



Pennsylvania

Department of
Environmental Protection

Water Resources Advisory Committee (WRAC) Meeting
Meeting Minutes | March 12, 2025, 9:30 AM – 12:00 PM

Rachel Carson State Office Building, 400 Market Street Room 105, Harrisburg, PA 17101
and Microsoft® Teams online.

Call to Order, Introductions, & Attendance – Matthew Genchur, Chair

The meeting was called to order by Chair Matthew Genchur at 9:33 a.m. Bob Haines conducted a roll call and of the 15-member committee, 13 members were present. A quorum was established.

The following committee members were present:

Chair Matthew Genchur.....Resource Environmental Solutions (RES)
Vice-chair Beth Uhler.....Center for Watershed Protection
Myron Arnowitt.....Clean Water Action
Harry Campbell.....Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Alexandra Chiaruttini.....The York Water Company
Jenifer Christman.....Western Pennsylvania Conservancy
Shirley Clark, Ph.D., P.E.....Pennsylvania State University
Kent Crawford, Ph.D.....USGS (Retired)
Andrew Dehoff.....Susquehanna River Basin Commission
John Jackson, Ph.D.....Stroud Water Research Center
Theo Light, Ph.D.....Shippensburg University
Cory Miller.....University Area Joint Authority
Chad Pindar (in for Kristen Kavanagh)Delaware River Basin Commission
Charles Wunz, P.E.....Wunz Associates

The following committee members were absent:

Dean Miller.....Pennsylvania Water Environment Association

Review and Approval of Minutes from November 21, 2024, Meeting (Action) – Matthew Genchur, Chair

Chair Genchur requested consideration of the November 21, 2024, draft meeting minutes.

Motion: Kent Crawford made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from September with Jenifer Christman seconding the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Streamlining Permits for Economic Expansion and Development (SPEED) Act (Informational) – Domenic Rocco, Director, Bureau of Waterways Engineering and Wetlands, and Krystal Bloom, Environmental Group Manager, Bureau of Clean Water

Domenic Rocco provided a broad overview of the SPEED Act, including eligible DEP permits and key details on the Chapter 105 implementation. Krystal Bloom followed with additional details on the Chapter 102 program implementation. Rocco and Bloom addressed questions and comments from the Board.

Kent Crawford inquired about the number of Qualified Professionals (QPs) and whether they would be able to handle the volume of permit reviews. Rocco responded that several firms have submitted multiple candidates for QP consideration, with the Chapter 102 and Chapter 105 permit programs having the highest number of applicants and approved QPs so far. Bloom added that the Chapter 102 program currently has 53 approved QPs.

Myron Arnowitz asked how the SPEED program aligns with public participation requirements under DEP's Environmental Justice program, including public comment and hearings. Rocco explained that SPEED projects require a pre-submission meeting, and for potentially contentious projects requiring public hearings, DEP would advise applicants against using the SPEED process, as it could negate the intent of a quick turnaround.

Arnowitz questioned what would happen if an applicant chose to proceed with SPEED despite the project being contentious. Rocco clarified that while applicants could proceed, they might not achieve the expedited review they were expecting. Bloom added that when an individual permit is published in the PA Bulletin as a draft, the 30-day comment period is considered "off the clock," which could extend the permitting timeline. Arnowitz confirmed that this would also apply to the production of a comment-response document.

Arnowitz also inquired about the priority review process, where DEP has ten days to act on an application, and whether DEP has the staffing capacity to meet this requirement without impacting standard permit reviews. Rocco stated that DEP remains involved early in the SPEED process, ensuring awareness of pending applications. When the ten-day priority review period begins, DEP will be required to meet the deadline.

Harry Campbell asked whether DEP is implementing measures to ensure that the SPEED program aligns with legislative intent while maintaining adequate water quality protections. Bloom responded that DEP has developed training plans for QPs to ensure they understand the process and regulations. Bloom and Rocco noted that QPs must submit a final report for DEP's review, allowing DEP to assess whether the QP has conducted a thorough evaluation.

Kent Crawford asked about QP compensation. Rocco explained that payment is based on a negotiated rate between the QP and the applicant.

Beth Uhler raised concerns about applicants selecting their own QP and the potential for preferential treatment. Bloom clarified that DEP follows statutory requirements: if fewer than ten QPs are available for a project, the applicant may select one directly. If there are ten or more, DEP will provide a list of three QPs from which the applicant can choose. This system allows applicants some flexibility while maintaining fairness in the selection process.

Chapter 102 Pilot Program Update (Informational) – Krystal Bloom, Environmental Group Manager, Bureau of Clean Water

Krystal Bloom updated the Board on the Chapter 102 Pilot Program, including the county location and number of permit applications, and their status. Bloom addressed questions and comments from the Board.

The Committee did not have questions or comments on this topic

Chapter 105 Pilot Program Update (Informational) – Domenic Rocco, Director, Bureau of Waterways Engineering and Wetlands

Domenic Rocco provided background on the Chapter 105 Pilot program, including eligibility and various requirements. Rocco addressed questions and comments from the Board.

Beth Uhler inquired whether projects involving cultural resources would impact eligibility for the Chapter 105 pilot program. Rocco clarified that while such projects would not be ineligible, they may not be ideal candidates for the pilot program due to their complexity.

Uhler also asked about the overall process and the timing of QP involvement. Rocco explained that in the SPEED program, QPs participate in a pre-submission meeting, whereas the pilot program includes two pre-application meetings. Bloom confirmed the timing of these meetings for both programs.

Uhler noted that it could be beneficial for applicants to select a QP based on the QP's area of expertise. Rocco agreed but emphasized that the SPEED program was designed for routine projects requiring quick turnaround rather than technically complex projects. Bloom added that conservation districts are responsible for reviewing projects regardless of their complexity, and the same applies to QPs.

Uhler then asked whether a quality control process would be implemented for QPs. Bloom and Rocco stated that a quality control process is planned, but it has not yet been developed.

Public Comment – Matthew Genchur, Chair

Conrad Martin submitted a comment in the Teams chat regarding saltwater intrusion affecting the City of Philadelphia's drinking water. Martin inquired whether the Committee was aware of the issue and tracking the Delaware River Basin Commission's (DRBC) response.

Chad Pindar from DRBC, attending on behalf of committee member Kristen Kavanagh, addressed the question. Pindar explained that DRBC is actively monitoring the "salt front" in the Delaware River, as this portion of the river is tidally influenced and contains several drinking water intakes, including those serving Philadelphia. Pindar also shared a link in the chat for additional information on the topic.

General Discussion/Agenda Topics Request – Matthew Genchur, Chair

Jenifer Christman inquired about the impacts of federal funding on water programs. Kent Crawford supported this request and asked for a focus on funding for the Chesapeake Bay Program and the Water Quality Network Program. Shirley Clark added a question regarding federal pass-through funding for implementing resilient activities, such as nature-based solutions. Myron Arnowitt requested information on how reductions in the EPA's budget would impact DEP's budget.

Bob Haines informed the Committee that past topic requests have been addressed in various ways but encouraged members to send a reminder if any requests had been missed.

Shirley Clark requested updates on revisions to the Erosion and Sedimentation (E&S) Control Manual. Krystal Bloom responded that efforts have been focused on addressing comments on the Post-Construction Stormwater Management (PCSM) Manual, and only preliminary updates to the E&S Manual have been drafted. A firm timeline for completing the E&S Manual updates has not yet been established. Beth Uhler noted that aspects of the updated PCSM Manual are incorporated into the draft PAG-13 MS4 general permit.

Matt Genchur asked if DEP had any upcoming action items for the Committee. Bob Haines informed the Committee that non-regulatory agenda items are slated to come before WRAC but are not yet ready for review. Domenic Rocco added that regulatory updates for Chapter 105 will resume soon and will be brought back to WRAC for comment.

Adjournment – Matthew Genchur, Chair

Motion: Shirley Clark made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Jenifer Christman seconded the motion. All voting members present voted to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 11:06 a.m.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 14, 2025