

Comments from the January 12th Lancaster County Watershed Association Chesapeake Bay TMDL Forum

(Highlighted words are comments that appeared on the flip charts)

~One of key issues brought up was the need for more county-wide **citizen education** on local water quality.

Comments regarding Question 1, on the need for an overarching Lancaster County Watershed Association

 This larger county-wide group could assist with **grant writing** for all other organizations.

 **Support for smaller organizations** would be improved through a larger group.

 A larger group could possibly organize/support a **local stream improvement program** similar to the one the PA Fish & Boat Commission currently has (Adopt-A-Stream/**Cooperative Habitat Improvement Program**). This would foster additional projects locally in a quicker fashion.

 This larger organization would be tasked with **thinking regionally** to provide that **team effort** needed.

 An overarching Lancaster County Watershed Association could increase **funding flows because of the larger partnerships** it would involve.

 A larger county-wide group should also include **all local partners** concerned with water quality issues, such as; **county agencies, local groups, businesses, etc.**

 A **system to collect and share water quality data** from throughout the county should also be a task assigned to this new larger group.

 The bottom-line is most folks thought this larger county wide group would **help coordinate local efforts** more efficiently.

Thoughts on Question 2, dealing with the Lancaster County Conservation District's 2015 Strategic Plan and how it addresses watershed issues

- ❖ Removing locally **impaired stream** sections should be a priority. By **reviewing current watershed plans that have been completed a template should be developed for various ways to implement** that plan thus moving the watershed plan forward.
- ❖ A more vigorous **outreach campaign** should be looked at to reach all sectors of the county not just homeowners. This could involve the promotion and creation of **Environmental Advisory Councils (EAC's)** for local municipal support on environmental issues. These campaigns should not repeat past efforts but focus on new approaches that elicit action that needs to take place to improve water quality.
- ❖ We need to **share the story** of why change or action is needed and make it **meaningful** to our target audiences.
- ❖ **Study what is currently working** locally or in other areas in regards to education and outreach. Use this as a **model for others to follow** or duplicate.
- ❖ The **need to follow up with challenges** that we may be having is something that needs to happen as well. All of this needs to happen while we **support our local volunteers** and the partnerships they are establishing.
- ❖ **Education to the Non-Agricultural community** is something that came up over and over. Developing **positive approaches with consumers** was one idea to pursue along with a host of other ideas.
- ❖ Additional partners should be involved in this education and outreach approach as well (i.e. **Solid Waste Management Authority**).

Ideas discussed for question 3, on having an annual focus for all local conservation groups and how this could assist with the Bay TMDL

- One directive discussed for local **watershed groups should be a resource for data regarding new development/municipalities**.
- Perhaps promoting **non-agricultural** ideas should be a focus; **green infrastructure, rain barrels, green roofs**, etc.
- The need for **“making a plan”** for all sectors in the Bay watershed was brought up. **Agriculture has plans** in place for their use of the land (**conservation plans, nutrient management plans**, etc.). Perhaps we need to **consider plan development for other land uses outside the agricultural** arena as well.
- An annual focus for **watershed groups to promote** might be **no-till cover crops** or other agricultural best management practices.

For question 4, what we are missing and what else is needed, these were the comments recorded

- The need to **find corporate partnerships and/or sponsors** was an idea that was discussed. This could possibly assist with **nutrient credit trading** or even the **public relations** angle.
- The continuing idea of **working with our local municipalities on innovative stormwater management** is an important piece of the watershed puzzle.
- **Land preservation, Smart Growth, and/or regional planning** need to be further implemented throughout the county to address stormwater issues that will continue in the future.
- Working with the **development community** on possible **offsets** they might be required to do for current or future develop is an avenue EPA is looking at to reach Bay TMDL limits. Should we also be looking at this as an option?
- Riparian buffers and streambank fencing was touched upon in regards to yet another tool to take advantage of. Lancaster County’s **Conservation Reserve and Enhancement Program (CREP)** has some of the highest rental rates in the state but few are using this option. Also, the Lancaster County Conservation District’s **“Fence’em Out”** program was explained to attendees. The idea of getting producers to **volunteer** for this program now before the federal or state government **mandates** it could be a powerful mechanism moving forward.
- **Business and industry** can not be excluded from our conversation. Many businesses are looking for more ways to be **“in the green”** and promoting that to consumers. Finally, new **energy** technologies could be partners if we are looking outside the box.