

WPCAMR
Western PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation
Quarterly Meeting Minutes
November 14, 2008
Eat N' Park
Indiana, PA

In attendance:

Jim Panaro, Robindale Energy
(Secretary)
Bruce Golden (Staff)
Andy McAllister (Staff)
Rick Thompson (Staff)
Anne Daymut, Indiana CD
Eric Cavazza, PA DEP, BAMR
Carly Phelps, Armstrong CD
Amber Siar, Jefferson CD
LeeRoy Vatter, Indiana CD
Pam Meade, Armstrong CD

David Beale, Armstrong CD
Jeff Fliss, PA DEP
Kim Lanich, Elk CD
Rob Cronauer, Westmoreland CD
Dave Kemp, Somerset CD
Jim Eckenrode, Blair CD
Pam Milavec, PA DEP, BAMR
Donna Carnahan, PA DEP
Rachel Kester, Clearfield CD
Tom Clark, SRBC
Carl Undercofler, Clearfield SEC

WPCAMR Business Meeting:

Meeting chaired by Jim Panaro and called to order at 10:00am. Everyone present introduced themselves. Jim welcomed everyone and asked everyone to review the minutes of the past meeting and in the interest of saving time, to look the minutes over more thoroughly after the meeting and provide corrections/changes to Bruce and Andy.

Secretary's Report (Jim Panaro):

Review of past meeting minutes. No comments on the minutes.

Motion (Vatter/Eckenrode) to accept the minutes subject to change. Passed.

Treasurer's Report (Bruce Golden for Greg Phillips):

See also treasurer's report.

Motion (Vatter/Meade) to accept the treasurer's report. Passed.

Bruce asked if there were any questions.

Jim said that in the last meeting, Greg had asked Bruce to create a spreadsheet for the General Fund.

Bruce: Yes, Greg asked me to create a spreadsheet track our general fund. It's basically the operating budget for WPCAMR using the general fund. It's a mechanism for tracking the General Fund—I made it as a generalized tool, and is finished. We decided to wait until the next meeting to showcase it. Also, there's another item. We are the recipient of a contribution from Robindale Energy from their golf outing. Andy will report on that as part of his report a little later.

Andy McAllister reported on the death of Lester McNutt in Somerset County last month. Lester has been a long time friend of Conservation Districts. A former board member of the Somerset Conservation District, had volunteered his time for many environmental committees. Lester will be greatly missed by the environmental community.

Presentation “Hydrologic Unit Plans in the Set Aside Program”
(Pam Milavec and Eric Cavazza, PA DEP, BAMR)

Eric Cavazza handed out the summary of the AMD Treatability guidelines and a map of PA showing approved Hydrologic unit plans that had been developed by DEP prior to the reauthorization of SMCRA.

Cavazza: At the last WPCAMR meeting, which I couldn't attend, there was some discussion of the AMD Treatability guidelines that had been developed as a draft document and put out for public comments. It's on the DEP webpage. We evaluated the comments and changed direction a little bit and this is a little summary of our current direction, I'll go over some of this and Pam will continue. There was a lot of comment when we put the document out for comment that we should've gathered more information on systems that had been built by those outside the Department.

We're going to make an effort to get as much info as possible on every publicly funded system in PA, that number is close to 300. Roughly 50 had been built by BAMR and about 250 roughly been built by others. OSM had put together a database but it's incomplete, so we're going to try to collect information on all of these; as-built plans, water quality information, pre and post-construction, watershed restoration plans, and as much as we can. The goal being one, we're trying to create a permanent record. We're looking at possibly using Stream Restoration Inc's website “Datashed” to house all this information. Also, when we get all this information, the Department has indicated in a position paper on our webpage that we are going to be committed to Operation and maintenance of all the facilities that have been built...that's not blanket, if a system needs maintenance or rehabilitation there's going to be some kind of system of evaluation to see what the value of maintaining it is. Those kind of decisions will be made on a case by case basis. In general, there's going to be a commitment for O&M. One thing we hope to do is assess what kinds of O&M needs there are out there and how much money we need to set aside from the set aside for the long term. Also, we're wanting to use that information to look at our treatability criteria to see if that warrants any changes based on the data we get from these sites.

Another initiative listed here is discussion of a one-time sampling effort. We've had some discussions with Bruce because they had a growing greener grant to help with

sampling of passive treatment systems but they hadn't gotten as much direct use for that as they had originally thought. So, he has some money in that grant, so we're talking about going out and doing two samplings of as many of these publicly funded treatment systems as we can. We're in the infancy of organizing this. Our goal is to sample in late winter and then again in summer, his grant runs out in June. We'll compile all that data and there's a lot of general analysis that can be done with that data. We've said that we'd try to keep the public involved in this process so I'm using this as a venue to keep the audience updated as to what we're doing and we welcome input or comments. Because of the ramp up period and funding we have time right now to evaluate the best course of action. I'll talk about this publicly funded treatment facility information request now. We're trying to make the form as short as possible but there's a lot of information that we need to get. For those in the room, if you get one of these, I hope you take the effort to fill them out. Any cooperation we get we appreciate. Any information we get will be made publicly available.

Meade: One of these units on the map is our Crooked Creek Watershed. Do you want us to work through our watershed specialist or is there any contact from BAMR that we should get in touch with directly with questions or do you want us to work with Dave and Anne?

Cavazza: Pam will talk about the Hydrologic unit map and about what the priorities are for us.

Milavec: As Eric said, we did receive a lot of comments on our original guidelines and put some effort into reviewing those. When we started this workgroup, we had some discussion as to whether the guidelines should be geared towards watersheds or individual projects. With the reauthorization of SMCRA, there's some changes in how we get the hydrologic units approved and we're still in negotiations with OSM on how that's going to happen. So, because of that, we've decided to go with projects but some of the comments we heard said that we really should be gearing up entire watershed restoration efforts and not focusing on projects. We are revising our guidelines that'll focus more on watershed restoration or hydrologic unit restoration efforts.

The map that was handed out shows the original hydrologic unit plans that were approved prior to reauthorization. Prior to December 2006 we had to develop a hydrologic unit plan which went to OSM for approval. For the 26 listed here, probably the first 18 or 19 of them evolved in the '90s, then there's a handful that we developed because somebody had decided that funds used to pay for operation and maintenance of our active treatment systems should come out of the set aside money rather than from state money so the set aside money now pays for our active treatment systems. We had to develop 3 or 4 of these plans just to cover those costs. The only plan approved in the past 2 years has been Bennett Branch. I know Tom (Clark) had a question earlier on about some of the watersheds on here and while there isn't a lot of planning on some of these, well they were the result of watershed groups coming to us early on and saying we have these AMD discharges that we'd like to address and we'd like to work with you and the set aside program. So, we partnered with them and we developed the HUPs and we moved forward so that's how most of these came to be.

What we're doing now is evaluating these existing 26 to decide if they met their goals and if they've not met their goals, what would it take to meet their goals and finally, are these still a priority for the Department to complete these watersheds. We're doing that right now and we're looking for input from the public. Pam, you asked us about Crooked Creek, any input you'd like to provide us, we'd be happy to have input on that. Please call me if you have any comments.

Lanich: I've a question about Bennett Branch hydrologic unit size you have here isn't the entire watershed.

Cavazza: It stops at Caledonia Run. Right now, that's all we're trying to restore. Right now, there's no commitment to restore Caledonia Run, it's still going to be polluted after the Hollywood plant goes online so that was the reason we stopped at Caledonia Run.

Milavec: One thing that's interesting, these early ones [HUPs] did not have a lot of chemical evaluation and loading and modeling done that the later ones have, particularly Bennett Branch. As Eric said, so far our restoration plans are very well defined down to Caledonia Run and from there down it's less well defined so we did not include that in our boundaries right now but that doesn't mean that can't be changed. Our primary goal right now is to review these and determine where we might want to still do some work. Our next priority is, we've already made some commitments to build some treatment systems in some watersheds. A good example is the Upper West Branch where we have designs to build a treatment system to treat the Barnes and Tucker 15 discharges. Before we spend the funds to do that, we have to now, under reauthorization, have approved Hydrologic Units. So we're developing that one right now. That will be the first qualifying Hydrologic unit that we're going to develop under reauthorization. So, the rules changed a little bit and we're still trying to get that figured out.

I have a new form that I didn't bring, it's called a "Qualified Hydrologic Unit Determination". What we intend to do is not start from scratch but if there's a watershed where it looks like we might want to develop a Hydrologic unit, we want to see what restoration plans are already out there and see how close they come to having all the information and data that we need and then fill in the holes rather than start from scratch. So, if anyone's interested I have a couple of copies of that.

When we had our public meetings, there were two things we heard very clearly, one was that people wanted to see a 30% set aside and the other was that people wanted to see O&M addressed. It certainly looks like there's going to be sort of an O&M set aside within the set aside. The problem with that, we can only spend set aside money in qualifying hydrologic units so all those treatment systems that are not within [qualifying] hydrologic units aren't qualified for set aside money. So, our next priority is going to try to work in watersheds where there's already a lot of treatment systems and get them to qualify then we'll be able to spend funds there.

We've also been talking to the 319 program a little bit and trying to coordinate our efforts a little better with 319 than we have in the past. Someday down the road we get us some brand new hydrologic units but I don't see that happening for quite a while. Any questions?

Fliss: Is any of the focus on looking at the actual stream that was impaired to see if any of this is helping that stream be removed from the 303(d) list?

Milavec: For the BAMR constructed projects, we are doing that. We have one field biologist trying to do surveys on quite a few watersheds. We are not focusing on it right now but we're having discussions with the Water Program in Harrisburg and there are several watersheds that they want to see what they can de-list or at least show improvement. We're working with Gary Walters on that.

Fliss: In Pittsburgh, we've always waited for the delisting for the metals because we can come in and see if there's something else wrong with the stream.

Clark: In a situation like in the Tioga River, almost like a Bennett Branch situation, would it be better for us to submit the Tioga River as a whole or actually go and submit multiple determination documents for each subwatershed?

Milavec: Obviously the advantage in doing the whole thing is that you do it once and you're done. If you have enough data then that's something you might want to look at. The disadvantage is you might be biting off more than what we can actually put the funds to....one of our internal discussions we've been having has been with Brent Means of OSM and one of the philosophies we discussed was should we be qualifying hydrologic units beyond what we have the funds to complete. That's a good debate and I'm not sure what the answer is. If you start looking at it from, well are you ever going to finish it, then you might want to be more careful about how large of a unit.

Clark: They have priorities there obviously. I thought maybe we should concentrate on getting those priorities done first and then look at the other ones as time and money permit.

Milavec: Yeah, the other good reason to do it that way is that you probably have a lot of good data on that priority stuff and probably not so much data further down so you might want to break it off in smaller chunks. Well, I look forward to your comments if you have any, my phone number is: 814.472. 1832 and it's pmilavec@state.pa.us

Cavazza: And we'll continue to keep you updated as we move forward.

Old Business

Regional Coordinator's Report (Bruce Golden):
See report for details. Report on meeting webpage.

Watershed Coordinator's report (Andy McAllister):
See report for details. Report on meeting webpage.

WPCAMR AmeriCorps report (Rick Thompson):
Rick introduced himself and talked about the work that he'll be helping WPCAMR with.

Break momentarily for 10 minutes

Conservation District/Agency/Watershed Association reports (All present):

Those in attendance reported on current and future activities within their respective organizations

NEW BUSINESS

Proposed 2009 WPCAMR meeting dates

Feb 19 (Eat n' Park, Indiana)

May 22 (Eat n' Park, Indiana)

August ? (Location and date TBD)

November 13 (Eat n' Park Indiana)

The date for the August meeting will be determined when we have a host venue identified. No one had conflicts with the dates given.

Open Discussion: "What should be the role of watershed groups in the reauthorized SMCRA world?"

Golden: Does the question make sense? The set aside money will probably be the most significant source of money for doing AMD work in the near future. I think for the next couple of years, there's not likely to be another Growing Greener right away especially with the economic conditions upon us. My best guess is that Title IV is going to be it for several years and as the Title IV money ramps up, it'll probably get to somewhat of a plateau in about 3 or 4 years. We'll start to see a lot more activity than we have right now but we're trying to figure out the role of the watershed groups in this whole thing. We'd like to get some perspectives from the folks here who are about as closely associated with the groups themselves as anybody.

Fliss: Is OSM going to determine where the money is going to be used? That kind of limits what we say.

Golden: Indeed it does, maybe we ought to talk about that first. Almost all of it will deal with set aside especially where AMD is concerned. Within that there's not as many constraints on that money as there will be with Title IV. That money essentially does become the state's but there are strings attached to how that money is spent. It can't be spent on just anything, it has to be for AMD stuff on the ground basically. (to Milavec and Cavazza) Please chime in if I say anything that's not true. So there's certain things that we know will probably be okay, like operation and maintenance costs. So I believe that within that subset there will be a role for watershed groups to do things there. Perhaps there can be things that can be reimbursed in some way...that's speculative on

my part. The O&M part will definitely be a place where watershed groups I think should have a valid place in this whole future of watershed groups. The remainder of the set aside which would be used for treatment systems is the other area we have to look at. It has to be basically treatment systems on the ground or mitigation or abatement kinds of projects. So, within that realm, what kind of role should a watershed group have? Certainly, I'm imagining BAMR is going to be doing a lot of this stuff directly themselves. There might be a portion that might be dedicated to things that BAMR can't do but as time goes on there will be more work than BAMR can handle all by itself. There might be opportunities for watershed groups there. But it would probably will have to remain in the realm of treatment systems or abatement projects somehow.

Fliss: You know as well as I know there are some watershed groups that want this set up like the current Growing Greener system and I don't know if that's going to happen.

Golden: Well, that's one of the things that perhaps should be discussed but I agree there could be problems in doing that but one of the things that I've been wanting to have is a job description for watershed groups. Let's define what kind of things watershed groups can do in the AMD world and what kind of things they should maybe stay clear of. That's sort of where I hope this discussion will go.

Milavec: One thing to add to that in direct response to your questions was as far as OSM is concerned, we've worked very closely with Brent Means and Fred Scherfy and both of them have said this is Pennsylvania's program, the money comes to Pennsylvania, it becomes Pennsylvania's money. We still have to stay within the guidelines of the reauthorized SMCRA and that's where Qualified Hydrologic Unit and Comprehensive Restoration all come in. They've been working very closely with us to determine what those words mean and what we can do without being in violation of that law.

Fliss: Is there a possibility it could be set up like the CEI [County Environmental Initiative] or a portion of it is gotten through a state agency and a smaller portion is allotted to groups or something?

Milavec: What was said in the draft position paper is that for the most part what we're looking at as far as grants is a continuation of what we already do which is pass through grants to watershed groups, it's not a competitive process like Growing Greener. We've had several of those with different watershed groups...for those types of grants, I see that continuing...not sure yet as far as Growing Greener-type grants. The position paper says that we already have a grants program in DEP, we're not going to duplicate that in BAMR.

Cavazza: This is a topic that's been bantered about by the citizen's input group of Bruce, Amy Wolfe, John Dawes and everybody that Scott Roberts is heading up. It's a topic that's been discussed there and I don't think there's any consensus or direction or decision made.

Golden: That's one of the reasons the question is there because we're trying to provide input through this little workgroup to the Department and I know there's a lot of varying opinions on what a watershed groups' role should be. There's not necessarily consensus

within our own ranks here as to how that should all work. So, we're looking to you for some advice here.

McAllister: I had called Lance Bowes, Watershed Specialist in Venango County and posed this question to him. Since he couldn't be here today, he said I could share his thoughts here today. "The watershed groups know where the discharges are and have information and data regarding water quality. The groups will be able to direct BAMR to discharges that, if fixed, would greatly help the particular watershed. Also, the groups would be invaluable with follow ups by sampling after a system's been installed. The watershed groups aren't looking to make any money, they just need enough financially to do some copying, postage and odds and ends like that. They just want their watersheds cleaned up. The watershed specialists act as a coordinator for the groups, act as a go-between between funding sources and the groups because oftentimes the groups aren't capable of handling grants, looking for funding, etc. So, Watershed specialists help them to do that kind of stuff. We contact funding sources and/or do duties that the watershed groups wouldn't be able to do or to do very well. "

Eckenrode: I had a question..it doesn't matter where the money comes from necessarily. My question is why the question "what are the rules?" when I think they've kind of been set over 8 years or so. Obviously BAMR isn't able to handle all of the sites. If the money is handed over to the state and they allocate so much every year to groups, conservation districts or whatever, why not continue doing that?

Golden: Is that the best use of that money, is that the most efficient way to get the most reclamation for the dollar?

Eckenrode: I think at this time, especially since we have to jump through all the hoops that are tied to this, I don't see why the process can't continue on the way it has been. Even though they struggle at different times, I think that watershed groups are pretty efficient.

Daymut: I think that the watershed specialists and the groups themselves can stretch the dollar a lot further than the state can because of the contacts we have with local contractors and other ways to get money within our communities that can make the project a lot cheaper than the state can.

Golden: And how would that work?

Daymut: We have all the contacts for local contractors. Not the big companies that have to drive further...every time we bid out a project we invite those big companies and they're always three times as much as what we can get our local Indiana guy for.

Golden: We need those kinds of specifics to make cases. How about the ability of groups to bring match? How about that? Do you think that's a vital/expected role?

Meade: I really worry when cash match is asked for. Because two groups that I work for have an annual budget of \$12.37 and we are not in a very affluent county. It's a \$100K grant project and we need to come up with 10 or 20% cash match...it's just

impossible for our little groups. In kind, we can get in kind coming out the windows. The cash match can be very, very, very difficult. The other thing that might be part of the set up is a little bit of admin money, even 1%. Like they said, if we were looking to get rich we'd be doing something different. But it's nice for my little volunteer groups if we can set aside 1% for administrative fees and then that can become our treasury and we can maintain a website and do things better, we can go to events and conferences, etc.

Golden: I appreciate what you're saying about match (cash). That wasn't the nature of what I was asking...some watershed groups have the ability to get match in that can augment the monies that are already available. It's not something that BAMR can ask for, right? So, what I'm asking is there might be a real role for groups who may be able to pull in these other funding sources. Part of the problem is, the demand will outstrip the resources that are there. Is one possible job for a group to be able to get match money from other sources? Is that in fact, one of the things that could be on a watershed group's list?

Fliss: All watershed groups aren't created equal. Some are capable of doing a lot less than others are capable of doing. Some would like to do a project, others have to deal with conservation districts or whatever for paperwork. Have you looked at putting down a long list of possible things and when the money comes in and if it passes the BAMR rating, based on what watershed group you have and what they can't do, then go from there as to what you'll have them do as a partner.

Golden: Okay, considering some of those groups that are very capable, should the watershed group that's just formed without those capabilities, where grants are concerned should they have the same kind of consideration as the more capable ones?

Fliss: They should receive the same consideration as to where the money goes to that watershed, but once the money goes to that watershed, what part of the whole project they are should be based on what they can do. Make it capability based. You don't want to go throwing a whole project on a group that's inundated, it might cause more problems than there already is.

Golden: Other feelings on that...should the group's capabilities be taken into account?

Meade: Who's going to make that judgment?

Golden: Good question.

Lanich: Capabilities can change in a group within a year.

Meade: Pam said that they don't want to duplicate Growing Greener but maybe we shouldn't be trying to reinvent the wheel...maybe take the Growing Greener wheel and roll it over to this. I don't see that we can get away with no application or grant process. It doesn't have to be three inches thick but just like every other grant, you've got the rules of the grant and if you can provide 50% cash match then your capabilities are judged on who can get the most bang for their buck.

Daymut: If part of a watershed group's job description is to monitor after a system is built, they have to have some sort of pride in the system that's put there...in the past it's because they put in the application and proud that they got the money and put the system in the ground. They have to have some say in where the project goes, maybe the money doesn't have to come to them.

Golden: If a group says, we'll do the post-construction monitoring of a system what responsibilities should the group have for doing that? The capabilities of the group can change over a couple of years. What happens to that system where the department may be depending on the group to do the routine operation and maintenance, what is the group's obligation? I don't know if anyone has any answers for these things but these are things that need to be considered.

Clark: It's a prime example of why it's a shame that EASI [Environmental Alliance for Senior Involvement] wasn't funded this last year. They could've fit right into that niche.

Golden: what do we do about this responsibility issue? What kind of backups do we need to have? There might be ways that we can help the watershed groups out that would not be expensive that could boost the whole watershed group sustainability..it would require some money but I don't think that money can legitimately come from the set aside. If we can provide other sources of money, that would be extremely helpful but it's a little less realistic now with all the other financial stuff that's happening.

Milavec: I've a question related to what Anne said. What is most important to watershed groups? Is it that you're involved in the project, sampling, prioritization. Does it really matter to the groups if they're the grant administrators.

Daymut: I would say they'd probably prefer that they didn't handle the money. But they definitely feel the need to be involved in the decision.

Milavec: Except for the really larger groups that have paid staff, it seems to me the other groups really struggle with the administrative part.

Beale: Some of the maintenance issues that you're discussing aren't completely relevant because the government agencies aren't completely able to monitor and maintain the systems that they put in over the years. Maybe you're trying to stretch to the watersheds the responsibility that doesn't exist with government.

Golden: I think in the future any treatment system when built will probably have that string attached...you build it, there has to be a mechanism in place to do the O&M.

Beale: I'm more concerned about reclamation than water treatment. Eg. with erosion and change in vegetation cover, more about P1 and 2 sites.

Cavazza: For those land sites, we inspect for one year but after that one year, we have no regular inspection period beyond that point. Those problems should be referred back to us.

Fliss: Talking about capabilities and comfort levels of watershed groups, could it come to getting a list of potential elements of a project (permitting meetings, etc)...ask the watershed groups themselves what they feel comfortable in doing.

Golden: Jeff, I'm going to enlist your help with this because one of the things we hope to do in the near term future is send out a survey to watershed groups trying to ascertain the state of watershed groups right now. Asking what are their roles and what they'd like to do and I'd like to talk to you and Pam about that very thing you talked about to be included in a survey. Expect a phone call.

Kester: A lot of our groups don't have the wherewithal to handle funding themselves but they will either pass through us [Clearfield CD] or their municipalities. We've had some really good partnerships with the townships. They're already set up to handle the money where the groups can't.

Golden: In that instance, why shouldn't the CD itself have the grant rather than the watershed group.

Kester: I can't do all the work that 10 watershed groups can. It works for us because our fiscal people can do the money stuff, they can't go do the work. I can give them the grant and they know what to do. The townships know what to do with the grants. Also, I can't do oversight on all the construction projects going on, so I leave that up to the guys in the group to go out and check.

Golden: I see what you're saying. And a lot of times the groups themselves can't handle the administrative parts very easily. I see a nice distribution of efforts here. So the conservation districts should be an integral part of any watershed support system that's available. Some districts will be stronger than others where this is concerned too.

Meade: That little hierarchy is already functioning with districts, RC&Ds, etc. The groups oftentimes know the landowner and can do some of the ground work. The groups over 2 years old already know what they can do, what they can't do. They already have those relationships.

Golden: So the strength is the local connections they can count on.

Kester: I think that's going to tie in with the issue of O&M. On Morgan Run, we have the Morgan Run Watershed group, who's kind of under the Clearfield Creek Watershed Association and the Township's been involved and the Conservation District's been involved. So, if the watershed group falls through, Clearfield Creek's going to pick up that action, they're not going to let those systems go down. For some reason, if they can't continue it, the township's also involved—maybe they're going to pitch in and pick up that spot. The Conservation District doesn't want to see these fail because they've been an integral part of it—that partnership is where it lies.

Golden: This is all good stuff.

Undercofler: Also, the Senior Environment Corps is involved with the Conservation District and if something would happen there, that's covered under the umbrella of RSVP.

Golden: What I'm hearing is that we shouldn't consider that watershed groups are just these stand-alone entities, but they have deep roots that we can count on.

Meade: And no one size or shape is going to fit everybody. I've had a lot of interest from the teachers and the students at one of our watersheds. The little watershed groups know what resources they have in their community. They just need some money. The other thing that drives my groups nuts is the regulations get just get boxier and boxier. Some of those things are just little speed bumps.

Kester: The watershed groups are the stakeholders.

Fliss: We recognize the fact that not all watershed groups aren't the same, that conservation districts differ from one to another. I may be biased but I personally think the best thing to do is to find out with this mailing what watershed groups are capable or comfortable. We know basically that conservation districts what they can or can't do. Put BAMR on the top of the food chain and everything else fits under there.

Golden: I think we ought to play to the strengths of watershed groups and try to avoid the places where watershed groups would struggle and perhaps fail. We need to create a realistic job description so all parties involved can agree that here are the things that in a particular situation, what a watershed group can or cannot do. I think part of the frustration in the past has been that in some portions of DEP, there's been expectations put on watershed groups that aren't at all realistic. To simplify one of those complaints that I've heard is that watershed groups should basically be able to conduct themselves as a business does. I don't buy that because they're not a business. They're not in it for making money. People do this in their spare time and you can't hold them to that kind of standard. What we need to do is have some common understanding of what watershed groups should and should not be both capable and responsible for doing. That's where we're trying to go with this. How to play to the strengths and avoid the pitfalls...how do we make that work? Our motivation here is to make that definition so we keep the watershed movement alive. It's a really valuable thing. I think the watershed groups locally, are the local environmental ambassadors. It's a value to the Commonwealth and I hope we can get the Commonwealth to agree with that and show that appreciation with a little bit of funding. But, we need to be able to make the case.

Kemp: Jeff and I were just talking here and came to the conclusion in each watershed you have different problems...there's no cookie cutter to fit the mold. So you have to look at each watershed individually because they have different problems and different priorities.

Meade: Lots of things start at the bottom and build. This is a situation where I think we need to start at the top, we need to see what DEP/BAMR/OSM and the SMCRA money—what do they want? What are their rules? I have two completely different groups I work with. We get “okay, this and this needs to be fulfilled to get this money”,

so we sit down and say “okay, we can do this and this but we can’t do this so who can help us?” Watershed associations have more support now than they’ve ever had before. They have WPCAMR and EPCAMR, they have conservation districts that acknowledge our value, etc. Thirty years ago, we didn’t know anybody.

Golden: I couldn’t agree more. WPCAMR is in this role where we’re trying to ascertain the needs of watershed groups and try to accommodate that the best we can. At the same time we know that DEP has their set of needs that they need to satisfy and we’re trying to come to some sort of middle ground.

Meade: Watershed associations need money to do projects. You figure out what we need to do to get that money and we will do it.

Golden: Do you care about the money or do you care about the environmental improvement?

Meade: I care about the water and the land...the money is a means to a goal.

Golden: So it doesn’t really matter if that money happens to run through you or some other way to get that environmental improvement to happen.

Meade: That’s right.

Golden: So, that’s the bottom line—the environmental improvements.

Meade: And if every single penny of that money is to go to a project on the ground or a bit set aside for guaranteed water quality O&M for like 5 years or something like that...yeah, we’ll find operating costs in other places.

Golden: We need to get the job done and it doesn’t matter how that happens?

Meade: That’s right. And any group I’ve known is not in it for the money.

Golden: The ambassador role is a real important role. Any more to add to this?

Beale: We have a lot of small watersheds that are tributaries to the Allegheny river that aren’t now covered by watershed associations and never will be yet there are some problems that some may fall under P1 and 2s and they probably won’t ever fall under the assessments that BAMR is requiring.

Golden: For 1s and 2s, they should already be on a list and they should be taken care of whether there’s a local group or not.

Milavec: Yes, that’s inquiry driven. If the property owner calls, we send someone out to investigate it to see if it’s a P1 or 2. Then that starts that project in our pipeline.

Beale: So if we have projects like that, we need to contact you?

Milavec: It works best when the landowner calls about it because then you know the landowner is supporting it.

Cavazza: We probably will not pursue it if the landowner is not in favor of it.

Beale: You'd probably have them in favor but in terms of them doing anything towards it, they don't care what's out there.

Milavec: They probably won't have to do anything more than call Don Baker about it.

Meade: If we were to go to them and say "make this phone call for the group" and they'll sign landowner agreements just as long as they have no responsibility here whatsoever.

Golden: That's a wonderful part of what the watershed group's responsibility might be. But Dave, you don't have to have one there. Anyone else?

Lanich: I don't know if there's anything in the set aside that says we should provide more OM&R funding before we build any more treatment systems.

Golden: That is actively being discussed but I'll let Pam or Eric address that.

Milavec: That's something we heard in the roundtables.

Golden: Throughout this process, WPCAMR has done some financial modeling on how the set aside may work. There's a limited amount of dollars. If we really start to take care of all these OM&R things, that could consume the majority of set aside. It's a trade off game. There's got to be balance here.

Lanich: Is there any thought to setting up trust funds for a system where you maybe can make a bit of money.

Golden: External to set aside? Not with set aside money you can't.

Cavazza: The set aside money can't be put into a trust fund.

Milavec: At least the [state's] set aside account is an interest bearing account.

Golden: Any other comments? Thank you very much. We'll pursue this survey with watershed groups to find out more.

Motion to adjourn (Vatter/Eckenrode). Meeting adjourned at 13:50

Minutes taken and prepared by Andy McAllister