

# **TRIPLE DIVIDE WATER COALITION MEETING**

Coudersport, PA  
September 12, 2012

## **MINUTES**

### **ATTENDANCE**

Paul Heimel, Commissioner	Deb Ostrom, PCPC
Shawn Metcalf, Shinglehouse Borough	Fern Burdick, N. Tier Children's Home
Susan Keffer, Commissioner	Ben Hoppe, Galetton Borough
Jim Clark, Penn State Extension	Doug Morley, Commissioner
John McLaughlin, PCPC	Mark Stephens, PA DEP
John VanZant, PA DEP	Mary Ann Heston, P. C. Water Dogs
Ron Angood, Coudersport Borough	Jason Childs, PCCD
Lou Karija, Coudersport Borough	Charlotte Dietrich, PCPC

### **CLEARFIELD/ CENTRE COUNTY COALITION MEETING**

John McLaughlin explained that he attended and spoke at the July Clearfield/ Centre County Coalition meeting, he offered his assistance in getting a source water protection organization started, and that the meeting went very well. Mark Stevens stated that they have received a WREN Grant, that Clearfield has 22 systems, and that Centre County has approximately 20 systems as potential members. They have selected their name and logo. They would now like to establish an EMA notification system similar to the Potter/Tioga 911 system, start school educational projects and have Penn State join in their efforts.

Jim Clark stated that he attended a meeting in Bellefonte and he spoke about the Triple Divide and the benefits of having a Source Water Protection Plan. Matt Genchur and Joel Jordan from PA Rural Water have been invited to speak at the National PRWA Convention about the formation of water supply organizations such as the Triple Divide Watershed Coalition. Jim Clark will supply information about the Triple Divide Water Coalition, and their accomplishments in support of their presentations.

### **McKEAN COUNTY FAIR DISPLAY**

John showed the TDWC display that was set up during the McKean County Fair. The display and its contents were paid for through the 2011-2012 WREN grant funded by the League of Women Voters of Pa. Thanks were expressed to Jim Clark for taking the time to place the display. Jim stated that about 45 brochures were picked up during the weeklong event. Mr. Clark also set up the display at the recent Senior Expo at the Pitt Bradford campus, and plans to take it to the Senior Expo in Roulette on October 12. Paul Heimel asked if it could be

displayed at the Township Convention on September 22. John explained that the display was put together with Velcro, so it could be customized to support other educational displays. The display can be utilized for presentations in schools or before civic groups, and is available to the other source water protection groups in the region.

## **NEXT MEETING DATE**

John M. asked if the members preferred to have a meeting in November or begin scheduling meetings quarterly. Jim Clark explained that he was trying to put together a water operator class here in Potter County so that the Water Operators could attend and earn some of their continuing education credits without having to travel. Mark Stephens stated that he had been preparing a class that would involve some classroom work as well as tours of one or more of the local water treatment facilities. Following this discussion, it was decided to schedule the next TDWC meeting for November 14th in order to finalize arrangements for this training class.

## **TRIPLE DIVIDE WATER COALITION WEB SITE**

Coudersport Borough's tab is almost complete. Jim Clark suggested that the directory of public suppliers be added to the web site, as well as the informational brochures of all the coalitions. It was also suggested that each water system have access to their own tabs so they can quickly update their site in case of an emergency. John said that as the individual system tabs are finished, he would send them to the system for review and comment before adding them to the web site. John urges all of the member systems to complete their information for the tabs as soon as practical so that Deb Plummer has time to finish her work on the site under her contract.

## **DEP POSITION ON CHANGES TO O&G REGULATIONS**

John handed out a sample of the changes that he felt would be of interest to the Coalition members.

Mark explained that this concept paper was put together in Harrisburg, between DEP and the gas companies. There will be a public meeting September 15, through the September 17<sup>th</sup> to receive public comments on the proposal. John suggested that the Coalition look the proposal over, and consider possible comments. When the regulatory language is written and published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin, there will be a window for offering public comments. When the comment period is open, the coalition members will have the opportunity to submit comments in the same manner as our comments on the brine application general permit last year.

## **911 RESPONSE SYSTEM UPDATE**

As stated at the July meeting, the Tioga County Call center which also dispatches for Potter County has implemented an emergency call system to alert public water systems in their response area of any spills or other release of a potential contaminant into the environment anywhere within the watershed contributing to a delineated source water recharge area. One of the problems implementing the system was having a single 24/7 contact person for each

water supply. Due to the nature of the small water systems throughout the area, it was decided that all initial calls would go to the DEP Emergency Response Team in Williamsport, who in turn will notify the water supplier. At EMA's request, DEP wrote a letter relieving EMA of the responsibility of contacting the water suppliers.

This is how the system works:

1. A report of a spill or contaminant release is received by the Tioga County call center through 911 or other means.
2. The location of the spill is entered into the GIS system at the call center.
3. The GIS system will automatically flag the location as being in the watershed contributing to a public water supply and will trigger the call to DEP.
4. The call center will report the incident to the DEP Emergency Response Team (this number is manned 24/7).
5. DEP will dispatch an ERT member to the scene and will notify the water supplier of the location and nature of the release so that the system operators can take whatever actions are appropriate to prevent the contaminant from entering the water supply.

## **LYCOMING CREEK STUDY**

Mark stated that Lycoming County was doing an in depth assessment of the Lycoming Creek watershed including the geologic formations, USGS is sampling all of the waters, to date they have found that the number one cause of contamination comes from roadway salt, with the second being naturally occurring brine. There will be an attempt to expand the study to include other waterways and to establish a protocol for future water quality monitoring initiatives.

## **ABANDONED AND ORPHAND WELLS**

There was a lengthy discussion of the pros and cons of locating abandoned oil, gas or water wells in or adjacent to water supply recharge areas as potential sources of contamination. Mr. Heimel passed out copies of the most recent shale Gas Newsletter published by the County and an article outlining the risks of these wells to drinking water aquifers. Marcellus gas drilling operations pressurize the shale layers containing the gas and this can force gas as well as other contaminants upwards through the old well bore holes to the surface or into the shallow fresh water aquifers. Mark also asked that all water authorities look for abandoned wells as a part of their routine surveillance activities in their recharge areas.

## **NEW DEP PERMIT REVIEW POLICY**

John gave a report summarizing a new policy for handling permit reviews by DEP. The policy is intended to reduce review times and provide uniform reviews across regional and program boundaries.

According to the policy any permit application found to be incomplete will be denied without a technical review. If an application is found to be complete it will be referred to the appropriate section for a technical review. The applicant will be afforded one opportunity to correct any deficiencies in the application found during the technical review. If the applicant fails to address ALL of the technical deficiencies following the request for additional information, the

application will be denied. Any permit denial will result in forfeiture of any application fees. All applicants are encouraged to set up a pre-permit conference with the DEP staff prior to submission on an application to insure the application is as complete as possible when it is submitted for review.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:15.