lindley (T)
Millport (V)
Rathbone (T)
Savona (V)
South Corning (V)
Southport (T)
Tuscarora (T)
Urbana (T)
West Union (T)
Woodhull (T)

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