



SPRING CREEK WATERSHED COMMUNITY

A grassroots stakeholder initiative

Coordinating Committee Meeting Summary: Tuesday, March 17, 2009

Attendance: Kent Addis, Paul Bartley, Bob Carline, Rob Cooper, Bob Donaldson, Bob Eberhart, Barbara Fisher, Jiunn-Ru Huang, Brianna Hutchison, Mike Joseph, Bob Leonard, Jennifer Shuey

Spring Creek Watershed Sustainability Initiative

The Core Group and the Resource Group

A list of individuals and organizations in the community with interest in and knowledge about “green” activities/technology was generated at the February 17th meeting of the Coordinating Committee. This list was extensive, so Bob Eberhart and Barbara Fisher were tasked with determining those individuals/organizations who should be invited to participate on a regular basis (Core Group) and those who should be called upon as needed for assistance with specific projects (Resource Group).

In addition to interested members of the Coordinating Committee, Mr. Eberhart and Mrs. Fisher identified the following as participants for the Core Group: Spring Creek Watershed Commission (Paul Bartley and one other), COG Environment and Public Safety Committee (Dennis Hameister), Centre Regional Planning Agency (Tom Zilla), Centre County Planning and Community Development Office (Bob Jacobs, Linda Marshall), Centre County Conservation District (Ann Donovan), ClearWater Conservancy (Jennifer Shuey, Bob Donaldson), CBICC/Heritage 1 (Chris Magent), Bellefonte Chamber of Commerce (Gary Hoover), PSU OPP (Rob Cooper), PSU Cooperative Wetlands Center (Denice Wardrop), PSU Center for Sustainability (David Riley), DEP Northcentral Office (Jason Fellon), SRBC (Susan Buda), and State Water Plan (Todd Giddings). If all contacts for the Core Group choose to participate, this group would consist of about 20 individuals. Mr. Eberhart suggested that a letter be sent to each contact in the Core Group to formally invite their participation and to make sure that they are up to date on what is happening with the SI. Some initial contacts have been made with individuals representing various organizations. CBICC/Heritage 1 stated that they were willing to participate in discussions relevant to their mission and that they would like to have someone from the Coordinating Committee come out and give a presentation about the SI. The Coordinating Committee agreed that it should encourage a higher level of participation from CBICC/Heritage 1. David Riley of the PSU Center for Sustainability has not returned the Coordinating Committee’s correspondence. Rob Cooper agreed to pursue contact with Mr. Riley.

Mr. Eberhart and Mrs. Fisher identified 45 individuals/organizations as participants in the Resource Group. The full list is available as an attachment to the March 17th Coordinating Committee meeting agenda (Attachment #1, *The “Core Group” and the “Resource Group” of the Sustainability Initiative*). Members of the Resource Group should regularly receive the Coordinating Committee agenda, minutes, and press releases, but would not be expected to attend all meetings. These individuals would participate as advisors on specific projects relative to their area of expertise, and would also be encouraged to propose additional projects for the SI. Additional contacts were suggested for some of the organizations

(i.e., Bellefonte Water Authority—Joseph Beigle, PFBC—John Arway, USFWS—Larry Brannaka, Bird Clubs—Roanna Fuller). The Coordinating Committee also decided to add the following organizations to the Resource Group: Mach 1 Kayak Group (Dave Kurtz), Keystone Trails Association and other hiking groups (Jean Aron, Ralph Seely, Gary Thornbloom), PSU Master Gardeners (Molly Sturniolo), PSU Smeal College of Business Sustainability Council, and the Centre Region Bicycle Coalition (Paul Simpson). It was suggested that PSU Eco-Action be moved to the Core Group, depending on this group's interest in participation.

SI Priority Projects

Of the numerous potential projects suggested at the February 17th meeting of the Coordinating Committee, several were chosen for immediate action (in addition to the geothermal model ordinance and updating the watershed map). The Coordinating Committee felt that adoption of watershed-wide stream buffer and ridge overlay ordinances should be a priority project because these ordinances have already been adopted in certain municipalities. These existing ordinances would factor heavily in the development of a model ordinance for the rest of watershed, thus reducing some of the work involved in drafting an entirely new model ordinance. Mr. Eberhart offered to pursue this project further. The Coordinating Committee Executive Committee and ClearWater Conservancy are applying for a WREN grant to cover the costs of updating the watershed map. The Commission will be listed as the applicant and if the grant is awarded the funds will be administered through ClearWater. Dave Gilbert of GeoDecisions has agreed to develop the map itself, while Todd Giddings and ClearWater staff will update the text on the back of the map.

Another project that the Coordinating Committee decided should be pursued in the early stages of the SI is the identification and preservation of lands within the Spring Creek watershed that have special attributes (e.g., critical groundwater recharge areas, rare or unique habitats, etc.). Natural resources in the watershed will continue to degrade unless such areas are protected from development. Rob Cooper indicated that Penn State recently completed a project to pinpoint such areas on their own lands. Mr. Cooper offered to speak with Larry Fennessey, who was involved in the Penn State project, about the feasibility of identifying and creating a map of these lands for the entire watershed.

Bob Donaldson suggested that the Coordinating Committee pursue a project to improve the maintenance of dirt and gravel roads, thereby reducing erosion and pollution from these sources. Communities in the headwaters (i.e., Harris Township) have been exploring the PA Department of Agriculture's Dirt & Gravel Road Program. Mr. Donaldson will pursue this project. Also in regards to transportation in the watershed, it was noted that the implementation of free bus service in Centre County, which was suggested project at the February 17th meeting, was probably unrealistic. Instead, the SI should focus on promoting and improving the existing public transportation system (i.e., CATA bus, bike ways, walking paths).

Other priority projects might include requiring all farms to have a nutrient management plan and the purchase of infrared cameras that could be rented out for home and business owners to measure the energy efficiency of their buildings. The latter could be purchased using money obtained from grants, in particular The Wal-Mart Foundation, which supports initiatives focusing on environmental sustainability (<http://walmartstores.com/CommunityGiving/203.aspx>). The Coordinating Committee agreed that additional time at the April meeting should be devoted to further discussion of SI projects.

Geothermal Model Ordinance (Bob Donaldson for Todd Giddings)

A committee (Todd Giddings, Mark Ralston, Richard Parizek, and Amy Story) has formed to work on developing the geothermal model ordinance. The League of Women Voters (LWV) would like to hold a public education program about geothermal drilling and what it means for natural resources in the area. Todd Giddings has agreed to help with this program. The LWV asked the Spring Creek Watershed Community and/or Commission to co-sponsor the program. The Coordinating Committee decided that the Commission should be the co-sponsor rather than the Community, which simply serves an advisory role to the Commission.

Sustainability Initiative Project Coordinator Update (Barbara Fisher for Chris Tavella)

Chris Tavella's questionnaire to the municipalities is well underway. Mr. Tavella is also looking into potential sources of funding for SI projects.

Other Points of Discussion

It was mentioned that a clear definition of "sustainability" must be included in all publications related to the SI and that perhaps the mission statement of the SI should be revised to better reflect the goal. The way in which some of the projects recommended relate to the SI's current "umbrella" mission statement may be unclear to some individuals. Jennifer Shuey suggested that the SI projects be advertised in such a way that members of the community begin to understand how simple things they do in their homes (such as using energy efficient appliances) enhance and conserve natural resources.

Spring Creek Canyon Update (Jennifer Shuey)

The next incarnation of the Spring Creek Canyon Master Plan, which includes an updated development plan for the 1,800-acre property, will be made available to the public on Tuesday, March 24th at <http://www.canyonplanning.com>. A final public meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 31st from 6:00-9:00pm at the Central PA Institute of Science and Technology. All public comments must be submitted in written form prior to April 7th and the consultants must submit the final plan to DCNR by April 15th. The Coordinating Committee decided that the Spring Creek Watershed Community should make a final statement as a group at the March 31st meeting. Barbara Fisher asserted that the Master Plan should have language to protect key conservation values of the property. Bob Donaldson further stated that the conservation easements on the 1,800-acre property should be in place before the eventual owners take possession of their individual parcels, thus obligating them to execute the easement plan. The Coordinating Committee decided to hold a special meeting to discuss its stance on the Spring Creek Canyon Master Plan. This meeting will take place on Friday, March 27th from 7:30-9:30am at the ClearWater Conservancy office.