

**West Branch Susquehanna Restoration Coalition
Meeting Report
Tuesday, June 13, 2006**

Opening This meeting of the West Branch Susquehanna Restoration Coalition was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Amy Wolfe. The meeting was held at the Clinton County Conservation District Office at Lamar, PA.

Present The meeting was attended by Jen Demchak, Becky Dunlap, Erin Dunleavy, Ken Flanigan, William Hellier, Rachel Kester, Terry O'Connor, Carl Undercoffer, Mary Vuccola, Dr. John Way, and Amy Wolfe.

Information and Discussion Items

Item 1: Amy Wolfe provided a report on the West Branch Susquehanna Restoration Symposium II held on Friday, May 12, 2006 at the Penn Stater Conference Center Hotel in State College. The 158 attendees included people from state, federal, and local agencies and watershed associations. Amy also stated that another Symposium is planned for next year. She also mentioned that suggestions regarding planning for the next Symposium would be welcomed.

Item 2: Amy Wolfe reviewed the remarks of Paul Swartz, Executive Director, SRBC, who served as the keynote speaker for the Symposium, by citing several of his challenges for the group. The main challenge was to take advantage of the human resource inventory that includes county and local officers/commissioners, businesses, chambers of commerce, conservation districts, GreenWay partnerships, and colleges/universities. Amy Wolfe also suggested the formation of a formal internship program with the colleges/universities (Bucknell, Lycoming, Susquehanna, Mansfield, Lock Haven, and Penn State). The purpose of the internship program would be to coordinate students with watershed group needs. Dr. Way suggested that the careful planning and development of a notification of intern positions would be an important factor regarding the success of any intern program that might develop.

Item 3: Amy Wolfe spoke to the announcement made by Scott Roberts regarding the DCNR grant amounting to \$81,300. This grant is aimed at the development of a Strategic AMD Remediation Plan for the West Branch of the Susquehanna River. The total cost of the plan will be \$122,000 with the remaining amount coming from Trout Unlimited.

Item 4: Amy Wolfe announced that the North Central Conservancy convened a meeting of Land Conservation Groups on May 4, 2006. A focus of the meeting was the conservation of land in riparian zones that would become very attractive for private ownership once AMD remediation has occurred.

Item 5: Amy Wolfe announced that Trout Unlimited is interested in initiating an economic benefits study for the West Branch of the Susquehanna River. Amy is obtaining an outline of scenarios and cost estimates from contacts at Penn State and will supply outlines to interested individuals.

Item 6: Amy Wolfe announced that she had submitted a grant proposal to the Melon Foundation. The funding is to be used to secure additional technical assistance.

Item 7: Amy Wolfe commented on media outreach. As a result of Erin Dunleavy's press release pertaining to the formation of the West Branch Susquehanna Restoration Coalition, Amy was contacted by WRTI, a Harrisburg station, with questions about the coalition and problems in the West Branch. This resulted in an interview which later ran in the Harrisburg area. Also, regarding outreach, Amy will be doing a presentation at the Elk's Lodge.

Item 8: Amy Wolfe provided an update on Senate Bill 2616 - Santorum/Specter. The current bill would reauthorize funding for 15 years with mandatory spending for AML. Also, funding for Pennsylvania would increase from \$25 million to \$75 million/year. Additionally, the 10% set aside will increase from 10% to 30% and the bill includes flexibility for Pennsylvania to address water problems. The bill also includes the provision for a reduction in fees paid by coal companies.

Item 9: Senator Byrd has proposed to extend the AML Fund thru 9/30/2007. Currently the \$2 billion fund is split 60/40% between Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

Item 10: Watershed Updates - Each watershed group represented at the meeting provided a summary of their recent accomplishments regarding restoration planning and remediation activities.

Announcements

The July Meeting of the Coalition will be held at 6:30 pm on July 11, 2006 at the Clearfield County Conservation District Office. In general, meetings are held on the 2nd Tuesday of the month.

Please remember to bring any watershed assessments/restoration plans or data that might be used by the SRBC in developing a Restoration Plan for the West Branch of the Susquehanna River.

<Recorded by Ken Flanigan>