

---

**Western Pennsylvania Watershed Group Workshop  
November 14, 2018  
Cranberry Township Municipal Complex – Cranberry PA**

**Watershed Group Round Robin – Achievements and Challenges Shared**

**Beth Dutton, 3 Rivers Wet Weather**

- Assist municipalities and watershed groups to work together and promote integrated planning. Working with overflows and storm water issues.
- Website – catalogue of green infrastructure projects
- Educating elected officials on their role in water resources
- Newsletter
- Quarterly MS4 roundtable – people working in municipalities come together
- Watershed groups can educate homeowners about chemical use on lawns, plant trees, trash pick-up, water quality monitoring, maintain water gardens, cleaning debris prior to rain events, assist in post flooding clean-up

**John Linkes - Roaring Run Watershed Association**

- Founded in 1983
- Manages/owns 650 acres
- Rail trail along Kiskiminetas river, 2-mile gap to complete to West Penn trail
- 45 minutes from Pittsburgh, we have 6 miles of trail and 16 miles of mountain bike trail
- Armstrong County
- Members dropping off mostly due to age – currently 400 members, was 600
- Facebook page – “RRWA and Trail”
- Fundraisers – night race and similar activities
- 10-year project removing coal ash – Scrub grass Power Plant in Kennerdell came down and had a government project to remove coal ash because rain was causing run-off and creating acid spikes. That coal ash had btu value, was trucked to Kennerdell, used and then the alkaline ash was brought back to reclaim acreage. We still have other acid mine drainage

**Donna Pearson – Girtys Run Watershed Association, Allegheny Watershed Alliance**

- Representing both the Girtys Run Watershed Association and the AWA.
- Girtys Run is one of the members of the AWA. Small watershed, part of 6 municipalities
- AWA provides capacity-building tools and services to support watershed improvements, public engagement and intermunicipal collaboration.

### **Genay Hess– Kiskiminetas Watershed Association (aka Kiski-Conemaugh Watershed Association)**

- 30 acres – just increased because of new walking park outside of Leechburg. Plethora of spring wild flowers, kiosk with activities and info on invasives. Working to introduce more natives.
- Riversweep great American clean-up, highway clean-ups.
- WPC – has helped with grants for our parking area clean-ups.
- 2 AMD projects on Kiski – Carnahan Run, Wolford Run – first tributary from Saltsburg.
- Trout stocking – started to get publicity for our group and get some recreation going.
- Kayaking and canoeing rebounded – 4 rental places on Kiski River.
- Applying for another launch. Poor stepchild of Roaring Run – work well together

### **Bill Moul - North Area Environmental Council (NAEC) - Pine Creek Watershed**

- First citizen sponsored survey of flood and landside prone areas in PA which was used as model.
- North Park, and new parks in Ross Township, part of area where Harmony short line ran, lots of nice municipal parks
- 67 square miles, 14 municipalities.
- North Hills Council of Governments – gives opportunity to reach all municipalities at one time.
- Trouble – DEP project – development of citizen monitoring for bacterial levels in streams – want to develop protocol for non-professional folks because DEP is so behind.
- The project was successful, but the results indicated the need for a TMDL on Pine Creek. Tremendous changes were necessary in bacterial loading.
- Finally have website, social media
- <https://www.naecwpa.org/>

### **Caralee Hemmington – Upper Chartiers Creek Watershed Association – Washington County**

- Very large watershed – South of Washington to McKees Rocks, rural and urban
- 20- year old organization, we are at a tipping point – losing members, board members, struggling
- Have done a lot of stream monitoring but struggle to get the information disseminated to public.

- River Conservation Plan in 2003, prior to gas industry. Tried to adjust our monitoring to meet that challenge. We haven't monitored air pollution, but we know it is very high.
- Worked 2 years to show that Chartiers Creek meets recreational standards so that we can build kayak launch. Results bad. Now in trouble with municipalities

### **Jenifer Dann**

#### **Washington County Conservation District, Washington County Watershed Alliance –**

- WCWA is an umbrella organization for smaller watershed associations so that one group (501(c)3) can apply for grants and manage them.
- Five active watershed groups within the Alliance
- Also works with school districts if applying for environmental projects.
- Started monitoring for county in response to gas industry – started with 24, down to 17 sites. Found water better than expected in some areas and worse in others.

### **Natalie Uschner-Arroyo, Lower Chartiers Creek Watershed Association**

- New organization, Started May 2018
- Goals – clean-ups, citizen science water monitoring, invasive removal
- Want to get folks engaged and learn from other watershed organizations

### **Debbie Frawley, PEC Program Coordinator Trails & Recreation**

- Trail groups in NW PA have worked well with conservation groups linking trails to habitat protection as well.
- More information can be seen at PEC's Trails & Recreation website:  
<http://pecpa.org/programs/trails-recreation/>
- Western PA trails are part of the multi-state Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition:  
[https://youtu.be/2tfh\\_3psRPo](https://youtu.be/2tfh_3psRPo)

### **Marla Meyer-Papernick, PEC Program Manager**

- Facilitates work of the Laurel Highlands Conservation Landscape (LHCL) with DCNR.
- Economic Impact Study evaluating the value of water to a region from tangible (potable water) to intangible measurements (pristine views)
- Coordinates annual mini-grant program for smaller projects that support the goals of the LHCL. Applications available in January 2019

### **Sara Koenig Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania**

- 100 years old,
- Grow native plants, offer 20% discount to non-profit organizations.
- Want to partner – create bird friendly habitats in parks.

- Back yard certification program – will give a recommended list of natives for conditions in your yard – come to your house two times to help create landscape.
- Want to work more in Armstrong and Butler Counties.
- Identified need for watershed alliance in the area.

**Annie Quinn (Executive Director) and Margaret Abood  
Jacobs Creek Watershed Association**

- Strong period of growth.
- Huge mission statement – last two years we are going to meet them.
- Designated 319 watershed – get federal funding. Been hitting hard for last 10 years.
- Boundary of Fayette and Westmoreland Counties
- Demonstration projects have used every technology that is available and worked with municipality to make sure it is functional and maintained.
- Last 2 years – education and recreation.
- Partner with Creek Connections.
- Creating curriculums – mayfly birthday party in preschools.
- Earth day events at libraries – blue bird boxes, bat boxes
- 2018 – 3600 students served
- Looking for social entrepreneur source of funding – find a thing – purchasing recreational equipment and then will offer pop-up programs.
- People think of big river recreation in PA, but smaller creek activities are cool – trying to build on that.
- If that program develops – we hope the additional money generated through memberships will be the conservation of the creek.
- On-line interactive map – come to Jacobs Creek – look at these opportunities GE idea

**Wendy Kedzierski – Project Director - Creek Connections - Allegheny College**

- Partnership between Allegheny College and K-12 schools. Works with 40 schools and 50 teachers in Northwest PA and Pittsburgh regions
- School students doing water monitoring –
- Residential camp at Allegheny college – watershed associations sponsor students in their area to go to camp

**Brenda Costa - Executive Director - French Creek Valley Conservancy**

- Accredited land trust founded in 1982
- More than 2000 acres under protection in watershed. Headwaters near Sherman, NY
- Crawford, Mercer, Venango, Erie counties
- 2/3 protected through conservation easements
- 4, 5, 6 grade school education
- Community based outreach, as well.
- Biggest event is French Creek Cleanup. Been successful for 26 years. (see video link)

- Designated water trail – redoing website. – PEC grant
- We have only one small outfitter
- Challenged by the irregularity of paddle season – lots of time in summer, it is too low to paddle. Kayak okay, not canoe.

### **Tom Keller**

#### **Sewickley Creek Watershed Association - Westmoreland County**

- John Murtha was talking in a small community, turned and looked at Sewickley Creek and said, can't we do something about that? Founded in 1991.
- Original goal was to clean up all mine sites – 30 miles long, hit by drainage in so many locations.
- Great fishing stream, 3 kayak access areas, working to create 4<sup>th</sup> kayak access
- 4 AMD projects on the ground
- Gov's excellence award – cleaned up water and came up with marketable product with iron oxide
- 3 colleges studying
- Geocaching
- 4400 feet path to walk around facility – people photography wildlife
- Annual family field day at Lowber – vendors come in so people can learn – conservation district
- Want kids to work together on projects – older and younger
- Pavilion for kids to do work after getting out in water
- Main problems are money and people. We cannot get young people involved (see lee Steadman's ideas)

#### **Cliff Denholm - Slippery Rock Watershed Coalition**

- 18 passive treatment systems
- Struggle with getting local people involved - Water monitoring is a lot to ask
- Also representing Stream Restoration Inc. – a nonprofit whose focus is abandoned mine drainage remediation.
- Tech assistance grant to help clean system and do maintenance
- Cliff described “Datashed”, which is a collaborative effort of Stream Restoration Incorporated, PA DEP, and others to provide the tools needed to actively monitor and maintain passive treatment systems. He noted that there is a website that allows you to enter data (datashed.org). Users put information in about treatment systems, watershed data – attracts info on passive systems and stream data.  
<https://datashed.org/organizations/stream-restoration-inc>

- Clean Creek Products (<https://cleancreek.org/>) is a division of Stream Restoration Inc. seeks markets for the metal oxides recovered from abandoned coal mine discharges – iron and manganese – been a struggle to find a market for the material. The market is up and down. Across the state it's a lot of aluminum, iron, and manganese that is being removed. Lots are aging and need the sludge to be removed. Serious problem which is going to hit hard in the next few years.

## **PROVIDER ROUNDTABLE**

The following County Conservation District Watershed Specialists or staff attended.

Jillian Matthews - Armstrong County Conservation District

Ryan Harr - Butler County Conservation District

Jared Zinn - Greene County Conservation District

Heather Fowler - Fayette County Conservation District

Larissa Cassano-Hamilton – Mercer County Conservation District

Jennifer Dann - Washington County Conservation District

Alyssa Harden - Westmoreland Conservation District

### **Ryan Harr spoke for the watershed specialists:**

- 67 Counties and 66 watershed specialists across the state.
  - Each county is different in focus and educational background – focus is board directed so respond to board priorities
  - Each county has different grants – private sector, mini-grants, etc.
  - Know who your specialist is – they are great resources
  - Dirt and gravel road program – diverts water - municipality must apply for projects to be completed, must be certified in program through training
  - Mostly must be a township road
  - If a private road, hard to get funding from conservation district
  - The program has a template of how to fix, so anyone can use that. Not usually big-ticket projects.
- 
- DCNR grant programs –
  - River Conservation Plan – even if old, it's a bonus if a project coming from plan

### **Rhonda Madden - Madden Strategies – Writer and Fundraising Assistance**

- Helps group write and apply for funding and provides capacity building assistance
- Worked in Philadelphia, New York, and grew up in NW PA
- Doing conservation work with River Life and Allegheny Land Trust.
- Can also help find matching grants.
- Passion for helping small rural areas

### **Derrick McDonald – PA DEP watershed protection office (Harrisburg)**

- CREP, Growing Greener, 319 – Grant Advisor

- Regional offices for this area – Meadville and Pittsburgh
- Derrick reviews riparian buffer, and conservation easement applications for western part of state and multiple unit projects (multi- municipal projects, regional watersheds, etc. Large projects in the \$100 to 500,000 range).
- This year PA DEP GG had a surplus of funds versus applications - Positive sign that there are funds available
- Activities likely to be funded include stormwater BMPs such as stream bank stabilization, riparian plantings, green infrastructure
- One of things he hasn't seen is too many projects relating to watershed groups, particularly smaller ones. PA DEP has worked to make the application process easier. Projects that tend to be funded have quantifiable deliverables.
- Applications that do not include explanation of how project relates to goals are difficult for reviewers to understand. Reviewers don't want to dig for deliverables, outcomes, metrics.

#### **Kelsey Krepps – Penn Future - Western PA outreach coordinator**

- PennFuture provides advocacy assistance to watershed organizations.
- Kelsey's region covers Erie to Somerset to Green Counties. She spends most of her time in Pittsburgh area.
- PennFuture has an attorney in every regional office – they can provide legal assistance and are involved in statewide policy issues
- Environmental Rights written into our constitution (one of 5 states) – upheld in courts
- Looking to partner with watershed associations – add policy aspect, legal support for citizens in your area. Zoning violations, dumping, etc. Will help with outreach on events.
- Poconos – stream designation – defended exceptional value – can't change it.

#### **Brian Wolyniak - Penn State Extension - Master Watershed Stewards Program**

- Coordinates Master Watershed Program initiatives in western pa counties.
- Master Watershed Steward Program (MWS) -Empowers volunteers. Modeled like the Master Gardener training.
- Participants are required to attend 40 hours of classroom/field trip learning on a variety of watershed issues and complete 50 hours of volunteer work to earn MWS certification. To maintain their certification, they are required to perform 20 hours of volunteer work per year.
- Science behind watersheds,
- Susan Boser – colleague in Beaver County
- For Allegheny county, the program was on-hold for a year.
- Next class will take place in 2019 in Allegheny County, but anyone can participate
- Typically 15 to 20 students per class

- 12 classes, 2 to 2.5 hours each
- First year volunteer hours – 50 hours, mostly completed in group projects

**Joe Greco - BEG Burt Elkin Greco Group - Big Switch – Biobased erosion control  
Filtration sock**

- Developed plant-based erosion material (Columbus zoo)
- Part of U.S. farm bill, federal projects to look for bio-based products
- There weren't any in plant-based market
- Airforce, civil engineer squadron
- National and international groups
- Chicago bridge and iron
- When shell industry started to grow, we saw a lot of movement along wetlands and streams. Allegheny river Hunter Station bridge project – endangered mussels, 2 seasons snorkeling, gps on them, moved 90 percent to other waterways. Used BEG product to keep contaminants out as they removed the bridge.
- Switch grass product
- Will help with issues – to smaller groups – deterioration, reclamation
- Monarch butterfly reaching extinction in Ohio – BEG worked with zoo to develop product that would encourage milkweed growth. (the leaves of all milkweed species are the ONLY food that the caterpillars of American Monarch butterflies can eat) Ohio DOT put the switch grass product on construction projects, overseen by fish and wildlife, 100% successful. Milkweed grows out of it.
- Cleveland metro parks has used successfully to keep contaminants, nutrients, manure out of stream, starving algae blooms.

**Kylie Maland - Western PA Conservancy - Lake Erie & Ohio River Basins – watershed manager**

**Tye Desiderio – Western PA Conservancy - watershed specialist**

- Western PA Conservancy is a land trust. Have protected 255,000 acres of land across the State since 1932. <https://waterlandlife.org/>
- Maintain and care for Fallingwater property and home
- Assist with conservation easements
- Transfer properties to public land management agencies – forests, parks, gamelands
- iMAP Invasives program is used to track invasive species, monitoring and control efforts. WPC staff provides training on how to access and upload data – (<https://login.imapinvasives.org/paimi/login/?next=/paimi/> )
- WPC's Water Conservation program is 17 years old - <https://waterlandlife.org/watershed-conservation/>
- Primary purpose was to help establish watershed associations.



- Benefit of our organization is that we are a large, regional representative – natural resources don't obey jurisdictional boundaries. We can help bridge
- Liaison between public land management agencies and watershed folks – bring players to table to get projects done.
- Work on public and private lands
- Offer grant writing assistance and administration
- 2 grant programs – Dominion Energy watershed mini-grants limited to service area of Dominion and for grass roots organizations. Small grants between 2,000 -3,000 for promotion/outreach, restoration and/or water quality monitoring programs. 2019 mini-grant applications now open and due on DECEMBER 28, 2018. See <https://waterlandlife.org/watershed-mini-grant-program/>
- 2<sup>nd</sup> grant program is for canoe access– (<https://waterlandlife.org/watershed-conservation/canoe-access-development-fund-cadf/>)
- Provides grants to organizations to develop canoe and kayak access sites across western Pennsylvania. Program has been expanded to class 1 and a, b, c designations, and lakes
- WPC also offers project planning. Helping to make sure river conservation plans are in the right hands of folks who can implement, use for fundraising.
- Project design: aquatic habitat improvements, stream bank stabilization
- Permitting assistance and construction oversight, monitoring before and after
- Farmers – nutrient management planning, better practices
- Tree plantings, Culvert replacements – fish passage, drainage, Dam removal

### **Susan Myerov, Watersheds Program Director PEC - Pennsylvania Organization for Watersheds and Rivers - POWR**

- POWR is an affiliate organization of PEC and staffed by PEC employees.
- POWR and PEC work together to host regional watershed workshops like this and plan and convene the statewide conference for watershed organizations every other year.
- Provides umbrella insurance, 44 members currently hold insurance. Is \$353/year which includes \$30 of POWR membership; policy runs from April 14th to April 14th. 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.

- Registration will be opening soon for the Statewide Conference for Watershed Organizations – February 24-25, 2019 – State College. Check our website for up to date information: <http://pecpa.org/connections2019>

**PRESENTATION OVERVIEWS:** Please see <http://pecpa.org/H2Oworkshops> for copies of presentations.

**Monty Murty –Executive VP, PA Council - Trout Unlimited  
“Trout Unlimited and Trout”**

- TU mission is to have robust populations of trout for the next generation of people.
- Provide grants with PA Fish & Boat Commission and the Foundation for PA Watersheds.
  - Applications due **December 15** for the Coldwater Heritage Partnership’s Conservation Planning Grants <https://www.coldwaterheritage.org/>
- Laurel Highlands CLI – subgroup for water
  - Economic impact study/value of conservation
  - To be used to make development choices
  - ROI for conservation efforts

**Brenda Costa – Executive Director, French Creek Valley Conservancy  
“Tales from the Field – French Creek Watershed cleanup overview and video presentation”**

- French Creek River Cleanup – 2018 was 26<sup>th</sup> year
    - 750+ people volunteered
    - 32,000 pounds of garbage collected
    - \$50,000 raised through corporate and in-kind donations
- Corporate sponsors
- Tell them minimum level – FCVC asks for \$250
  - Combine sponsorship with participation
  - Recognition and thank you to sponsors
  - Start with personal relationships
- Know your numbers and track data
- Volunteers
  - Attendance at picnic
  - Number and sizes of shirts given away
  - People aren’t spending money on raffles and drawings
- French Creek starting to run out of garbage
- May start to cleanup tributaries too each year
  - May start invasive species removal events on cleanup day; or trail development; or signage installation projects

- Create other stewardship components and interest volunteers in memberships and committees

#### Waivers and liability

- One person per team must go to office and sign
- FCVC has liability insurance and volunteer rider

Bridgestone – has a tire program to recycle/dispose of tires for free but it takes time for them to come to pick up the pile – must be stored.

### **Susan Myerov, Watersheds Program Director – PEC** **“Working with Municipalities”**

- Many watershed groups across the Commonwealth work within watersheds of Municipalities subject to Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permits.
- Many common watershed group activities align with education and outreach requirements for municipal stormwater permit:
  - riparian buffer and stream restoration
  - River and Creek Clean-ups
  - water quality monitoring
- Outlined three of the 6 minimum requirements of MS4 permits and places where watershed associations can partner and or become ally of municipality
  - Public education
  - Public involvement – anything that gets people involved- watershed associations do clean-ups, involve municipalities so they can take credit for their requirements
  - Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination – \_ Identification of problems in local waterways and report issues to municipal officials. (Penn Future pocket guide)
- Benefits to Municipalities
  - Bring volunteers and expertise, save money for municipality
  - Establish trust
  - May be income generating for watershed group (e.g. fee for service)
  - Partner on grants, leverage funding