

**Northwest Regional Watershed Group Workshop, November 7, 2018**  
**Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority, Scranton, PA**

**1-Watershed Group Round Robin – Achievements and Challenges**

**Bob Heil, Brodhead Watershed Association**

- Organization has changed/grown over last 4-5 years with support from the Delaware River Watershed Initiative (DRWI). Bob in second year of Executive Director position. DRWI enabling organization to conduct community engagement and outreach activities addressing clean water issues. This includes Municipal Separate Storm Sewer outreach and support to municipalities in Monroe County.
- Organization continues with native plant sales, monthly hikes and Autumn Ramble.

**Rylan Coker, North Branch Land Trust**

- North Branch Land Trust focuses on land conservation; they are working in the Upper Lehigh Cluster of the DRWI focusing on acquisition projects.
- They also support Chesapeake Bay Foundation conservation/restoration efforts.

**James Koharski, Shamokin Creek Restoration Alliance**

- Shamokin Creek Restoration Alliance focuses on Abandoned Mine Drainage (AMD) restoration, including headwater stream projects that treat AMD impacts.
- They are also supporting tree planting efforts with schools and elsewhere (e.g. Weiser State Forest Tree planting with PA DCNR and PEC).
- They are working on a project to compare clean streams with AMD streams.
- Their biggest issue is limited local elected official support for their restoration efforts.

**Louise Bugbee, Watershed Coalition of the Lehigh Valley**

- Louise noted that their biggest challenge is membership issues. That is, getting new members to join watershed groups in the Lehigh Valley.
- They have small grants for the Delaware Lehigh corridor which include:
  - A meadow garden
  - Disposal of mono-filament fishing line
  - Multi-functional buffers (pussy willow garden)

**Jim Vogt, Aquashicola-Pohopoco Watershed Conservancy**

- The Conservancy works in western Monroe and in Lehigh Counties.
- Their challenge is getting more people involved. To that end, they are interested in further promoting the Master Watershed Stewardship program in Monroe County.

**Nicholas Spinelli, Lake Wallenpaupack Watershed Management District**

- They work with lake side landowners on shoreline restoration projects. They also have Wallenpaupack Creek stream restoration projects.
- They also do education and outreach on water quality to other audiences including elected officials, schools, builders, and farmers.
- They conduct water quality monitoring (have a long-term database)
- They do grant pass throughs (Growing Greener) to community associations for watershed restoration activities.
- Nicholas also is president of the Pennsylvania Lake Management Society (PALMS); see his PALMS update under the regional providers section below.

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**Geoff Rogalsky, Tobyhanna Creek/Tunkhannock Creek Watershed Association**

- Geoff noted that their group is mature; has a core group of very passionate people.
- He is also looking for the best role to play within the mosaic (sometime confusing) of organizations and programs that support watershed groups.

Discussion:

Susan Myerov summarized challenges that she is hearing today and from feed-back from around the state:

- Watershed group membership is getting older. Need to attract new members; including younger people.
- Youth education should be prioritized. Also involving school properties in projects to help involve students in hands on learning. This needs to involve school curriculum/learning requirements and have champion teacher(s).
- Education should also be extended to other large landowners like businesses and golf courses.
- There are conflicts with local government; having the political will to address water quality issues.

John Levitsky (Luzerne CD) noted he is working with Dallas School District on three stormwater basin retrofits. He included in this effort a meeting with school maintenance staff to get them on-board, making the case that a retrofitted basin will prevent mowing equipment from getting stuck in muddy basins. Projects on school property can be turned into biological labs/restored habitat. You can also access educational grants to create chemistry/monitoring programs.

Conversely John noted a school project challenge; a school district being sued by upstream landowners who have the impression they are being flooded by the school's riparian buffer planting project.

Bob Heil noted he has a school district interested in a restoration project. He recommended using the Envirothon process for baseline data collection. He confirmed need to incorporate hands on student involvement that meets academic requirements. Make it easier for teachers to take on project.

Robert Hughes noted challenge of getting kids out of schools (may be short window of time after testing to get them out... April to June timeframe). Need funding to do the projects; environmental education grants (\$3,000) often not enough, and larger grants (\$25,000) are hard to match. Look at doing collaborations with multiple organizations.

## **2-Provider Round Table**

### **Elizabeth Rosser, Pennsylvania State University Extension, Master Watershed Stewardship Program**

- Program is active in:
  - Luzerne, Lackawanna, and Wyoming Counties (next training May/June)
  - Monroe County (next training March)
- PSU Extension runs program with lots of partners (Conservation Districts, colleges, watershed groups, non-profits, and others).
- Based on Master Gardeners program (40 hours of training, final exam, required volunteer service of 50 hours first year, then 20 hours in subsequent years, plus 10 hours continuing education/year).
- Stewards do many volunteer programs (outreach, tabling, Earth Day events, restoration, clean up, and other on-the-ground projects). Pocono Forest and Water grant has MWS doing projects or supporting watershed groups on projects. MWS are there to help watershed groups with education/restoration projects. They also can help municipalities with MS4 programs (education, outreach, and public involvement).
- Erin Frederick in state-wide coordinator, she can help start other county programs.

### **Madeline Emde, Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed**

- Includes 130 organizations, ranging from local restoration groups to national groups. Membership is free.
- Promotes better watershed protection/policy in Delaware River Watershed. Coordinates watershed wide collaboration/advocacy. Works on interstate campaigns. Shares information and resources.
- Annual Delaware River Watershed forum (250 people attend; they are looking for people to join forum planning committee). Let them know what topics you would like to see at the annual conference or other events.
- Supported new Delaware River Conservation Act; new non-regulatory federal program within US Fish and Wildlife Service. Includes grant and technical assistance programs for local partners to do water quality improvement, habitat, and recreational projects. Grant program just launched (\$4+ million/year). Will be linking it up with NFWF grants going out in February of 2019.
- Also supports Wild and Scenic River funding.
- Coalition does advocacy, such as does lawmaker visits to Harrisburg and Washington DC.
- Please Join! Or get on the list serve to get more information/resources; contact Madeline at [madeline.emde@njudubon.org](mailto:madeline.emde@njudubon.org).
- See calendar of watershed wide events (<http://www.delriverwatershed.org/calendar/>); events are added to their e-newsletter.
- Work groups include federal policy, communication, and diversity/equity/inclusion committees.

### **County Conservation Districts, Watershed Specialists**

- **John Levitsky, Luzerne County Conservation District, provided overview:**
  - Can support/conduct restoration, AMD, invasive species (aquatic and riparian), and trout restoration (wild trout) activities.
  - This includes writing grants, conducting projects, and working with partners organizations.
  - John noted that finding, establishing, or re-establishing watershed groups is an important issue. Growing Greener use to fund start-ups of watershed groups. Conservation Districts with one watershed specialist cannot cover all the issues. Watershed groups are key partners to leverage restoration/conservation projects. John needs watershed groups that can expand his reach; he in turn can help them.

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- **Andrea Mikol, Monroe County Conservation District**
- **Nathan Pritchard, Northampton County Conservation District, and Lehigh Valley Watershed Coalition:**
  - Supports Master Watershed Stewardship curriculum, stream monitoring, riparian buffer restoration, and a multi-functional buffer at a CSA farm.
- **Colleen Campion, Wayne County Conservation District:**
  - They have mostly special protection waters in County; education to landowners is important.
- **Cheryl Nolan, Lackawanna County Conservation District**
  - Conducting re-assessment of Lackawanna River, but volume/rate of water not cooperating....water too high!
  - Does Envirothon working with Monroe County.
  - Does lots of outreach and education. Noted that PA DEP now wants to fund projects and project O/M more than fund education initiatives. Conservation districts have flexibility to do education; ask them for help.

**Bryan Crable, University of Scranton, environmental microbiologist**

- Researching fate and transport of metals and organics in water.
- Setting up a lab, wants to hear from watershed groups on their problems; how he can help.

**Christine Dettore, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (PA DCNR)**

- Community Conservation Partnership Programs (C2P2) grant round upcoming. Next round opens January 22<sup>nd</sup>, April 10<sup>th</sup> closing date, awards announced by end of year. Includes funding for park and river programs.
- Riparian buffer program grants; there will be two rounds, one through C2P2 and a second through Penn VEST. Penn VEST had prequalification component and is focused on multi-functional buffers. Fall timing for Penn VEST grant.

**Shane Kleiner, PA Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP)**

- Has responsibility for Act 167 stormwater management plans and MS4 permit program.
- PA DEP also administers the Growing Greener (GG) grants; Shane is hoping that the latest round of awards will be announced soon. The next round of GG is opening late winter/early spring. There are currently about 60 GG grants in region.
- For GG, don't wait too long to get commitment letters; get them prior to GG announcements. Look for volunteer match opportunities.
- You can get 20 percent of GG grant up front through request. But otherwise it is a reimbursement grant, return time of at least 6 weeks to get payment for project. You may be able to continue to replenish the 20 percent up-front payment or get a line of credit. Try to partner with organizations that have financial resources to handle cash flow.
- Shane also noted that watershed groups should look out for different funding sources such as:
  - **Funding from violation fines** such as the Mariner East pipeline fine money. It is best to have a plan ready for projects to plug into fine money should it become available.
  - **Gravel and Dirt Road Repair.** The conservation districts are given grant funding for gravel and dirt road repair (8 million dollars). Districts gets the funding and can distribute to projects associated with repairs such as stream crossings, buffer areas, and environmental sensitive maintenance. Talk to district and to townships regarding this funding. Townships

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are recipients and need to complete a two-day training course in order to be certified to receive this funding.

- PA DEP environmental education grants can use to support larger GG grants.
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) grants, combine federal money with state money, good for matching.

**Robert Hughes, Director, Eastern Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation (EPCAMR)**

- EPCAMR conducts AMD watershed assessments to create restoration plans (2 decades of work).
- Hold statewide conferences to deal with AMD issues across the state.
- Conduct mapping of underground mines. There is interest and funding now from industrial stakeholders in mapping work. Industry wants to know about the water and land resources associated with AMD lands when they are considering development/redevelopment projects.
- Patagonia grants. Patagonia recently moved to Hanover industrial site. They have a grant program that funds trout heritage programs. This work includes assessing first and second order streams that are lost to mine voids. Patagonia paying for training and for doing the assessments work.
- EPCAMR's stream assessment work is linked to the *North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative*, a multi-state network of practitioners working to enhance/restore aquatic connectivity. The collaboration looks at where repair of culverts and other fish migration barriers can be done to connect aquatic habitats.
- EPCAMR advocates for revitalization of watershed groups and associations. Example is Abraham Creek Watershed Association. As assessments are completed identified blockages that could be opened to improve the fishery, need local organization to advocate for project implementation.
- EPCAMR staff:
  - **Laura Rinehimer, GIS specialist**, maps underground mines and impacts on watersheds
  - **Denise Hernandez, Urban Outreach Specialist**
  - **Gavin Pellitteri, Watershed GIS Specialist**, maps mines and monitors discharges to be remediated.
  - **Rachael Grube, Watershed/GIS Specialist**, underground mine mapping.
  - **Shawnese Taylor, EPCAMR, urban outreach specialist and grant writer.**

**Nicholas Spinelli, President, Pennsylvania Lake Management Society (PALMS)**

- Focused on management, restoration, and protection of lakes and ponds.
- Hold annual conference (March 6 or 7, in State College). Conference is for watershed groups, watershed specialists, community associations, design firms, and academics.
- Administer a mini-grant program via Growing Greener; grants are in \$20,000 range for shoreline stabilization, aquatic invasive control, and stream restoration.
- Lake coordinator for aquatic consultant funding (educational programs).
- PALMS is looking for a new Executive Director.

**Emily Rinaldi: PennFuture, Mount Pocono office**

- Work focusing on *Our Pocono Waters* campaign to conduct stream designations. This involves watershed organization partners and others such as sportsman groups and businesses.
- PennFuture holds seat on the Chose Clean Water Coalition.
- Also holds seat on the Coalition for Delaware River Watershed.
- Involved in Four the Delaware Campaign
- Is involved in clean water issues, policies, messaging across the state. Looking to expand effort in the Ohio River Watershed.

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- Involved with the Save the Loyalsock Coalition (against horizontal drilling), trying to expand this to a Save PA Coalition.
- Involved with Delaware River Watershed Initiative, Upper Lehigh and Poconos-Kittatinny clusters.
- Can provide advocacy training bringing people to better communicate with elected officials. Can set up meetings with elected officials.
- Can provide free legal services for watershed groups and other non-governmental organizations.

**Janet Sweeney, Pennsylvania Organization of Watersheds and Rivers (POWR)**

- Provides umbrella insurance, 44 members currently hold insurance. Is \$353/year which includes \$30 of POWR membership; policy runs from April 14<sup>th</sup> to April 14<sup>th</sup>. Doesn't cover water activities, but...
- POWR is member of American Canoe insurance, which can insure activities occurring in water (e.g. sojourns).
- POWR administers sojourn mini-grant (provides \$900/day if overnight sojourn, or \$500 for one day event)
- Coordinates River of Year. Annual winner gets \$10,000 leadership grant to allow watershed organizations to promote events over the year.
- POWR has been expanding newsletter; with help from Susan Myerov. Overall, POWR partners with PEC, and POWR is currently staffed by PEC employees.

**Janet Sweeney and her PEC role:**

- PEC conducts illegal dumpsite clean-ups using fine funding. This have occurred in Wayne, Susquehanna, Pike and Potter Counties. Grant program ending this year; talk to Palmira at PEC about how to do a cost efficient clean up.
- PEC is affiliate of Keep American Beautiful (KAB), which does litter prevention and supports clean ups. PEC can pass through KAB funding for clean ups.
- PEC's northeast office supports Pocono Forest and Water Conservation Landscape initiative, one of eight conservation landscapes across state. Administer a mini-grant (\$2,500 to \$10,000) for this initiative that can fund education, connections to trail or to constituents, and conservation tree planting. Requires one to one match. Opens in March, awards announced in May, and one year to complete work.

**Rachel Rosenfeld, Sierra Club, Community Outreach Coordinator**

- Her position is new; she works in the Lehigh Valley (Monroe, Lehigh, Carbon and Northampton Counties).
- Sierra Club supports a network of water advocates/defenders. They train volunteers to speak up at municipal meetings in support of clean water and stormwater programs.
- They are organizing a Clean Water Coalition to defend the federal Clean Water Rule (e.g. through letters to EPA).
- They partner with *Our Pocono Waters* campaign. Also support Monocacy Creek MS4/buffer outreach.
- Conduct conservation outings; currently do bike and walking outings, but water impact tours are being developed.
- They support water quality monitoring; designed to expand and add capacity for water quality advocacy at state and local level.
- Have an equity, inclusion and justice initiative to bring more people to environmental issues.

**Charlie Charlesworth, Trout Unlimited, Past president of TU and currently on Board of Directors of Lackawanna County TU. He is also a Master Watershed Steward**

- TU is a conservation organization.
- Local TU office works with conservation districts on Lackawanna River Watershed projects.
- They also conduct fly fishing programs (certified instructors). This extends to Scout merit badges and other youth programs.
- Conduct Trout in Classroom; in 300 schools in Pennsylvania.
- Have a The Coldwater Heritage Partnership (CHP) which provides leadership, coordination, technical assistance, and funding support for the evaluation, conservation and protection of Pennsylvania's cold-water streams. Has three grant programs for cold water habitat (stream bank and habitat restoration; planning and implementation grants). Open to 501c-3 organizations.
- Have Forever Wild grants (a TU grant that goes to local TU chapters)
- Go to <https://www.patROUT.org/> for more information.

**3-Organizational Capacity and Regional Water Resource Presentations**

**Robert Shane, Mid Atlantic Organizer, TU**

- Robert provided an overview presentation on Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's (PFBC) Unassessed Water's Initiative in which TU is very involved with stream designation (see presentation at <http://pecpa.org/wp-content/uploads/TU-Unassessed-Waters-Initiative-11-7-18.pdf>).
- This is an effort to assess and designate Class A and wild trout streams; which then receive additional protections from PA DEP. There are 15,000 miles of designated wild trout streams, and roughly 53,000 miles of streams that are unsurveyed.
- As TU identifies trout streams, they recommend them to PA Fish and Boat Commission, who can vote on the designation of up to 99 miles of wild trout streams at each of their quarterly meetings (or unlimited amount of Class A waters). This designation leads to greater protection for the stream itself and connected floodplain wetlands (which become exceptional value).
- Since 2010, TU has designated about 4,559 miles of new wild trout waters on 1,233 streams, and 1,048 miles of new Class A waters on 428 streams.
- Connectivity issue; land ownership, in-stream barriers, seasonal streams and movement of trout. (fish chase cold water).
- TU wants to work with watershed group partners who can advocate to protect watersheds.
- External threats include climate change, fracking, population growth, hatchery trout, and private group challenges such as Monroe County Clean Streams coalition.

**Keith Williams, NorthBay Freshwater Snorkeling Program**

- Keith presented on a NorthBay outreach and education program that connects people to rivers through freshwater snorkeling ( see presentation at <http://pecpa.org/wp-content/uploads/PA-Watershed-Freshwater-Snorkeling-NorthBay.pdf>).
- Overall, NorthBay provides educational programming to 11,000 youth/year.
- Provide freshwater snorkeling journeys; includes snorkeling tool kit and associated curriculum that is aligned with National Science Standards.
- NorthBay can help start new snorkeling programs. See their web site at <http://northbayadventure.org/environmental-education/snorkeling-with-the-forest-service/>

**Susan Myerov, PEC**

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- Susan presented on how watershed groups can work with their municipalities including supporting pollutant reduction plan projects and other MS4 programs (see presentation at [http://pecpa.org/wp-content/uploads/Working-with-Your-Municipalities\\_v2.pdf](http://pecpa.org/wp-content/uploads/Working-with-Your-Municipalities_v2.pdf)).