

TRIPLE DIVIDE WATERSHED COALITION MEETING

Coudersport, PA
May 8, 2013

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

Paul Heimel, Commissioner
Doug Morley, Commissioner
Jim Weaver, Tioga Co. Planning
Susan Kefover, Commissioner
Mike Snyder, Pa WARN
Charlotte Dietrich, PCPC

Deb Ostrom, PCPC
Fern Burdick, N. Tier Children's Home
Joe Yilek, PA DEP
Woodrow Cole, PA DEP
Jason Childs, PCCD
John McLaughlin, PCPC

A widespread power outage struck the area before the scheduled meeting time creating emergency operating conditions at all of the member systems. The majority of the members were unable to attend the meeting. Under the circumstances Woody Cole from PA DEP has agreed to attend our next meeting to discuss the operator outreach and the engineering services programs. Mike Snyder will be invited to a future meeting of the Tioga County Sourcewater Protection Coalition so that interested systems will be afforded another opportunity to hear his presentation. (Highly Recommended)

Tioga County Sourcewater Protection Coalition

Jim Weaver and John McLaughlin reported on the May 1st meeting held at Island Park in Blossburg. Ben Hoppe and John McLaughlin represented the Triple Divide Coalition. Several municipalities in the Rt. 15 corridor between Mansfield and Blossburg have hired a consultant to investigate the feasibility of forming an area wide joint water authority. Several of the existing systems in the area are having difficulties meeting the demand for water service in this rapidly expanding corridor. It will be of interest to follow the progress of this project as it develops.

Two members of the SRBC staff did a presentation on procedures for obtaining renewals for water withdrawal permits from the Commission. They stressed the need for meeting with the SRBC staff well in advance of an existing permit's expiration to insure that a system collects all of the historical data on the source needed to complete the renewal. The SRBC will initiate contact with a permittee 5 years prior to the permit expiration and they strongly recommend the system meet with the SRBC staff at that point. The SRBC will treat any permit renewal as a new application, and the current process is substantially more sophisticated than it was in the past.

Announcements

The League of Women Voters of PA sent an invitation to the TDWC to attend the upcoming

annual WREN conference at Dickenson College. If anyone is interested in attending, they should contact John McLaughlin soon so that an RSVP can be returned.

Charlotte distributed copies of a comment letter she has sent to DEP regarding proposed changes to the on-lot sewage disposal regulations. Implementation of these changes is designed to further protect high quality watersheds, and is being driven by a recent Commonwealth Court decision. Concerns have arisen regarding the lack of testing to determine the effectiveness of the new measures as well as adding significant costs related to installation of on-lot septic systems.

John passed out copies of the new gas well drilling standards which were agreed to by various environmental groups and the major gas drilling companies operating within the Commonwealth.

These standards are in part more stringent than the current DEP requirements. John recommended that anyone negotiating a lease insist that these standards be applied to any operations on their property.

John announced that a Bioblitz event will be held at the Sinnemahoning State Park on May 20th and 21st. The public is welcome. More information may be found by doing a Google search using Sinnemahoning Bioblitz.

On April 2, an organizational meeting was held in Brockway with the intent of forming a sourcewater protection coalition in that area. Jim Clark was the primary speaker and the TDWC was his principle reference. Water systems from Jefferson Elk and McKean Counties attended. All agreed to have another meeting and they will likely invite representatives from the TDWC and the Tioga County Coalition to attend.

Comments from the Public

There were no comments from the public.

Potter County Recharge Area Maps

Finished, laminated copies of the Potter County recharge area maps were distributed to the systems present. There are sufficient copies of the maps available for each municipality in the county. The Planning Commission office will host an appreciation luncheon on May 15th at which time copies of the maps will be distributed.

Operator Training Update

PRWA has scheduled the mandatory Security training for July 25th in the Community Center in Knoxville. Anyone interested in taking this course should register ASAP. Registration can be done by calling the PRWA office in Bellefonte or by visiting the PRWA website at PRWA.com.

John is working with PRWA to schedule a vulnerability assessment class to be held in Coudersport in September.

Orphan Well Update

John reported that the clean-up on the two orphaned wells found within the Shinglehouse Borough recharge area is proceeding through the DEP orphan well program. These wells likely will be plugged and sealed this year, thanks in large part to the efforts of Mark Stephens. The success of this project should encourage operators to continue to step up routine surveillance of the recharge areas.

Geo-referencing/Mapping Project

Jim Weaver led a discussion of Tioga County activities regarding geo-referencing of water system infrastructure. Scott Zubek from the Tioga County GIS Department has done some research on the equipment and software requirements of such a project. John agreed to bring up the matter of a joint Tioga/Potter grant application to the Potter County Water Quality Steering Committee at their next meeting. John and Jim will prepare a scope and project cost. Mike Snyder of Pa WARN said that one of his associates has experience with this type of work and that he would be willing to assist.

DEP Engineering Services Program

Woodrow (Woody) Cole from DEP provided an interesting report on the various free services available to our systems through the Operator Outreach and Engineering Services. Since the majority of the water suppliers were unable to attend this presentation, Charlotte asked Woody to attend a future meeting to give us another opportunity to become acquainted with these programs, and he readily agreed. This presentation triggered a lively Q&A session.

Pa WARN Network

Mike Snyder delivered an excellent session accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation on the PaWARN network purpose, organization and operation, including many examples of mutual aid during a variety of emergency situations. At present the only system in Potter County belonging to the network is Roulette Twp. Membership dues are calculated based on system population with all systems serving up to 5,000 people joining for a \$25.00 annual fee. All systems are required to sign a Mutual Aid agreement as a condition of membership. This agreement is the same for all members and is necessary to address things such as damaged equipment and workers injuries. This agreement provides instant access to all member utilities Statewide for mutual aid in the form of equipment and manpower without dealing with administrative conflicts. Mike left several copies of an informational brochure at the Planning office. You can pick up one there or call and Deb will send one to you. Mike will be invited to attend a future Tioga County Coalition meeting, so there should be another opportunity to hear his presentation. Mike is available to conduct approved for credit operator training on emergency response. We will try to schedule this in conjunction with the Tioga County Coalition as a logical follow-up to the PRWA sessions already set for this year.

Several of the things we have been trying to accomplish with our website such as the spreadsheet Jim Clark has developed are already available through PaWARN, only theirs include all 77 member systems throughout the State. The resources available through this network far outstrip anything we could do locally or in cooperation with the other Coalitions.

We STRONGLY recommend that you check out this resource, and seriously consider membership. Mike can be contacted at (717) 774-8870 Ext. 102 or (717) 880-1303 (cell)

Next Meeting Date

Continuing with our current quarterly meeting schedule, the next meeting would fall on August 14, 2013. There was no discussion on where the meeting will be held.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:30.