

Upper/Middle Susquehanna Water Resources Regional Committee Meeting

August 18, 2005
East Mountain Inn & Suites
2400 East End Boulevard
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18711

DRAFT Meeting Summary

Attendance

Committee members in attendance:

Tom Beauduy	David Snook
Mike Cavanaugh	Jerry Walls
William Gerlach	Richard Wardrop
Todd Giddings	Harold Webster
Amy Jacoby – alt. for Drew Hadley	Uwe Weindel, Chair
Bill Manner	John Yamona
Doug Manning	Adam Zakarian, Vice Chair
Jennifer Means	

Committee members not in attendance:

Ed Bellis	Tim Horner
Drew Hadley	David Kaufman
Frank Halderman	Gary Petrewski
Roy Herlocher	Dorne White

Others in attendance:

George Tallman, Talliman Family Farms, LLC
Alan Tamm, PEMA

DEP

Bill Gast
Leslie Sarvis
Ron Yablonski
Donna Menn

Administrative Items

Chairman Weindel began the meeting at 12:47 p.m. A decision was made to start the meeting even though a quorum had not yet been met.

Finalize May Meeting Summary

Once a quorum was reached, the committee approved the Draft May Meeting Summary with one correction. There is a typographical error on page two under “Comments by the Public” of the May 26, 2005 Meeting Summary. The State

College Joint Municipal Authority (JMAA) should be changed to the University Area Joint Authority (UAJA).

Motion made by Mike Cavanuagh
Second by: Tom Beauduy
Motion passed.

Statewide Committee Meeting Summary

Leslie Sarvis reported that at its July 21 meeting, the Statewide Committee approved the CWPA Process and Criteria documents to be merged into one and published as draft guidance in the Pennsylvania Bulletin.

The Statewide Committee also approved for the Department to move ahead with the draft regulations that deal with the registration and reporting requirements. They are being worked on internally to present to the Environmental Quality Board in late fall or early winter.

Only a handful of nominations for the technical expert pool were received, so it is being kept open for further nominations.

There was a presentation from Nancy Imler and her staff on the Streams and Lakes Integrated Management System (SLIMS), which includes all surface waters in Pennsylvania. It uses the National Hydrography Dataset (NHD) as its framework.

There was a discussion regarding continuing outreach to the general public, particularly since some committee members were disappointed with the small turnout at the May public meetings. The Public Participation Subcommittee will be reconvened to continue discussion on ways to better engage the public.

DEP Summary of Activities

Leslie Sarvis and Bill Gast highlighted the Statewide Committee Memo dated July 15, 2005. Registration continues to increase. Conservation Districts are being asked for their help in contacting the agricultural community. A letter was sent recently to 500 golf courses informing them of registration and reporting requirements.

A letter with preliminary population projections was mailed to county planners asking for their review and comment. The deadline for responses is August 19.

Bill Manner informed that the committee of the recent changes in program structure at DEP, particularly on the regional level. He related that a new program has been created, the Watershed Management Program, which will encompass all the Department's non-point source pollution activities into one program. The committee requested copies of the new Organization Chart when it becomes available and a diagram with staff working on the State Water Plan.

When asked about the Act 220 budget and using Growing Greener funding, Bill Gast stated that Growing Greener 2 funding, as well as Growing Greener 1 (the previous program funding) may be available for use for implementation of Act 220. However, there is some question with regard to whether Growing Greener 2 funds may be used for state water plan type work because it is bond money, which must be used for capital type projects. The Governor's Office and attorneys are looking into the matter.

Comments from the Public

Alan Tamm from the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) related that PEMA has a mandate from the federal government to plan to avoid disasters at both the state and local levels. To receive disaster relief funding, municipalities must have a Hazard Mitigation Plan in place. PEMA's statewide Hazard Mitigation Plan references the State Water Plan. PEMA is asking communities to look at their hazards, flooding and lack of water, to determine vulnerabilities. If copies of the Hazard Mitigation Plan are desired, the committee may contact him by email at atamm@state.pa.us. A list of projects can be accessed through www.landuseinpa.com/emap/.

George Tallman, a potato farmer in Tower City Schuylkill County, introduced himself and stated he uses irrigation on his farm. He is a 5th generation farmer and his farm has been using water from the Wiconisco Creek since 1928. He is concerned that fees may be imposed for use of water and commented that if he had to pay for the water to irrigate his farm that he most likely would have to sell his farm. Mike Cavanaugh related that there is no attempt to charge fees for this type of water usage.

Todd Giddings reported that the draft Groundwater Management Plan for the Susquehanna River Basin is complete and believes that it is in the printing process. Mr. Giddings also reported that there were misunderstandings by agencies in the State College area about critical water planning areas (CWPA's) being based on growth limitations and required by regulation. The Committee needs to be proactive in educating agencies that identification of CWPA's is voluntary.

Mr. Giddings circulated several handouts, including the "Spring Creek Watershed 2004 Annual Report State of Water Resources in Spring Creek," a water table hydrograph to draw attention to drought cycles, and the Total Annual Precipitation at State College graph showing wettest and driest years. Mr. Giddings believes that renewed interests in water planning are linked to drought occurrences. He called attention to the fact that Act 220 was developed in 2002 and at that time we were at the end of a serious drought cycle.

Summary of the May Regional Public Meeting/Hearing

Leslie Sarvis handed out the draft summary of all of the May public meetings and hearings. The committee commented on the light turnout but agreed that it is still early in the plan development. Once the August public meetings/hearings are

over, DEP will send a complete summary of all comments to the committee members as well as look into getting more copies of the transcripts from the public hearing.

Regional Plan Component Outline and Work Assignments

Leslie Sarvis discussed the idea to break down the Regional Component and have committee members contribute to some of the sections. The committee expressed concern over the time and resource commitment outside of meetings to accomplish the tasks of data/information gathering and writing. There was also concern over being able to maintain consistency of information and format with the other committees.

Uwe and Leslie will coordinate on the best way for the committee to move forward to develop the Regional Component.

Follow-up/Next Steps

The next meeting will be held on November 17, 2005 at the DEP NCRO, Williamsport, PA.

County planners in the basin will be invited to present their water issues to the committee. Todd Giddings requested that the Centre Regional Planning Agency be invited to the next meeting to present along with the county planners.

The meeting adjourned at 4:07pm.