



**West Branch Susquehanna Restoration Coalition
Meeting Report
Tuesday, July 13, 2010**

Tour Prior to the regularly scheduled meeting, a tour of the Tangascootack Creek watershed was led by Scott Koser of the Clinton County Conservation District. The group traveled to 2 sites in the watershed where they learned of the coal mining history of the area and current efforts to abate AMD impacts to the South Fork of the creek.

Opening This meeting of the West Branch Susquehanna Restoration Coalition was called to order at 6:45 pm by Rachel Kester. The meeting was held at the Clinton County Conservation District, Lamar, PA.

Present The meeting was attended by: Mario Carrello, Bill Beacom, Jim Ryan, Kelly Williams, Jenna Turner, Ann Donovan, Mark Killar, Carl Undercofler, Becky Dunlap, Rachel Kester, Rebecca Holler, Aaron Furguele, Shirley Sholtis, Amy Wolfe, Trish Carothers, Terry O'Connor, Roger Kuhn, Lee Murphy, Scott Koser and Mary Ann Bower. (Art Rose really wasn't here.) ☺

Information and Discussion Items

Item 1: Introductions: All meeting participants identified themselves and the group they were representing.

Item 2: The minutes of the March 9, 2009 meeting were distributed. No additions or corrections were noted.

Item 3: Lee Murphy, DEP/EPA, gave a presentation to the group regarding the new Non-Point Source Pollution Control Program funding available through Pennvest. At this point in time, watershed groups and other non-profits are not eligible to directly receive the funding but must work with a government entity who can act as the pass through agent on the grant. Funding is awarded in the form of low-interest loans or grants from the state revolving fund. Another stipulation of the grant is that the municipality in which the project is located must be Act 167 compliant (must have stormwater ordinance in place). There are currently bills moving through the legislature to make some changes to the program that would allow non-profits to apply directly for the funds and allow AMD and Ag BMPs to be installed regardless of the Act 167 status. The next round of grants is due August 31st. For more information, contact Lee Murphy at c-lemurphy@state.pa.us or see the Grants section of the coalition website.

Item 4: Mario Carrello updated the group on the status of the Growing Greener program. He informed the group that the next round of grants will open on July 17 with applications due on September 17. Unfortunately, as it stands at this time, the only AMD projects that will be eligible for funding are located 1) on primacy bond forfeiture/ABS sites; 2) within an EPA Section 319 watershed; or 3) in a watershed that has a BAMR Hydrologic Unit Plan or where BAMR staff are currently working towards development of a Qualified Hydrologic Unit. This severely limits the groups that are eligible to receive funding in the West Branch. Amy Wolfe encouraged group members to contact DEP and tell them that Growing Greener funds should not be used to pay for bond forfeiture/ABS sites as the state is already responsible for cleaning these up and a funding mechanism is in place.

Item 5: Rachel Kester, Trout Unlimited, informed the group of upcoming grant opportunities. She also reminded the group that grant opportunities are posted on the coalition website at www.wbsrc.com/grants. Anyone wishing to submit a grant opportunity to include on the website should contact Rachel.

Item 6: Becky Dunlap, Trout Unlimited, gave a brief update on the status of the West Branch Recovery Benchmark project. She said that data collected last summer has been entered in the database and is currently undergoing the final QA/QC check. Preliminary results were revealed at the West Branch Susquehanna Restoration Symposium on May 6th. A final report is due out later this year.

- Item 7: Rebecca Holler, OSM/VISTA summarized the AMD Education Workshops and tours that took place throughout the West Branch last summer and this spring and were primarily funded by a DEP Environmental Education grant. She noted that there were 319 participants, of which there were over 30 teachers, 15 elected officials, and 100 school kids. Over 700 additional students received AMD education through spin-off events following the tours. Rebecca also announced that TU has received another DEP EE grant that will be used to host a similar round of AMD workshops and tours this year and next that will focus more on middle and high school students. She also did a brief synopsis of the symposium, noting that there were 127 participants on the first day and an additional 41 folks who took part in the field training day. Symposium news articles, pictures, presentations, and the field day training manual are available for download on the website at www.wbsrc.org/symposium.html. Click on the link for the 2010 symposium.
- Item 8: Rachel Kester reminded the group that all non-profit organizations with 501(c)3 status in Pennsylvania must file form 990 with the IRS each year, regardless of how much money they have in their treasury. Failure to do so for more than three years in a row will result in revocation of that group's non-profit status. Please make sure your group is complying with this rule! More information can be found at www.irs.gov under "Charities and Nonprofits".
- Item 9: "Round-the-table" watershed updates were provided by those present on behalf of the organization(s) that they represent.

The next meeting will be held at the Clearfield County Conservation District on Tuesday, September 14, 2010.