

**UPPER SUSQUEHANNA COALITION**

**Public Safety Bldg, 103 Corporate Drive, Multi-Purpose Room, Owego, NY**

**28 May 2010**

**Minutes**

**Attendees:**

Erin Heard	USC Outreach Specialist
Scott Cook	DEC Region 7
Scott Fickbohm*	Otsego Co. SWCD
Amanda Barber*	Cortland Co. SWCD
Aaron Ristow	Cortland Co. SWCD
Mark Watts*	Chemung Co. SWCD
John Wickham	Schuyler Co. SWCD
Craig Schutt*	Tompkins Co. SWCD
Mike Lovegreen*	Bradford Co. CD, PA
Jeff Parker*	Steuben Co. SWCD
Jim Curatolo	USC Coordinator, Dog Owner
Chip McElwee*	Broome Co. SWCD
Wendy Walsh*	Tioga Co. SWCD
Joe Graney	Binghamton University
Elaine Dalrymple*	Schuyler Co. SWCD
Karen Clifford*	Delaware Co. SWCD
Rob DeClue*	Chenango Co. SWCD

• denotes voting member

**II. Executive Board Meeting 9:00-10:00 on new Agriculture Coordinator/Team Leader position**

III. Call to Order 10:15 by chair Wendy Walsh

**IV. Approval of Minutes: Mark Watts motions to approve the minutes as printed, Jeff Parker seconds the motion, Approved.**

V. District Role in Gas Development and other related developments (Wendy Walsh)

Wendy, John Schumacher and Steve Lorraine attended the state committee meeting. The state committee approved the plan proposed by the USC districts with minimal comments and corrections. This subject should be pushed forward quickly. DEC is anxious to sit down with Districts and State Committee. Wendy will meet June 7 @ 10am with Mike Latham, Ken Kazinsky, Christina Falk and others in Albany to begin talks.

Tour of Bradford County gas exploration is leaving Tioga @ 9am on June 9, return to Tioga around 4:30pm. Bring your own lunch

Cortland Co received call from DEC regarding the SGEIS. This was evidence that they are going through all the comments submitted.

Gas companies are creating citizen advisory panels in counties in PA.

Bill Capell USGS spoke at the State Committee meeting; USC will invite him to a bi-monthly meeting.

Joe Graney (BU) and Wendy attended an SRBC meeting at BU. SRBC is looking for new monitoring sites. 10 more sites in NY have been proposed. Current operational sites include Meshoppen Creek, Choconut Creek, Sugar Creek, Tomjack, Wappasining, and Snake Creeks. SRBC will be ranking the proposed sites based on proximity to gas drilling. 40 square mile watersheds are the average size they are looking for. pH, turbidity, conductivity, stage, 6 time per year grab samples for barium, selenium, are among the tests to be performed.

Dickinson College in Carlisle PA got a grant to form a citizens monitoring group. Tuesday June 8<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm will be training in Bradford County. Focus on TDS and Conductivity. Will walk through protocol and methodology for volunteers to do monthly tests. Visual inspections will be part of the training. Coalition members are welcome.

USC may want to write a proposal to the gas companies to upgrade water quality monitoring gages around the basin.

Invasive species: Gas companies and SRBC will look to add an invasive species component to the trucking plans to prevent movement/introduction of invasive species.

USC members should provide feedback for Wendy Walsh to give DEC on district roles with gas drilling. There could be a similar plan to the stormwater partnership between USC and DEC.

#### VI. Chesapeake Bay TMDL/Watershed Planning efforts

- Just what is happening? – schedule of events

USC should support the Cardin bill conceptually, but we should be treated as a headwater. Coalition members should ask congress people why we are not being treated a little differently. There is now a blanket 30 % reduction requirement, which may be physically impossible for NY to achieve. The CBP will add an additional 10% reduction to make sure sufficient numbers are reached.

Two resolutions proposed:

**Resolution to draft a letter to Jim Tiereny to develop an MOU on how USC works with DEC.**

**Resolution to write a letter to Gillebrand supporting the Cardin bill with a stipulation that districts are involved and that STPs should be funded/supported through the bill.**

**Amanda Barber motions, Mark Watts seconds the motion. Both Carried.**

#### VII. The USC Agriculture Team – (TBD)

- The Executive Board met before the USC meeting to discuss the agricultural coordinator position: Aaron Ristow has applied, and will be working part time out of Tompkins County SWCD office. He will be funded by the USC and Tompkins SWCD. Amanda Barber/Cortland will be Ag team leader. Board has asked Aaron and Ag Team for a 6 month business plan describing responsibilities/roles/funding/priorities. Ag Committee will begin meeting again. Jim will be involved in coordinating. After the 6 months the USC will look at bringing Aaron on full time and review a pay increase. Executive Committee is recommending to the USC that Aaron be hired as Ag coordinator and Amanda is the Ag team leader.

**Mike Lovegreen motions to move forward with the Executive Committee's recommendations. Jeff Parker seconds the motion. Carried.**

- USC Grazing Initiative update and next steps: Supplemental environmental protection money will be paying for 4 projects in Schuyler and Steuben that were recently completed.
- New nutrient reduction proposal submitted: nutrient management benchmarking and stalk nitrogen testing through a CBP grant.
- Cargill project: Cargill is interested in supporting environmental work, namely precision feeding as it effects the big picture and Chesapeake Bay wetland restoration near some of the Cargill plants in the basin. Discussions continue.
- Ag Team planning meeting: Jim will present projects and current funding, talk about big picture, get everyone up to speed to kick off the Ag team approach with all members present.  
Ag committee: Amanda Barber , Rob DeClue, Wendy Walsh, Steve Lorraine, Someone from Broome Co. The first meeting will be held at the end of June. Amanda and Aaron will send out dates and agenda.

Mike Lovegreen: EPA farm inspections in PA are asking for conservation plans, NM plans, etc. Amish farms didn't have a lot of formal plans so Mike put together an action packet for Ag including farmer friendly water quality checklists to present to regulatory agencies. This packet helps get farmers ready for EPA visits. Mike made the packet available to NY counties to help prepare our farmers.

In NY, EPA will use DEC's inspection forms. When DEC does an inspection they send the form out to the farm ahead of time. DEC is supposed to complete 6 inspections in the watershed this year. Farm, planners, and districts are being notified and invited to participate. Districts can provide info on BMPs they have helped install.

#### VIII. The USC Stream Team – Mike Lovegreen

- Latest training session: last Wednesday in Tioga County introduced the training package. The next one will be in July. Mike is looking for a coalition site to use for training, and will talk about options and survey numbers to let the group work through the engineering process to put the package together. The next one will be a one-day training.
- Jason Petlock is gone to work for a gas company. Contact Rob Parker if you can't reach Mike.
- Status: Mike passed out current status of projects and submissions/requests. Counties should e-mail Mike updates.

#### IX. USC Wetland Program

- Wetland Committee meeting: .Kick off meeting planned for July 26<sup>th</sup>. Jim sent in the an In Lieu Fee Program prospectus to the US Army Corps. .The ILFP will cover the entire Susq Basin in NY. Each 8 digit HUC will be a service area. Melissa has developed a nice GIS analysis that identifies suitable soils that aren't already wetlands as part of the screening for his program.
- CBP Wetland Champion project: The Nature Conservancy south of Harrisburg had vernal pools go dry due to downstream development. USC will go down and do a two day training session and repair them.
- Partnering with USFWS and NYS DEC/Ruffed Grouse Society/NY Audubon: USC will do vernal pool workshop for USFWS. DEC region 7 is interested in woodcock habitat on the Otselic.

#### X. USC Coordinator Report

- Congressional Staff Briefing – 22 April 2010 – good turnout and follow up is in progress
- Retreat - 4 fall/winter mini retreats: wetlands, streams, Ag, gas.
- Joe Graney: new administration will take over at BU in the fall. Some site assessments and inventory of wetlands in Broome County is being completed by BU students/staff. BU has started their own little stream team to help Mike's team, they also have a team working on stormwater runoff.

- Scott Cook, DEC: RIBS ambient monitoring program has been suspended due to budget. Working in Madison County with pipelines and drillers. Vertical drilling is now required to get a construction stormwater permit.
- USC should continue to hold information and training sessions regarding the Marcellus Shale. Districts will be involved in pipeline installations, Ag and Mkt. training would be beneficial.

XI. Next Meeting Date -30 July 2010

Adjourn 1:45

Secretary

Erin Heard