

**GREENE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
MINUTES  
April 17, 2012**

**I. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chairman Archie Trader at 10:05 a.m. in the Mezzanine Conference Room, 19 South Washington Street, Waynesburg, Pennsylvania. Those in attendance were as follows:

**Greene County Conservation District Directors and Associate Directors**

Archie Trader-Vice Chairman; Pam Snyder-Commissioner Representative; Tom Headlee-Treasurer; Jim Cowell-Secretary; Jim Kenney-Director; J. Robert Rice-Director Emeritus; Greg Hopkins-Associate Director; Bill Wentzel-Associate Director/Program Associate.

**Guests and Cooperating Agencies**

Suzy Petery-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS); Chris Hardie, Department of Economic Development.

**Staff**

Lisa Snider-District Manager; Laurel Rush-Ag Technician; Julie Maxwell-Watershed Specialist; Becky Salosky-Fiscal Officer; Robbie Matesic-Executive Director, Department of Economic Development.

**II. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

*A motion was made by Jim Cowell to enter into Executive Session at approximately 10:06 AM to discuss a personnel matter. Jim Kenney seconded. (Motion Passed).*

*Following the Executive Session, a motion was made by Commissioner Snyder at approximately 10:13 AM to reconvene the meeting. Jim Cowell seconded. (Motion Passed).*

**III. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Ms. Snider noted that a correction was made to the February 21, 2012 meeting minutes that were mailed to directors. Under New Business,

Section F, a paragraph was added to further explain the draft Agriculture Compliance Policy.

***A motion was made by Commissioner Snyder to approve the minutes of the February 21, 2012 meeting with the correction. Tom Headlee seconded. (Motion Passed).***

**V. TREASURER'S REPORTS**

***A motion was made by Commissioner Snyder to approve the treasurer's report. Jim Cowell seconded. (Motion Passed)***

**VI. CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no Correspondence to bring before the Board.

**VII. REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE**

**James H. Mooney - 186 acres - Morris Township**

***A motion was made by Jim Kenney to accept this Request for Assistance. Commissioner Snyder seconded. (Motion Passed)***

**James H. Mooney - Mini Grant Applications**

Ms. Rush presented two mini grants applications, each for \$1,000, for spring developments and/or spring repairs. After visiting the sites, she prioritized the applications as Site #1 and Site #2 with Mr. Mooney's guidance.

***After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Jim Cowell to approve the mini grant application for Site #1. Jim Kenney seconded. (Motion Passed)***

Under the rules of the Mini Grant Program, an applicant can receive only one grant in a fiscal year (July 1<sup>st</sup>-June 30<sup>th</sup>). Subsequent grant approvals can be made, provided there are no first time applicants; therefore, Mr. Mooney would be ineligible for funding of Site #2 at this time because we cannot predict if a first time applicant might come forward by July 1, 2012. Consequently, Ms. Rush asked the Board to consider granting approval for funding for Site #2, in the next application round (after July) contingent upon no first-time applications being received.

***A motion was made by Jim Cowell to approve Site #2, contingent upon the aforementioned rules of the program. Jim Kenney seconded. (Motion Passed)***

## VIII. OLD BUSINESS

### a. FARMLAND PRESERVATION – WILLIS TRUST EASEMENT

Ms. Snider provided an update regarding the conservation easement encumbrance of the 101 acre parcel of the James F. and Pearl Willis Living Trust. Notice was received from the office of the PA Bureau of Farmland Preservation that the James F. and Pearl Willis Living Trust easement could have been considered at their April meeting. However, since there was such a short time period to notify the adjacent landowners prior to the PA Bureau of Farmland Preservations meeting, it was delayed. The package will be ready to be included on the June 2012, PA Bureau of Farmland Preservation agenda for consideration.

Ms. Rush noted that the application period for agricultural easements under the Greene County Farmland Land Preservation Program will be open from April 15 to May 15, 2012. Information and press releases have been submitted to the Observer-Reporter. The information will also be published in the Greene County Conservation District (GCCD) newsletter.

### b. USACE MONONGAHELA RIVER WATERSHED ASSESSMENT

Work continues with the Army Corps of Engineers to complete a watershed assessment of the Monongahela River Basin. Ms. Matesic noted that a meeting to discuss the comments regarding the *Monongahela River Initial Watershed Assessment*, outreach that will be conducted and next steps of the project is scheduled for Thursday, April 19<sup>th</sup> with the Corps. Also, it is hoped that steps will be taken to contract the West Virginia Water Research Institute (WVWRI) and its Director, Dr. Paul Ziemkiewicz. The WVWRI has data to provide for the study and would like to increase their monitoring area so that additional information can be provided.

The *Monongahela River Watershed Assessment* will not begin until an agreement is signed by the Greene County Commissioners. The agreement is expected to be signed in June, 2012.

Ms. Matesic added that the map showing the assessment area was included in Ms. Maxwell's, monthly report.

## IX. NEW BUSINESS

### a. WATERSHED SPECIALIST POSITION

The renewal period has opened for the grant contract for the Conservation District Watershed Specialist position for the July 2012 – June 2014 grant period. The grant is offered by PA DEP and covers 80% of salary and benefits for Watershed Specialist related work, travel expenses and work-related supplies.

\$64,000 is available for the two year grant period, of which \$32,000 is allotted each year to cover a portion of the cost associated with the Watershed Specialist position. PA DEP requires a 20% match from the applying county. Approval is needed for the submission and the job description for the position.

***A motion was made by Commissioner Snyder to approve the grant submission and the job description. Tom Headlee seconded. (Motion Passed)***

**b. GREENE COUNTY FFA IMPROVEMENT ASSOC. DONATION REQUEST**

Curt Hughes, West Greene FFA Teacher, has requested a donation to assist with the Greene County FFA Improvement Association. The purpose of the association is both educational and county-wide in scope. It encourages FFA members to improve the quality of their farming programs and products, their interests in agri-business and their leadership abilities. Funding for the program; which supports fair activities, has been lost in recent years. The funds that were received over the years came from the PA State Fair Fund.

The donated funds would help pay for the awards for students who place in different categories in the program. Both Greene County FFA Chapters, West Greene and Waynesburg, are eligible to participate. Although no specific amount was requested, the letter states that their annual budget is \$1,000.

***A motion was made by Jim Cowell to donate \$1,000 to the Greene County FFA Improvement Association. The accountability of these funds was discussed. Mr. Kenney requested that the motion be amended to require that an annual report for the program be submitted to the Conservation District, perhaps for distribution at the Annual Awards meeting. Commissioner Snyder seconded. (Motion Passed)***

**c. SOUTHWESTERN PA PROJECT GRASS CONFERENCE DONATION**

The Southwestern Pennsylvania Project Grass Chapter will be hosting a grazing conference at the new Kovalchick Convention and Athletic Complex in Indiana, Pennsylvania on October 11 and 12, 2012. The Chapter is requesting a donation of \$150 that would include one registration which could be offered to a farmer, perhaps through the GCCD newsletter or other outreach venues. The group is seeking vendors and grants to help lower the registration cost of \$95 for participants.

***A motion was made by Jim Cowell to donate \$150 for the conference and use the registration to send a local producer to the event. Tom Headlee seconded. (Motion Passed)***

**d. MARCELLUS CITIZEN'S STEWARDSHIP PROJECT**

The Mountain Watershed Association, in conjunction with the Fayette County Conservation District, has developed a *Visual Assessment Training Program* to educate citizens living in the Marcellus Shale region about the drilling process and about how things should and shouldn't look on or around a well site or pipeline. The purpose of the program is to make citizens aware of what is a legitimate concern, when a complaint should be made and to which agency, and what is a standard part of the drilling process. As part of the program, volunteers are trained to visually monitor drilling operations and report on the conditions they observe.

The goal is to not only educate citizens in order to teach them to visually monitor drilling activities and report problems, but to lower the amount of unnecessary calls about illegitimate concerns. The group has held the program in Washington, Allegheny, Beaver, and Indiana counties, and has scheduled Monday, April 30<sup>th</sup> from 6-9 pm to hold the program for Greene County.

Heather Fowler, Watershed Specialist for Fayette County Conservation District, requested that Julie present the monitoring safety portion of the program. That portion was developed by Fayette County and Heather engages her counterparts in other counties to address the citizens they work with themselves. The safety portion of the presentation highlights what not to do when monitoring; such as, not going on private property, not wading into flooding or fast-moving streams, etc. It's very straightforward and a small portion of the overall program.

Ms. Snider requested approval to participate in the program and assist with the outreach. ***A motion was made by Jim Kenney to assist in the program. Jim Cowell seconded. (Motion Passed)***

**e. DIRT & GRAVEL ROADS PROGRAM**

It was noted by Ms. Snider that the Conservation District Quality Assurance Board member for the Dirt and Gravel Road Program is Mr. J. Robert Rice. It was discussed with Bradley Eisiminger and Tom Headlee that an alternate was needed in the event that Mr. Rice could not attend the Dirt and Gravel Road Quality Assurance Board meetings as needed.

***A motion was made by Tom Headlee to appoint Bill Wentzel to serve as an alternate on the Dirt and Gravel Roads Quality Assurance Board. Jim Cowell seconded. (Motion Passed).***

## X. DISCUSSION OF STAFF REPORTS

Staff reports were mailed with the meeting packets. Additional comments follow.

**Laurel Rush** – The 25<sup>th</sup> Greene County Envirothon will be held on May 11<sup>th</sup> at Ryerson Station State Park. Also, Consol and the Community Foundation of Greene County will be here today at 11:30 a.m. to present a \$3,000 donation for the event. Yesterday, Ms. Rush attended the meeting of the Greene County Association of Township Officials where she discussed agricultural security areas and farmland preservation.

**Julie Maxwell** – She has been working with a new watershed group, the Ten Mile Creek Watershed Association (TMCWA). The president of the group is John Hewitt from the Washington County Conservation District, who is presiding as a resident of the watershed and not as a Conservation District employee. To help recruit new members on the Greene County side of the watershed, a promotional article will be included in the GCCD newsletter. The group is currently monitoring conductivity levels in the watershed with four data loggers purchased through a grant provided to the Washington County Watershed Alliance by the Colcom Foundation. The group is interested in developing a Conservation Plan for the watershed and is looking into available grants and consultants to prepare a detailed plan. They currently meet on the first Monday of the month at the Log Cabin Fence Co. building in Amity, off the Marianna exit, at 9:30 a.m. For up to date information and meeting times, call 724-222-3060 x5.

In response to a question from Mr. Kenney regarding the Whiteley Creek Fish Habitat/Restoration Project, Ms. Maxwell said that some of the fish habitat structures planned on Whiteley Creek will be installed this year. The remainder will be done next year, as the grant has been extended through June of 2013. Ms. Snider noted that the PA Game Commission, Gamelands #223 Maintenance Supervisor of the Greene County Food and Cover Headquarters, Dave Griffin, who had been working with them on the project and was a strong advocate, has since retired. Current officials seemed apprehensive about completing this large project. The project consists of 7 structures that are at least 250' in length and is labor intensive. If they cannot assist with the project, other steps will be taken, such as possibly hiring folks to carry out the work. PA Fish and Boat Commission and other county conservation districts have been providing our office with direction and contacts if necessary.

**Lisa Snider** – She referred to the information she e-mailed the Board Members regarding Act 13, the Natural Gas Impact Fee legislation. A preliminary injunction was granted regarding Section 3309 of the Act of February 14, 2012,

P.L. \_\_, 58 Pa. C.S. 2301-3504 (Act 13). The motion was granted on April 11, 2012 and a stay was ordered for 120 days due to pending lawsuits filed by:

- Robison Twp., Washington County
- Peters Twp., Washington County
- Cecil Twp., Washington County
- Mt. Pleasant Twp., Washington County
- Nockamixon Twp., Bucks County
- Borough of Yardley, Bucks County
- South Fayette Twp., Allegheny County
- Delaware River Keepers

Versus:

- PA Public Utilities Commission
- Attorney General of Pennsylvania
- PA Department of Environmental Protection

This injunction only takes into account the municipal zoning portion of the law and the ability of the municipalities to adequately address local ordinances in the timeframe given.

The Greene County Conservation District Annual Report has been completed and filed with the State Conservation Commission. This report was included in the meeting packets for the board members to review. Also the update of the expenditures compared to the approved district budget was included for review.

Regarding the section of Ms. Snider's mailed report that refers to the gas well impact fee and the uncertainty a municipality has regarding the amount of money they will receive, Commissioner Trader clarified that the Commissioners hosted a meeting with the municipalities to discuss the matter and the projected numbers that are available.

As an update to the complaint section of her report, regarding the Dominion Appalachian Gateway Project (which is located in Center, Richhill, Franklin, and Morgan Townships):

- Currently investigations are being conducted on four area ponds.
- A complaint was received concerning an open cut that was made on the South Fork of Ten Mile Creek on Good Friday; Dominion installed the sediment barrier in a section of the stream that had fast moving current instead of a slow current as recommended by the installation requirement and as a result sediment entered the stream. By the time she and PA DEP Oil and Gas Inspector, Scott Sabocheck, arrived, the stream was running clear. Water samples were taken. A minimal violation was noted by Mr. Sabocheck because the project permit was not onsite.
- Numerous phone calls have been received regarding sediment entering S.R. 188. A vacuum truck is now being used to clean the area.

- On S.R. 21, near Rohanna's, a slope failure was reported. The staff has not had the opportunity to check this area.
- Thus far, Dominion has been very cooperative and is correcting the problems as they are identified.

Regarding EQT's Sunrise Project (located in Franklin, Freeport, Gilmore, Jefferson, Wayne, and Whiteley Townships)

- One pond complaint has been received
- There is a right-a-way dispute, and lack of controls near Garrison Ridge.
- There is an inadvertent return (frackout) on Shough Run in Gilmore Township. When the company was drilling under the stream the stream bottom fractured and a release of bentonite mixed with water was allowed to enter the stream. EQT notified PA DEP that the incident had occurred and PA DEP Oil and Gas inspectors were on site to evaluate the situation. Water samples were taken throughout the watershed by PA DEP. EQT has been told by DEP to install controls and use shovels in the stream to remove the clay-like material. Ms. Snider said that all of the affected municipalities were contacted. Ms. Matesic added that future problems will be reported to Greene County's Emergency Management Director, Greg Leathers. Commissioner Snyder noted that EQT had informed the Commissioner's Office, the township, and Mr. Leathers.

In closing, Ms. Snider commended Environmental Program Specialist, Jeremy Kelly for his work and noted that his field visits/inspections have been invaluable.

It was noted that Mr. Kelly and Ms. Kozlowski are both attending training on the newly released Chapter 102, Erosion and Sedimentation (E&S) Control Manual both today and Wednesday.

The Board commended the staff for the thoroughness of their written reports.

**Robbie Matesic** – The Marcellus Shale Business to Business Expo will be held on May 19<sup>th</sup> at the Washington County Fairgrounds. The Department of Economic Development has rented a space to distribute information.

Last week, she attended the H2O Conference hosted by Waynesburg University. Approximately 200 people attended the event which shows the great interest in water quality issues. She commended Ms. Snider and Mr. Kelly for their work with the Planning Commission, including working with Mr. Hardie and conducting field inspections. The Planning Commission Board greatly appreciates their efforts.

## **XI. CONSERVATION DISTRICT OUTREACH**

Ms. Snider noted that the newsletter was completed and should soon be mailed to the district cooperators. Eighteen articles were prepared and are being sent to Liz Menhart, the County's Communications Director, for her review for publication in the Observer-Reporter. The first article to appear in the newspaper will be regarding Farmland Preservation and Agriculture Security Areas. She has been working with the GreeneSaver to create posters regarding the Chapter 102 and 105 programs that municipalities can use as a reference in conjunction with the Moving Dirt Brochure.

To date, meetings have been held with 5 municipalities, with additional meetings scheduled. Those meetings were summarized in her monthly report.

Two display spaces have been rented for the Greene County Fair, one indoors and one outdoors. In conclusion, GCCD is co-hosting the agricultural workshop with Washington County on May 12<sup>th</sup>.

**Jim Kenney** - Discussed at a previous meeting was the purchase of a boomless herbicide sprayer to rent. Last year, he purchased one for himself and is now seeing the results on the fields he sprayed. It was very effective on the brambles and blackberry bushes; however, the multi-flora rose is experiencing a small amount of regrowth. He feels that we should again consider this matter to assist the agricultural producers in the county.

Ms. Rush noted that she plans to hold a field day in the fall to promote the lime spreader and the sprayer could be included. Pictures showing before and after treatment also could be used. The general consensus was that we determine the interest through surveys at the summer festivals, fairs, and through a mailings before a purchase is made.

## **XII. REPORTS FROM COOPERATING AGENCIES AND GUESTS**

**Suzy Petery** - A procedural change was made in the reporting of conservation compliance. At the inception, of the Farm Bill, in the mid 1980's, any agricultural producer receiving government benefits or participating in any government programs were required to have their Highly Erodible Land (HEL) in conservation compliance. Compliance is usually achieved through a conservation plan. If a producer of a commodity crop (planted or harvested annually) breaks-out or rents a new crop field, a HEL determination must be made. Requests for these determinations usually are made by the Farm Service Agency. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) completes the determination and mails a copy to the producer and the requesting agency. If the field is found to be HEL, the producer is urged to contact NRCS to develop a compliance plan.

Part of the proposed change, is that the Conservation District also be notified of a HEL determination. This notification can be made with a copy of the HEL determination or in the form of a report on a monthly or quarterly basis. Since so few of these determinations are made in Greene County, the Board felt that a quarterly report would be sufficient.

In another matter, she expressed her disappointment in the few applications received from Greene County landowners for Farm Bill Programs. With approximately \$600,000 to \$1,000,000 available in the three county area, she would like to see Greene County agricultural producers benefit more from the program. One way to achieve this is through conservation planning.

The Soil Conservation Technician’s position is now open through the end of the week. It is hoped that the position, which will be stationed at the Meadowlands Office in Washington County, will be filled in about a month.

**Chris Hardie** - He gave an update on the activities of the Planning Commission. Currently, eight projects are under consideration: 4 industrial projects, a bank, a convenience store, a subdivision, and a storage shed unit. To date, 20 lots splits have been reviewed and approved, 200 public notices have been received, and approximately 35 tax abatements completed. The goal of the staff is to improve communications with the developers by meeting with them to keep them informed of the status of their projects.

XIII. The next regular meeting will be **May 15, 2012.**

**XIV. ADJOURNMENT**

*With no further business to discuss, a motion was made by Commissioner Snyder to adjourn the meeting at 11:15 a.m. Jim Cowell seconded. (Motion Passed)*

<b><u>MEETING MINUTES CERTIFICATION</u></b>
We, the undersigned, agree that the minutes taken above were approved in their entirety by the Greene County Conservation District on _____, 2012.
Chairman, Greene County Conservation District
Secretary, Greene County Conservation District

