

**Summary Minutes
Local Government Advisory Committee
August 4 – 5, 2011
Williamsport (Lycoming County), PA**

Thursday, August 4th

In attendance: Mary Ann Lisanti, Jeff Wheeland, Ann Simonetti, John Thomas, Sheila Noll, Kelly Porter, Penny Gross, Sheila Finlayson, Bruce Williams, Charlotte Katzenmoyer, Phil Briddell, Larry Trala Staff: Rick Keister, Circuit Rider Jake Romig
Guests: James Elliott, Megan Lehman, Jessica Blackburn, Matt Johnson, Natalie Gardner, Pat Buckley, Ann Roda, Chris Addland, Mark Davidson, Kurt Hausammann, Kevin McJunkin, Christine Weigle, Charles Springman, Robert Bauder, Toner Hollick

Tiadaghton State Forest Visitor Center

A bus transported LGAC members and guests from the Holiday Inn to the Tiadaghton State Forest Resource Management and Visitor Center for the meeting. At the center, members were given a tour of the center which was constructed as a green building. The facility includes the first green living roof in the DCNR system, planted with various types of sedums, and was built on a previously developed site, which avoided the need to develop vital greenspace. Other green features include geothermal heating, a rainwater reuse system, a landscaping design that incorporates native plants retains stormwater; and sustainably harvested wood.

Introductions and Lycoming County Bay Program

Chair, Mary Ann Lisanti, opened the meeting with introductions then introduced Lycoming County Commissioner Jeff Wheeland to talk about the coordinated Chesapeake Bay Program in the County.

The Lycoming County Bay tributary strategy was launched in 2008 in response to community concerns about the cost of compliance with state mandates to reduce nutrient pollution impacting the Chesapeake Bay. The center piece of this effort is a County based nutrient trading program that will lead to increased health of local streams and riparian habitats. Overall program goals include reducing nutrient and sediment pollution flowing into the West Branch of the Susquehanna River, enhancing local environmental quality, and promoting home-grown conservation practices. An advisory committee and two work groups comprised of local stakeholders meet regularly to guide the process. The effort is led by Commissioner Jeff Wheeland, County environmental planner Megan Lehman, and Conservation District Manager, Mark Davidson.

Marcellus Shale Presentation

David Yoxtheimer, Professional Geologist from the Penn State Marcellus Center for Outreach and Research gave a presentation on the issue of drilling for gas in a geologic formation known as the Marcellus Shale. He talked about the economic benefits of drilling for gas while presenting the environmental consequences that such activity brings to local areas.

Benefits

- Cleaner burning fuel
- Much lower emissions
- Smaller footprint
- Domestic fuel
- Jobs
- Positive economic impacts

Concerns

- Excessive water use
- Methane migration
- Chemical releases
- Explosions
- Forest fragmentation
- Erosion/sedimentation
- Excess truck traffic
- Air quality

The Marcellus Shale presentation is available by contacting:

rkeister@allianceforthebay.org

PA Presentation on the Phase II WIPs

Pat Buckley of the Department of the Environment (DEP) outlined the Phase II Watershed Implementation Process (WIP) in Pennsylvania. To facilitate local implementation of necessary reduction actions to meet the allocations, EPA directed the Chesapeake watershed jurisdictions to sub-divide the reductions by local areas. PA chose to sub-divide at the county level, as the EPA Bay Watershed model is based in part on county level data. The reduction targets are for planning purposes only, and do not become regulatory actions at the county level. The identified Pollution Reduction Actions represent one scenario from the Bay model that meets the reduction targets. There are other equally valid combinations of actions that could also meet the reduction targets. DEP is holding invitational workshops at the county level to gain input from local governments and communities to the state WIP. In the future, regional meetings of four to six counties will be conducted in the October through December time frame.

American Eel Restoration Project

Dr. Heather Galbraith, United States Geologic Survey, Northern Appalachian Research Laboratory, Asph, PA gave a presentation on the research and findings of the American Eel Restoration Project. The project involved the release of American eels into Pine Creek in the hope that the eels will begin a long relationship as host to the larve of the Eastern freshwater mussel. The mussels are valuable in their natural function of filtering sediment and pollution. Their numbers have been depleted in the Susquehanna River Basin because of hydroelectric dams on the river. For more information, she can be reached at [Heather S. Galbraith](#) at 570-724-3322 x230.

Lycoming County Environmental Tour

After the morning meeting, LGAC members boarded a bus for a tour that illustrated how Lycoming County is coping with a number of challenging environmental issues, including those related to the development of Marcellus Shale.

The sites visited included:

The Pine Creek Rails to Trails Project
Marcellus Shale Drilling Site
Williamsport Municipal Water Authority Wellfield
Williamsport West Waste Water Treatment Plant
Eureka Resources Marcellus Water Treatment Facility
Williamsport Central Waste Water Treatment Plant
Susquehanna River Walk
Halliburton Drilling Support Facility, Marcellus Energy Park
Sherman Beef Cattle Farm (nutrient trading participant)

Members got to see first hand the impacts of natural gas drilling, the treatment of frac water used in the drilling process, and the scope of drilling support activities that impact the infrastructure of Lycoming County. Briefings by the Planning Commission also informed the members of the social and environmental impacts that have created an economic boom as well as issues to be addressed in north central PA. The tour also featured several trails that have taken advantage of major waterways to offer residents and visitors opportunities for outdoor recreation. The final stop at a beef farm illustrated the latest advances in Best Management Practices and how they have been used to create model agricultural practices.

LGAC Dinner

LGAC members and guests were hosted by the Lycoming Planning Commission at a dinner at the Ross Club.

Friday, August 5, 2011

Exemplary Local Programs

River Smart Homes Overview in the District of Columbia.

This District-wide program offers incentives to homeowners interested in reducing stormwater runoff from their properties. Homeowners receive up to \$1,200 to adopt one or more of the following landscape enhancements: shade trees, rain barrels, pervious

pavers, rain gardens, bay-scaping. River smart homes landscaping can provide benefits to homeowners such as: beautifully landscaped properties; cost savings on water, electricity and lawn-mower fuel and oil; Reduced heating and cooling bills, less time devoted to lawn care, reduced stress, better health; higher property values.

For the District, the benefits to the environment are: minimizing use of herbicides, pesticides, and fertilizers; stabilizing soils to help prevent soil erosion; increased habitat for wildlife; infiltrating stormwater; diminishing impacts of polluted waters to local streams.

Lancaster Green Infrastructure

Lancaster City Public Works Director, Charlotte Katzenmoyer explained how the city opted to substantially develop its “green infrastructure” while increasing the efficiency of its existing gray infrastructure. The City’s recently completed Green Infrastructure (GI) Plan calls for incorporating GI into public projects/spaces as well as on private property through redevelopment and ordinance changes. It has developed a plan to engage homeowners and businesses in an effort to catch as much rainwater as possible and divert it from the sewage system. The city has also identified a series of public works projects to improve streets, parking lots, and playgrounds. The techniques include porous pavements, sidewalks, rain gardens, retention ponds, green rooms, trees and planter boxes to filter water into the ground or evaporate it; and rain barrels, cisterns, and ponds to capture and slowly release water.

LGAC Business Meeting

Sheila Finlayson made a motion which was seconded by Bruce Williams to approve the minutes from the last meeting in Alexandria, VA. The motion was passed unanimously.

Mary Ann reported on the Executive Council meeting on July 11th in Richmond, VA. She said that LGAC is seen by the EC as a vital partner. Disconnects do occur between local governments and states and EPA, but LGAC has been seen as an Advisory Committee that can help close those gaps. She reported that the Governors and Lisa Jackson looked at our publication, “Our Waters, Our Towns,” and told us that it was an outstanding document.

Penny Gross pointed out the need to focus on the authorities of local governments in the WIP process and to recognize the different state and local legal structures as we begin implementation at the local level. We need to constantly point this out since EPA and federal agencies often fail to recognize these differences. Emeritus member, Phil Briddell, suggested that there needs to be a political science model for local governments that would explain how things work at the local level to federal and state levels of government.

Sheila Noll pointed out the opportunity to use the state associations of counties and other local governments as a way to reach other elected officials about the Watershed Implementation Plans (WIPs). In VACO, there is a new membership orientation that might be used to acquaint new officials with the Bay Program, EPA, and the requirements of the TMDL.

Copies of the “Our Waters, Our Towns,” piece about the Phase II WIPs were distributed to members at the meeting. Additional copies were requested by Sheila Noll, Penny Gross, Bruce Williams, Jeff Wheeland and John Thomas. Jeff will be doing a presentation to the PA County Commissioners Association in a few weeks. Arrangements have been made with the state associations of counties and municipal leagues to post the LGAC report on their websites and/or electronic newsletters. Members are to contact Rick Keister for additional copies.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 PM. The next LGAC meeting will be on November 4th, 2011, in Annapolis, MD.

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