

Minutes

CHESAPEAKE BAY COMMISSION

York, PA

November 17 & 18, 2005

The Chesapeake Bay Commission held its fourth quarterly meeting of 2005 on Thursday, November 17 and Friday, November 18, at the Yorktowne Hotel, in York, Pennsylvania.

The following Commission members and staff were in attendance:

Delegate John A. Cosgrove
Representative Russell H. Fairchild
Senator Bernie Fowler
Assistant Secretary Ron Guns
Representative Arthur D. Hershey
Delegate Scott Lingamfelter
Secretary Tayloe W. Murphy, Jr
Deputy Secretary Cathleen Curran Myers
Delegate Albert C. Pollard, Jr.
Senator Michael L. Waugh
Senator Noah Wenger
Delegate John F. Wood, Jr.
Representative Peter J. Zug
Rear Admiral Frederic R. Ruehe

Staff: Ann Pesiri Swanson
Pat Stuntz
Suzan Bulbulkaya
Marel Raub
Paula Hose

Thursday, November 17, 2005

The first day of the meeting focused on a field tour of conservation efforts in York County. Following lunch, members and staff boarded a bus and traveled to several sites throughout the county that exemplify the local involvement and partnerships that are resulting in water quality improvements. The tour was led by Gary Peacock, Watershed Specialist with the York County Conservation District. Stops included a streambank restoration site, a "legacy sediment" site, a restored wetland, a gravel road maintained with conservation practices, and a residential development with erosion and sediment controls in place. At the legacy sediment site, Mr. Peacock was joined by Drs. Robert Walter and Dorothy Merritts from Franklin & Marshall College and Ward Oberholtzer, P.E. of Landstudies, Inc., to describe the site and the impacts of old mill dams. The tour concluded at the York Industrial Plaza, a redeveloped brownfield site. At the

headquarters of Buchart-Horn, Inc./BASCO Associates, members learned the history of the site and its redevelopment by Paul McNamee, P.E., and President of the firm. The Commission also heard a presentation by Genevive Ray, chairman of the York Planning Commission, on "Recapture the Riverfront," a project to improve the Codorus Creek through the City of York that would focus on water quality, recreation, and economic development. Members were also greeted by the Hon. John Brenner, Mayor of York.

Friday, November 18, 2005

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

The business meeting was called to order by Chairman Mike Waugh at 9:16 am. Following roll call, the May meeting minutes and the agenda were adopted as proposed.

CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

Chairman Waugh clarified the date of the January meeting, which will be on the 5th instead of the 6th as presented previously. It was also reported that the Executive Committee recommended a celebration of the Commission's 25th anniversary to be held in conjunction with the January meeting. It was the consensus of the Commission to plan for an event the evening of Wednesday, January 4, provided that enough hotel rooms could be reserved.

Paula Hose is designing a new web site for the Commission. It will include a member's page with active links to members' home pages, a meetings page, and a legislation page, among others. Those with ideas for the web site should contact Paula.

Five thousand copies of the Farm Bill report have been printed. Members should contact staff with requests for copies. Ann Swanson reported that a press release regarding the report will be made in December or January.

Chairman Waugh introduced Erin Blakely, the York Rotary Student of the Month who has expressed an interest in the Commission and its work.

STATUS OF THE BAY RESTORATION

Rich Batiuk, Associate Director for Science, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, briefed the Commission on the current status of Bay restoration. He noted that there are lots of projects on-the-ground, and there is improvement evident on the Susquehanna and other rivers. However, the rate of implementation is not high enough to achieve the 2010 goals on time, and water quality in most of the Bay remains at a level inadequate to support the Bay's fish, crabs, oysters, and underwater grasses. In response to questioning from the members, Mr. Batiuk noted that drought years seem to be good indicators of how the system responds to reduced nutrient and sediment loads. At a certain level of reduced loads, system recovery will be greater than a linear rate. The Commission

expressed a strong interest in identifying this “tipping point” level, and staff will work to communicate this interest.

IMPLEMENTING THE BAY PROGRAM MANURE STRATEGY

Ann Swanson then introduced the topic of “Implementing the Bay Program Manure Strategy.” The Strategy will be adopted at the November 29 Executive Council meeting, and commits the signatories to: facilitate the promotion and implementation of diet and feed adjustments on dairy farms; promote markets for manure and litter products; promote adoption of new technologies for value-added manure and litter products; promote development of economically viable and environmentally sound manure-based bio-energy projects; and coordinate state manure management programs across the watershed.

To implement the Strategy at the state level, the Commission delegations could hold legislative hearings to review state procurement guidelines regarding manure-based products and identify incentives and other strategies needed to promote economically viable and environmentally-sound poultry litter processing. At the regional level, the Commission can work to ensure inclusion of manure-related funding and supportive policies in the 2007 Farm Bill and can identify other federal funding opportunities.

The topic then continued with a panel of three experts. Virginia Ishler, with the Department of Dairy & Animal Science at Penn State University, provided an overview of dairy precision feeding. By closely tailoring the phosphorus (P) and nitrogen (N) in an animal’s ration to its nutrient needs, the amounts of P and N excreted in the manure will decrease. However, the challenge with dairy nutrition is that rations are formulated at the farm level, and there are 8,700 dairy farms in Pennsylvania alone. Furthermore, there is a wide variation in forage nutrient levels, even on the same farm. This means that forages must be tested frequently and rations balanced accordingly, costing the farmer in time and money. However, research indicates that precision feeding can increase a farm’s income over feed costs by 40%.

Dr. Matt Smith, with the USDA Agricultural Research Service in Beltsville, MD, highlighted several promising manure management technologies that are being researched at the Beltsville facility. These technologies have the potential to treat and reuse manure generated within the watershed, offsetting the import of other nutrient sources and providing an alternative to land application of raw manure. They also have the potential to increase the export of nutrients out of the watershed.

Composting can eliminate odors and pathogens, stabilize organic matter, and can be “packaged” for many different uses, including slope and soil stabilization, streambank restoration, drain filters, rain gardens, green roofs, and athletic fields. On-farm growth and harvest of algae from wastewater can significantly reduce nutrients from wastewater. The algae can be dried and used itself for fertilizer or feed amendments. The use of tillage immediately following manure application can result in an 80-90% reduction of

ammonia losses to the air. Research is also taking place on compounds that can be added to manure to reduce P mobility.

The final panel member was Field Selby, of EnviroVest, LLC. His firm is researching a product combination that shows potential to reduce soluble P up to 75% when applied to poultry litter prior to introduction of the flock. Mr. Selby indicated that challenges to implement this technology included hurdles for governmental approval of the technology, and financial risks to the farmer when he implements new technology. In his opinion, long-term benefits to water quality and farm economics can justify facilitation of new technologies at the state and federal level.

After dialogue among members, Chairman Waugh reiterated that this was the first of a two-part series on manure, which will be continued with additional speakers at the January meeting in Annapolis.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING

Chairman Waugh then discussed preparations for the Executive Council meeting. He recognized staff for their work on the Farm Bill report, and turned the discussion over to Ann Swanson for further details. Besides the Manure Strategy and the Farm Bill report, other items on the EC agenda include a Fisheries Ecosystem Management plan, for which the Commission was instrumental in securing NOAA funding, the National Geographic Education Summit, and the Captain John Smith National Historic Water Trail. NOAA has approved \$500,000 for the talking buoys that were discussed at the September Commission meeting.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned on a motion by Senator Fowler, seconded by Delegate Lingamfelter at 12:15.

The next meeting will be held at the Loews Hotel, Annapolis, MD, on Thursday, January 5, 2006.