

Ohio Water Resources Committee Meeting

February 4, 2008

Cranberry Township Municipal Building

2525 Rochester Road

Cranberry Township, PA

DRAFT

Committee Members in Attendance:

Marie Clark

Terry Dayton

Jeff Fliss

Jeffrey Foley

Daniel Gracenin

Dan Ireland

Robert Ritchey

Ronald Rohall

Jerry Schulte

Deb Simko

Bob Softcheck

Charles Stowe

Roger Uhazie

Guests:

Joseph West

Dave Jostenski, DEP

Andy Zemba, DEP

Lori Mohr, DEP

Introductions

Ron Rohall opened the meeting and called for introductions.

Administrative Items

Lori Mohr provided the committee with an update on administrative items:

The reappointments are pending in the Governor's office. Two committee member vacancies exist in the agricultural category.

Overview of the timeline for 2008: Public meetings and hearings will be held in September. The committee recommended holding the public meeting and hearing on September 8, 2008, at Seven Fields Borough municipal building.

The stormwater program at DEP is conducting pilot Integrated Water Resource Planning projects. Chartiers Creek, located in the Ohio basin, is among the first plans to be developed. More information will be provided at future meetings.

November Meeting Summary

Bob Ritchey made a motion to accept the November meeting summary. The motion was seconded by Jerry Schulte and it passed unanimously.

Election of Officers

Deb Simko made a motion to nominate Ron Rohall as chair and Mitchell Brouman as vice chair of the Ohio Regional Water Resources Committee. Motion was seconded by Dan Ireland and it passed unanimously.

Regional Priority Statements

Terry Dayton and Jerry Schulte made a motion to send the regional priorities to the Statewide committee with amendments. The motion passed unanimously. The priority statements were amended as follows:

- *Reclaim water resources impaired by abandoned mines*

The Ohio region is rich in mineral resources. Bituminous coal has been mined in this region since 1760 when coal was first extracted from what is now Mt. Washington to be used at Fort Pitt across the Monongehela River. Mining is still an important industry in the region, and helps fuel the state and national economy. Abandoned mines and their untreated, drainage are part of the historic mining heritage and have taken a heavy toll on the water resources of this basin. To ensure an adequate and reliable supply of quality water to meet human and ecological needs, remediation of these impaired resources is a major priority for this region. The committee recommends that a full assessment of all water resources impaired by drainage from abandoned mines be conducted, and that incentives and new technologies for the mining industry and others be developed to reclaim or reuse these waters.

- *Identify water resources needed to promote and facilitate economic development and provide job opportunities, while maintaining watershed integrity and recreational benefits.*

The abundant supply of clean and accessible water resources in this region can be used to promote economic development and job growth while preserving and enhancing watershed integrity. This requires careful planning that begins with identifying the best-suited water resources and understanding the water needs of potential businesses, and ends with a successful matching of businesses with compatible water resource access. The committee has suggested working with water supply data, regional economic development groups, and the Southwest Pennsylvania Commission to achieve this balanced approach to support economic growth and environmental goals. Encouraging water-based recreation and tourism is also an important component of this priority. In addition, the committee recognizes that sewage problems in the region, particularly problems caused by malfunctioning on-lot sewer systems, have the potential to impair economic development, and considers proper sewage disposal to be among the top issues to address for the Ohio basin.

Watershed Selection for Final Verification

Terry Dayton made a motion to approve the five watersheds analyzed by the technical subcommittee. The motion was seconded by Marie Clark and passed unanimously. These watersheds will be forwarded to the Statewide committee for consideration. The watersheds include:

1. Crooked Creek
2. Indian Creek
3. North Branch Blacklick Creek
4. Connoquenessing Creek
5. Beaver Run

**Laurel Hill Creek is being considered for nomination as a Critical Water Planning Area by an outside organization*

Committee adjourned at approximately 1:00 pm. The next committee meeting will be held on May 5, 2008, at Cranberry Township Municipal Center.