



Association Meeting Summary for June 21, 2011

Next Meeting: July 18, 2011- 7:30 to 9:30 am- Patton Township Municipal Building

Attendees: Paul Bartley, Bob Donaldson, Ann Donovan, Bob Eberhart, Barbara Fisher, Jim Gazza, Dennis Hameister, Kristen Saacke-Blunk, Nick Schipanski, Bill Sharp, and Jennifer Shuey

Guests: Kathy Brasier, Jason Fellon

Chair Kristen Saacke Blank called the meeting to order at 7:45 am.

- 1) **Speaker:** Kathy Brasier; Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology, PSU: “Watershed groups in Pennsylvania: research on formation, processes and accomplishments”
 - a) Dr. Brasier discussed research comparing/measuring outcomes of community watershed organizations in PA. Water issues were primary reason for formation of organizations. Local environmental management has pros and cons: cons- lack of resources and expertise, cooption by elites, lack of coordination across landscapes; pros- increased local control and accessibility. Many local organizations in PA, most are small and poorly funded, but with large list of partners (state, local and county governments, environmental and recreational groups are top 5 partners). The research relied on organizations’ self-reporting for measuring effectiveness: successful organizations viewed themselves as effective in raising stakeholder awareness, generating government support, and influencing water issue decision-making. Groups considered themselves less effective in organizing stakeholders and influencing land-based environmental issues. Largest single factor driving success was number and diversity of partners. Key issues for sustaining organizations: leadership recruitment/training/retention; strategic planning, self-assessment; operational funding; diversifying/expanding partnerships; addressing community and/or organizational conflict, addressing multi-jurisdictional issues; interconnections between environmental and other issues.
 - b) Discussion:
 - i) Kristen asked the group to gauge the Associations effectiveness. Much debate about the definition of success, but the majority of those present believed that the Association has been strong in generating/facilitating government support (borehole and buffer ordinances were offered as examples) and moderately successful in generating local awareness and mobilizing stakeholders.
 - ii) Bob Donaldson noted that it is difficult to sustain interest in local volunteer environmental organizations- more distractions, work demands, etc. Kristen noted a need to articulate the Associations message to a wider audience. Perhaps an Americorps position for outreach to parts of community not currently involved and/or to spearhead new initiatives/projects for

- the Association. Bill Sharp commented that with decrease in federal and state funding, local groups must provide leadership to take up slack and identify issues, partners and community needs. Ann Donovan noted that in her experience, groups that socialize outside of meetings are more sustainable- work parties, picnics, etc.
- 2) **Review of Agenda and Meeting Summary.** No changes to agenda or comments on April meeting notes.
 - 3) **Past Events**
 - a) Spring Creek Family Festival
 - i) Event occurred Saturday, June 18th from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm.
 - ii) Clearwater was not present to give a report on the event. Several Association members attended and noted an apparent increase in young families, reflecting Clearwater's emphasis on this population for this event. Nick and Bob D staffed a display for the Association and WRMP and reported few visitors.
 - 4) **Committee Reports**
 - a) Source Water Protection
 - i) Nick will contact Steve Miller about status of Watershed Commission invites to local water suppliers for meeting with Mark Stephens of DEP.
 - b) Water Resources Monitoring.
 - i) Clearwater has received UAJA contributions for both the Houserville Gage and WRMP.
 - 5) **Agency / Committee / Organization Updates.**
 - a) Spring Creek Chapter Trout Unlimited
 - i) Bob Eberhart reported that work on a joint statement on Marcellus drilling by TU, Sierra Club and Clearwater is continuing. Bob stated his belief that final issues may get resolved at a meeting later in the day. The statement will be in a form of a letter to the governor and legislative representatives.
 - b) Spring Creek Watershed Commission
 - i) No meeting was held in June
 - ii) Aquifer Committee: status unknown. Commission members present have not heard anything from the committee recently. Barbara Fisher suggested pursuing grant funding for work so that not dependent on volunteers.
 - 6) **Other items**
 - a) Jason Fellon noted that Growing Greener grants will open late June or July. Focused on practical, on-the-ground projects, not assessment projects. ~ \$10 million will be available.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:40 am.

Minutes prepared by N. Schipanski