

Marsh and Rock Creek Watersheds Critical Area Resource Plan
Critical Area Advisory Committee **DRAFT Kick-off Meeting Minutes**

1:00pm-3:00pm, January 12, 2011: Ag Center, 670 Old Harrisburg Rd, Gettysburg, PA 17325

Attendees:

Charles Bennett, David Jostenski, Mike Hill, Jim Palmer, Heidi Moltz, John Hess, Howie Kesser, Bill Chain, Bicky Redman, Joe McNally, Patrick Naugle, Chris Kimple, Paul Kellett, John Brummer, Nate Rozic, Sarah Weigle, Duke Martin, Mark Guise, Hugh Lewis, Zach Bolitho, Vy Trinh, Adam McClain, Jim Schupp, Bert Waybright, Skip Strayer, Nate Merkel, Matt Genchur, Robert Reichart, Charles Wilson, Ronald Stanley, Dan Trimmer, Ben Thomas, Eric Flynn, Patrick Bowling, Salma Monani, Richard Schmoyer, Flo Ford, Phyllis Chant, Rick Klein, Larry Redding

Handouts:

Meeting agenda, tentative schedule of advisory committee meetings, committee membership list, potentially stressed and water challenged areas of Adams County map, water level monitoring well network map, statement of watershed problems document

Welcome and introductions:

Charlie Bennett welcomed everyone to the meeting and announced that because the meeting was not announced in the PA bulletin and in the newspaper, as required by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the meeting is not “official” and all decisions arising from the discussion will be made at the beginning of the next meeting. Charlie Bennett mentioned that the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin (ICPRB) was originally contracted to conduct a “pilot” water resources management plan. Now that the combined Marsh and Rock Creek watersheds have been designated as a Critical Water Planning Area, the product of this work will be a Critical Area Resource Plan. Charlie also discussed the previous and ongoing efforts related to this project by the Act 220 Potomac Regional Committee and the Adams County Water Resources Advisory Committee.

Each person in attendance was invited to introduce themselves and say what organizations and interests they represent.

Act 220 updates:

Dave Jostenski provided an update of the state water planning process. Secretary Hanger approved designation for 3 watersheds, based on recommendations from the Act 220 Statewide Committee, including Laurel Hill Creek and Back Creek in the Ohio Basin, and the combined Marsh Creek and Rock Creek watersheds in the Potomac Basin. Four additional watersheds have been identified as needing continued review and evaluation over the next year, including Little Lehigh Creek and Brodhead Creek in the Delaware Basin and Sugar Creek and Spring Creek in the Upper/Middle Susquehanna Basin. Dave then provided a brief review of the nomination and approval process leading to the designation as Critical Water Planning Areas. He also mentioned the ongoing planning work of DEP associated with the Act 220 process. Dave recommended the PA water plan website (<http://www.pawaterplan.dep.state.pa.us/statewaterplan/docroot/default.aspx>) as a source of additional information, which contains a digital water atlas and information on statewide water use under the “Mapping and Data Tools” tab.

Charlie Bennett followed up by reviewing the Critical Water Planning Area definition and describing the flow of water in Adams County, highlighting various components of the water cycle.

Advisory committee procedures

Meeting schedules and topics – selection of dates for 2011 meetings

The following dates were selected for 2011 advisory committee meetings: Wednesday, April 13, 2011 from 1-3pm; Wednesday, July 13, 2011 from 1-3pm; Wednesday, October 12, 2011 from 1-3pm. The meetings will be held at the Ag Center in Gettysburg (670 Old Harrisburg Rd, Gettysburg, PA 17325).

General committee member duties

Charlie Bennett presented on the topic of anticipated committee member duties, which included attending meetings, reviewing and commenting on information and draft documents, identifying watershed issues, and developing and reviewing recommended solutions to proposed problems.

Advisory nature of committee

Charlie Bennett informed the committee of their advisory role in the development of the Critical Area Resource Plan. He continued by saying that during water management planning, the possibility of conflicting perspectives may exist. The group was challenged to be respectful of the positions stated by others as the plan is developed.

Dave Jostenski read the committee responsibilities from the DEP Critical Area Resource Plan Guidance Document: “Act 220 requires that a Critical Area Advisory Committee be established by the Regional Committee to advise the Regional Committee and the Department in the critical area planning process,” (<http://www.elibrary.dep.state.pa.us/dsweb/Get/Document-77161/392-2130-015.pdf>).

Organizational structure

Committee leadership

Pat Naugle nominated Charlie Bennett as the Chair of the committee, which was seconded by Paul Kellett. Bicky Redman nominated Pat Naugle as the Vice Chair. Paul Kellett nominated Heidi Moltz as the Secretary. No objections to these nominations were made.

Membership list

Committee members were asked to review their information on the draft membership list and notify Heidi Moltz of needed corrections.

Communications needs – webpage, Facebook

Charlie Bennett asked the committee whether they think a project webpage or a Facebook account would be helpful. Dave Jostenski provided some background on the idea and noted that this type of education/outreach may help keep committee members, the public, students, and other stakeholders apprised of the project’s progress and current activities. Several committee members made comments in support of the idea. Charlie mentioned a possible need for disseminated information to be approved by the Potomac Regional Committee. No one spoke against the idea.

Other organizational structure discussion topics

Skip Strayer and Richard Schmoyer asked that Adams County Economic Development be included in the committee. It was noted that the planning efforts of that organization would/should dovetail with the planning efforts of this committee. It was agreed to open a seat on the committee. Charlie Bennett will contact Robin Fitzpatrick for this purpose.

Charlie Bennett asked if any subcommittees should be formed and noted that there are natural groupings of people on the advisory committee including education, technical, planning, etc. As there is no immediate need for subcommittees, the discussion was tabled for a later date.

Update on project technical analyses

Jim Palmer provided the committee with an update of ongoing monitoring efforts in the watersheds. Both ground and surface water monitoring is underway. Unused groundwater wells not under the influence of nearby pumping were identified throughout the watersheds in order to evaluate groundwater availability and seasonal fluctuations. To date, 14 wells are included in the network. Monthly water level measurements are taken in these wells by Adam McClain, Adams County Conservation District. Continuous level meters were installed in two of the wells. The monthly groundwater level measurements are available through the USGS website (http://groundwaterwatch.usgs.gov/countymaps/PA_001.html). Four staff gages have also been installed by USGS, two on Marsh Creek and two on Rock Creek. Continuous meters have been installed at the downstream staff gages on each creek. A map was distributed with the well and staff gage locations.

Heidi Moltz described how the data will feed into the larger project. Specifically, current and future water uses and water availability will be quantified and compared in order to identify and quantify potential problems. Recommendations included in the plan will be developed to address identified problems.

Pat Naugle asked what the recommendations will look like. Heidi responded that this is the reason for having diverse interests represented in the advisory committee – to develop practical and implementable solutions. The nature of the recommendations will be based on committee input.

Statement of watershed problems:

Charlie Bennett provided a brief explanation of the pour point analysis utilized during the watershed screening process. For a complete description of the pour point analysis, see http://www.pawaterplan.dep.state.pa.us/docs/TechnicalDocuments/SupportingDocumentation/Marsh_Rock_Creeks_Report.pdf. He again noted that multiple groups have been working on this problem, including the Act 220 Regional Committee, the Adams County Water Resources Advisory Committee, and now this Critical Area Advisory Committee.

Charlie Bennett gave an overview of Marsh and Rock creek watershed issues identified thus far in the Act 220 process. A handout was provided that contains a summary of the verification study findings and additional watershed issues raised at the public kick-off meeting (September 21, 2010). Charlie asked if anyone knows of any other issues that should be considered. Bicky Redman raised the issue of the Superfund sites in the watersheds. No other issues were brought forward. Any additional issues may be submitted to Heidi Moltz.

Additional discussion:

Skip Strayer asked if the information generated from this project could possibly hurt Adams County in the future. He provided a hypothetical example of future reservoir creation in Adams County based on the data collected and technical analyses associated with the Critical Area Resource Plan project. He also provided an

example from Virginia where an upstream user put in a new surface withdrawal that hurt a downstream user. The downstream user won the lawsuit in court.

Dave Jostenski gave a brief review of PA riparian law. Dave also mentioned that surface withdrawal issues have to go to court in PA since DEP does not regulate surface water withdrawals. Charlie Bennett further clarified by mentioning that SRBC has regulatory authority over large withdrawals in the Susquehanna Basin. In contrast, ICPRB does not have regulatory authority in the Potomac Basin.

Dave Jostenski gave an overview of the hydrologic criteria used to determine if a watershed is “critical” under the state planning process. A threshold of 50% of the 7Q10 was used (7Q10 is defined as the lowest stream flow for seven consecutive days that would be expected to occur once in ten years). He said that alteration/degradation of fish habitat was used as the surrogate for determining if the withdrawals would cause irreparable harm. Greater than 5% change in habitat was determined to be unacceptable. 50% of 7Q10, when compared to net withdrawals, was found to exceed this threshold.

Bill Chain asked if it is correct to infer that the combined Marsh and Rock creek watersheds are one of the three most critical areas in PA because it was one of the three that were designated as Critical Water Planning Areas. Bob Reichart said it may be safe to say these watersheds are within the top 15 most critical in the state, but it was also selected to move forward because the local people are ready and the funding is available. Dave Jostenski continued that there are some very small watersheds in the state that have horrendous water problems, but because they are so small the problems may be more readily solved at the local level rather than through the statewide planning process. Charlie Bennett noted that it can be concluded that there is reason to be concerned about how water is used in the Marsh and Rock creek watersheds and that there is a need to implement measures where feasible. As an example, Pat Naugle cited a big power plant that uses very little water.

Richard Schmoyer cited the Battelle study that investigated the need to attract a more diverse job base in Adams County. Different types of uses that may or may not be attracted to the region will have different impacts to the community and the natural resources. He also suggested that recommendations coming out of the Critical Area Resource Plan need to be conducted in a balanced context with planning and should be based on things like storage capacities rather than zoning. He also mentioned the need for accommodations to be made to future uses and the economy.

Charlie Bennett showed a school district map and a watershed map for everyone to understand their locations in the watersheds. He also showed a drought map from the DEP website (http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/drought_information/10606).

Announcements:

The next meeting of the Critical Area Advisory Committee will be Wednesday, April 13th, 2011 from 1-3pm at the Ag Center in Gettysburg.

The next Adams County Water Resources Advisory Committee meeting will be held on January 25th from 1-3pm at the Ag Center in Gettysburg.

The 2011 PA water festival will be held May 24th at Gettysburg College (300 North Washington Street, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania). Volunteers are needed. Contact Bob Reichart for more information.