



Association Meeting Summary for April 19, 2011

Next Meeting: May 16, 2011- 7:30 to 9:30 am- Patton Township Municipal Building

Attendees: Kent Addis, Paul Bartley, Bob Carline, Bob Eberhart, Barbara Fisher, Matt Gentchur, Jim May, Kristen Saacke-Blunk, Bill Sharp, and Jennifer Shuey

Guests: Bob Selego

Staff present: Nick Schipanski (ClearWater Conservancy)

Chair Kristen Saacke Blank called the meeting to order at 7:35 am.

- 1) Speaker: Nick Schipanski; Water Resources Coordinator, ClearWater Conservancy: **“Federal Wetland Regulations 5 years after Rapanos”**
 - i) Recent Supreme Court rulings have restricted jurisdictional scope of the Clean Water Act.
 - ii) Pennsylvania DEP is one of few states that regulates most surface waters independent of federal programs.
 - iii) Isolated wetlands generally no longer regulated by Corps. Seasonal and intermittent waters are jurisdictional on a case-by-case basis.
 - iv) Supreme Court opinions and the resulting federal guidance has resulted in much confusion over what waters are jurisdictional.
 - v) New guidance will be released in an attempt to reduce the confusion and increase the jurisdictional reach of the federal government over intermittent/seasonal waters.
- 2) Review of Agenda and Meeting Summary.
 - a) The agenda was modified to allow comments from Bob Selego, candidate for Center County Commissioner, as the first item followed by discussion of Commissioner Candidate’s Forum.
 - b) There were no comments on the March minutes.
- 3) Bob Selego spoke to the Association about his candidacy. He commented on his understanding that all water sources are interconnected and there is a need to enforce mitigation and permit regulations effectively. He stated a need to balance economic growth with conservation of natural resources (specifically in regards to Marcellus development).
- 4) Bob Eberhart reported on planning for the Centre county Commissioner Candidates Forum.
 - i) When: May 5, 7:00 pm. Where: County Courthouse Annex, Bellefonte.
 - ii) Steve Lockman will moderate. All 13 candidates have agreed to attend.

- iii) A flyer for the event has been produced and Bob will distribute to Association members via email.
 - iv) There will be no C-NET coverage but considering taping for internet posting.
 - v) Bob needs more volunteer help: Jin Shuey and Bill Sharp volunteered.
- 5) Kristen requested a per/cup donation for coffee to offset costs.
- 6) Association's Strategic Planning: no discussion
- 7) Vice-chair vacancy.
- i) No volunteers from present members.
 - ii) Kristen mentioned Jim Gazza as a potential candidate; one who would represent industry, an under-represented stakeholder group.
 - iii) Several members suggested a third-in-line "pro-tem" position also could be considered.
- 8) Nick Schipanski discussed preparations for Watershed Cleanup Day on April 23rd.
- i) Chris Finton, chair of the planning committee, is again doing a stellar job of organizing.
 - ii) Funding for this year's event is low: several grants, normally a significant funding source, were submitted less than 8-weeks prior to the event and will likely receive word on any awards after the event. Lack of funding precluded large-scale projects this year. ClearWater has a reserve Cleanup Day account for salaries and capital costs, if needed.
- 9) Big Springs Festival.
- i) Kristen suggested staffing Association's table with high school student volunteers needing community service hours. Students would be required to read info about the association to become informed. Members commented that it was an innovative way to staff the event while providing an educational opportunity for young adults.
- 10) Spring Creek Family Festival, June 18th at Millbrook Marsh.
- i) Jen Shuey reported that Chris Hennessey is coordinating the event this year.
 - ii) Melinda Turner chairs the planning committee.
 - iii) Sponsorship forms were passed out to hand to potential sponsors.
- 11) Committee Reports
- a) Source Water Protection.
 - i) Barbara Fisher reported on April 4th meeting (attached). Committee concluded that it is most important to have the Commission informed about the issue and to gauge their interest and intentions and work cooperatively rather than have the Association suggest/plan action alone.
 - ii) To that end, Mark Stephens (Watershed Management Program, DEP) will present at the April 20 Commission meeting. Mark will be the primary contact with DEP for utilizing grant funds available for planning.
 - iii) Other items discussed: utility of starting with a pilot project and the need to identify and recruit participants; the need to address small water systems that lack resources and knowledge about the issue; a need to bring partners together around the table to discuss roles each can play; opportunities for volunteers to assist in public education.
 - b) Water Resources Monitoring.
 - i) Nick Schipanski reported on the WRMP webinar held on April 6th: twenty-five individuals participated, of which 12 were municipal officials.

- ii) The event was reported on in a story in the Centre Daily Times. A link to the webinar has been posted on the WRMP page of the Associations website.
- iii) Nick also gave an update on funding for real-time data from the Milesburg USGS gage: DEP has agreed to fund this through the end of September 2011. Todd Giddings agreed at the March 30 WRMP Committee meeting to write a letter to the Susquehanna River Basin Commission on behalf of the WRMP Committee/Association that the SRBC fund the provision of real-time data from this gage.

12) Agency/Committee/Organization Updates.

- a) A public comment period for ClearWater's land trust accreditation application is now open. ClearWater will participate in Arbor Day event for local schools at PSU Arboretum and applied for grant for developing ecosystem educational program to middle schools with nature photographer Buck Wilde.
- b) Bob Eberhart reported that TU/Moshanon Sierra Group/ClearWater is developing a statement concerning Marcellus drilling for use in approaching legislatures.
 - i) Kristen noted that the Association needs to continue development of its Marcellus statement. Bob Eberhart volunteered to assist Bill Sharp, other volunteers are needed.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:50 am.

Minutes prepared by N. Schipanski

Source Water Protection Committee meeting notes. *(Provided by Barbara Fisher)*

BACKGROUND:

Why Source Water Protection?

- identifies the source of water supplies for the public and small community entities
- is a solid legal and scientific basis figuring out where their water comes from and possible threats of contamination that could reach the capture zone.
- it involves representatives and residents in planning for the protection of their resources as well as providing for their future supply
- it does not discriminate any one party as a potential causing the threat, is across the board
- energize the process of education for the public to understand their need to modify their actions pertaining to land use
- strengthens protection through water systems and municipalities joining together. Since hydrological ellipses can overlap/what happens in one water system can affect another
- can lead to model municipal overlay ordinances and zoning for protection of groundwater and surfacewater supplies
- there is a need to train operators and their owners how best to manage their systems

FUNDING:

- comes from EPA through DEP
- it will be important to get timely access to it as there are reductions occurring
- money goes for providing technology to identify the location of the source and to understand the nature and scope of zones surrounding the source .
- independent consultants are hired by the state

FIRST STEP:

- Mark Stephens of DEP will speak to the Spring Creek Watershed Commission which meets on Wednesday,. April 20 at 7PM. It will be broadcast on CNET and rerun several other times.

SOURCE WATER PROTECTION COMMITTEE

- met on April 4th

-Attending were:

Kristen Saacke-Blunk, Bob Donaldson, Katie Ombalski,, Jim Gazza, Rob Cooper, Jim May, Nick Schipanski, Matt Genchur and Barbara Fisher. Mark Stephens participated by phone.

-Our committee thought it best that the first thing needing to happen was for the Spring Creek Watershed Commission to be given ample opportunity to learn about the program and be able to ask questions as to how it is implemented.

- We are reluctant to go in with a list of suggestions early on this first round.

We want them to have time to consider and explore options on how it best be approached and what they see their role is and what our role might be.

-We also considered starting small, perhaps with one project occurring in the upper headwaters and another downstream. Discussion focused on one of the projects being Bellefonte. We learned there also might be some interest in Centre Hall.

-It was also pointed out that it is most important little systems be addressed. They tend to be fearful of state scrutiny and protective of their own local control. Yet it is in their best interest to bond with others for the security of their resource.

IMPLEMENTATION:

- A most major question is who would do the work?
- Mark Stephens would be the primary person. Matt Gentchur offers courses for operators and has worked with Mark Stephens on some of these projects
- It is our understanding that a Centre County planner used to be assigned to work with the planning and needs of water systems but it seems he no longer is authorized to do all that he used to do.
- more help is needed and it was thought that it best come from a dedicated source.
- there would be an opportunity for volunteers to assist in public education programs to provide understanding of how residents can use best management practices in protecting their drinking water supplies

CONCLUSIONS:

- We need to be thinking of how we could work with the Commission. How can we go about this in a fair manner so that the efforts of the stronger players still allow for the needs of the smaller systems to be fairly and adequately addressed?
- In an ideal world water systems don't want to stand alone and need support.
 - We need to get the partners around the table and learn who wants to take the lead and who could help.
 - Hopefully this could provide the momentum for model ordinances and zoning for both groundwater and surface water supplies. Concern was expressed by several individuals during the committee meeting that this is a major activity which needs to be diligently addressed.