
APPENDIX P. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments from Public Meetings Held in April

Mercer Cooperative Extension – April 5, 2005

Project Area Characteristics

- Air Quality is not addressed in the plan.
 - *A section on air quality has been added to the Project Area Characteristics chapter between the Major Tributaries and Socio-economic Profile sections.*
- Mercury pollution coming from similar source? How does chemistry work? How does it affect fish?
 - *Information about mercury was added to the air quality section.*
- Emissions from scrubbers.
 - *Comment noted.*
- Tax reform to assist landowners to hold on to their properties.
 - *A recommendation was added.*
- Add Cooperative Extension to Land-Use Planning and Regulation and Zoning partners for education and research and in the management recommendation matrix.
 - *Cooperative Extensions were added as potential partners to five recommendations under the land-use planning and regulation section of the management recommendation matrix.*
- Management Recommendation under economics: the recommended tax incentives to keep land intact should be a high priority.
 - *A recommendation was added.*

Land Resources

- Landfills – River Road – leachate and a history of illegal dumping.
 - *Comment noted.*
- Slurry from former mills, South Pymatuning Twp., draining into Shenango River.
 - *Comment noted.*
- Illegal dumping “not in my backyard;” it’s someone else’s problem.
 - *A section on illegal dumping in the watershed is already included in the plan.*
- Additional available information about conservation easements and educate about conservation easements.
 - *Conservation easements are defined in the plan. A website with more information about conservation easements was added to Appendix N.*
- Support Woodland Owners Association efforts to educate public and restore degraded areas, and to develop demonstration areas.
 - *A recommendation was added.*

Land Resources (continued)

- Change the 4th and 6th recommendations under farmland preservation to high priority.
 - *After reviewing the original prioritizations, the priorities were changed.*
- Mercer County Agricultural Security Area parcels are missing from maps. (Where did the data come from?)
 - *At the time of the draft and final publication, the security area parcels data from Mercer County was not available. The Mercer County Comprehensive Plan will have that data, once completed. The Lawrence County Conservation District provided Lawrence County data and Crawford County is just getting their agricultural security program started, so no data is available yet.*
- Figures 2-10 and 2-8 largely show forest and agricultural land use, but do not show the residential use now present, especially around Lake Latonka.
 - *Updated land-use data was obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection. Changes were made.*
- Promote local production of foods and farm markets (agricultural products and agricultural producers, agricultural preservation program).
 - *Management recommendation was added.*

Water Resources

- Definitions of water pollution. If water is altered by man, it is polluted (Murray, M. Shellgram). If water can be used for its intended use, it is not polluted (Sanitary Engineer).
 - *Comment noted.*
- Take BOD samples above and below sewage effluent. Water has to be sampled in order to determine what pollutants are present or absent. Dissolved oxygen is one of the big requirements for any stream.
 - *A recommendation was added.*
- Remove playground on figures 3-3, 3-7, and 3-12. Check others, particularly Lower Shenango maps, to see if playground is listed.
 - *Maps were corrected.*
- In table 3-4 what is “other” as the impairment source?
 - *Impairments where the source and cause of the pollution is unknown are classified as “other.”*
- Fox Run AMD project. Phase I is completed.
 - *Comment noted.*
- Update wetlands map and move to high priority. We need to know what to protect.
 - *A recommendation to update the wetland map is already included in the Water Resources chapter. After reviewing the original priorities, the recommendation will remain at a medium priority.*
- Nitrates and phosphorous – sewage treatment plants.
 - *Comment noted.*

Water Resources (continued)

- Hypolimnion draining.
 - *Comment noted.*
- Master Well Owners should be used as potential partners; they educate approximately 100 well owners each year. Program of Cooperative Extension.
 - *Master Well Owners and Cooperative Extensions were added to potential partners in a recommendation about protecting private well supplies to homeowners.*
- Possible AMD discharge on the Sharon School Site.
 - *Comment noted.*
- Is cleanup of mercury at power plants working?
 - *Comment noted.*
- Recommendation to continue macroinvertebrate sampling. Compare to previous results University of Pittsburgh Lab of Ecology.
 - *A recommendation was added.*
- Sewage is visible in Orangeville and Kinsman, but it is not addressed in plan. Trumbull County currently has cost-share program for septic pumping.
 - *Comment noted.*
- Increase funding to remediate sewage problems.
 - *A recommendation already exists in the Water Resources Chapter.*
- Page 7-13 Erosion and Sedimentation: change the language of the recommendation from “farmers” to “landowners” in the third recommendation so that the agricultural community doesn’t get offended.
 - *Recommendation was changed.*

Biological Resources

- No comments received.

Cultural Resources

- Improve communication among groups – annual get-together events to focus on common ground.
 - *There is already a recommendation in the Project Area Characteristics chapter addressing this concern.*
- Add to Environmental Education management recommendations: Continue development of Munnell Run Farm as an ecological and agricultural education center. Should be a medium priority. Potential partners should include the same ones as in West Park recommendation but add Munnell Run Farm Foundation and Mercer County Historical Society. For potential funding add USDA and PDA.
 - *Recommendation was added.*
- Add Bronzewood Golf Course in Andover, OH 18 hole public course to Table 5-5 on page 5-11.
 - *Golf course was added to the table.*

Cultural Resources (continued)

- Page 5-18 under origin of names change ...Chenango, meaning “bull thistle”.... To Chenango, meaning “big bull thistle”... Venango means little bull thistle. Also change the spelling of Shenango when used to describe the Iroquoian word to “Shaningo”.
 - *Changes were made.*

Neshannock High School Meeting – April 7, 2005

Project Area Characteristics

- Utilize environmental education to address watershed issues.
 - *Recommendations for utilizing environmental education to address watershed issues were already included in several recommendations.*

Land Resources

- Recovery of river and natural resources, which were available prior to industry.
 - *Comment noted.*
- Floodplain levels important to future projects.
 - *Comment noted.*
- Lawrence County Planning Department applied to DCNR to complete a greenway plan.
 - *Comment noted.*
- Lawrence County Planning Department sent DEP a letter of intent for stormwater management.
 - *Comment noted.*
- Preserve the canal lock in Pulaski on the east side of the river. It is located on State Game Lands.
 - *The canal lock preservation was specifically mentioned in changes made to a previous recommendation.*
- Do not include GPS addresses of sensitive or military identities and water utilities due to homeland security.
 - *Although the information is public information and can be obtained on the Internet, the latitude and longitude of sensitive sites has been removed from the appendices.*
- The Army Corps of Engineers should be more responsive to:
 - 1) 1-800 numbers are not accessible;
 - 2) No response to local concerns;
 - 3) Hill Side Road often closed (south of Sharpsville)
 - *Comments noted.*

Water Resources

- Source Water - All management recommendations should be ranked as “high” priority.
 - *After reviewing the original prioritizations two recommendations were raised to high priority, and two recommendations stayed at the medium priority level.*
- Wetlands need continuous study, identification.
 - *There is already a recommendation for this.*

Water Resources (continued)

- In the New Castle area, what impacts have economic development had on the historical loss of wetlands?
 - *Specific wetland loss data is currently not available; a recommendation will be added.*
- Erosion and sedimentation management recommendations should be a high priority. People don't realize that dirt can pollute.
 - *After reviewing the original prioritizations, only one recommendation was raised to a high priority.*
- Leave vegetation in its place.
 - *Comment noted.*
- Does the Army Corps of Engineers have control of a monitoring gauge at Nashaw Bridge? Is it functioning?
 - *Information about the gauge was added to the Water Resources chapter.*
- Include Act 167 in first management recommendation under Erosion and Sedimentation.
 - *Act 167 has been added to the recommendation.*
- Culverts under abandoned rail line on west side of river are plugged, causing flooding.
 - *A recommendation was added.*

Biological Resources

- USACE (acronym) is not identified in the chapter as the Army Corps of Engineering.
 - *Acronym identification was added.*
- Preserve Otter Creek Swamp. It is an IBA and massasaugua rattlesnakes reside there.
 - *A recommendation was added.*

Cultural Resources

- Add State Game Lands in Pulaski (downstream) to Table 5-3 on page 5-9. Additional acreage purchased by waterfowl USA to be attached to State Game Lands.
 - *The Pennsylvania Game Commission was contacted and they are currently unaware of the additional acreages of State Game Lands at this time.*
- Remove low head dam downstream of Pulaski to improve navigability.
 - *Recommendation was added.*
- More accessibility to rivers
 - *Recommendations to establish more accessibility to the river are located in the Cultural Resources Chapter.*

St. Phillip Social Hall – April 13, 2005

Project Area Characteristics

- Eliminate Tuttle Lake.
 - *Although it is listed as a town in the Pennsylvania Gazetteer, Tuttle Lake was removed from the maps because the local population does not recognize it as a town.*

Project Area Characteristics (continued)

- List Espyville on the maps (covered or not?)
 - *Espyville is identified in the Upper Shenango River Subwatershed maps for identification purposes. It is not identified on the entire watershed map, because individual towns are not included on that map, just boroughs and cities.*
- Establish a Shenango water trail or greenway plan for economic revitalization of downtown areas.
 - *A recommendation for water trails already exists.*
 - *A recommendation for a greenway plan was added.*
- Address hurricane damages; some portions of the rivers are inaccessible; it difficult to find people to clean up, and positive response is needed from municipalities.
 - *A recommendation was added.*
- Work more closely with and educate municipalities.
 - *A recommendation for this is already included in this chapter.*
- Watershed-level zoning – emphasize and encourage joint comprehensive plans – currently each township has each type of zoning – zone on a larger scale.
 - *A recommendation for this is already included in the Project Area Characteristics chapter.*

Land Resources

- Tuttle Lake is incorrect, it is actually Tuttle Point. Tuttle is the name of the family who owned the property before it was the state park.
 - *Although it is listed as a town in the Pennsylvania Gazetteer, Tuttle Lake was removed from the maps because the local population does not recognize it as a town.*
- List Espyville on the maps (covered or not?)
 - *Espyville is identified in the Upper Shenango River Subwatershed maps for identification purposes. It is not identified on the entire watershed map, because individual towns are not included on that map, just boroughs and cities.*
- Figures 2-3 and 2-7 show a tan color in the wetland area of Pymatuning Reservoir. What is the tan color? Should it be wetlands?
 - *Figure 2-3 discusses primary agricultural land and Pennsylvania important farmlands. The tan or gray colors are areas in the Upper Shenango River Subwatershed that are not prime agricultural lands or Pennsylvania important farmland.*
 - *Figure 2-7 was changed with updated land-use data from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.*
- Why are the agricultural soils different from Ohio to Pennsylvania?
 - *The United States Geological Survey identifies prime agricultural soils during the preparation of the county soil survey, so each county can have different prime agricultural soils.*
- Prime agricultural soil maps vary considerably – review wetland areas.
 - *Because the agricultural soils are identified separately in each county, the maps are going to vary.*

Land Resources (continued)

- Figure 2-1 – No geology for Ashtabula.
 - *Geological data for Ashtabula County is currently not available.*
- Not enough crop rotation – poor farming practices (plant all in something – causes erosion).
 - *Recommendations to educate landowners about conservation practices are located in the Land Resources chapter.*

Water Resources

- Summerhill – Dirt and gravel roads sediment going into stream – gravel not of good quality and goes into the stream. Blacktop and seal to give base.
 - *Comment noted.*
- Dirt and gravel roads should be a high priority.
 - *After reviewing the original prioritizations, the recommendation will remain a medium priority.*
- Salt getting into streams from runoff.
 - *Comment noted.*
- Flooding on Conneaut Creek – trees blocking, creating floods.
 - *Conneaut Creek is not located in the watershed.*
- Pymatuning Laboratory of Ecology – fish-feeding study is interesting.
 - *Comment noted.*
- Management recommendations are good.
 - *Comment noted.*
- Is there any difference in the water quality from the Hartstown Marsh Swamp outlet down to the county line? What is the baseline of the stream?
 - *Recommendation added.*
- Will the “watershed” be defined as the entire Shenango watershed for pollution trading? North to South, Urban to Rural areas.
 - *Because pollution trading is currently in a pilot phase in the Chesapeake Bay watershed; the United States Environmental Protection Agency has yet to set trading zones.*

Biological Resources

- Add American lotus to Table 4-4.
 - *American lotus was not added to the table because it was an established table of common invasive species in Pennsylvania provided by the PA DCNR.*
- On page 4-11 add to the last paragraph about the impacts American lotus has on recreational areas, boating, fishing, others. TVA is having success controlling. Pymatuning State Park is currently trying to control.
 - *Impacts of the American lotus were added.*

Cultural Resources

- Establish a bike trail (and loop) around Linesville using abandoned rail lines and Pymatuning State Park.
 - *A recommendation was added.*
- Establish a network of trails linking to one another.
 - *This recommendation is already included in the Cultural Resources chapter.*
- The water trail idea is a great idea.
 - *Comment noted.*
- Canoeing access from the reservoir downstream; there is a problem with debris clogging the channel. Could create a trail if debris was removed to allow better river trail.
 - *A recommendation was added.*

Other Written Comments Received

Trumbull Soil and Water Conservation District, Ohio

- In Figure 1-2, the town of Coitsville is misspelled.
 - *Correction was made.*
- In Appendix I, the black bear was not mentioned under the mammal listing. I am pretty sure that there has been a harvest in Mercer County during hunting season. Pennsylvania Game Commission would have those figures in the Game News.
 - *Black bear was added.*
- In Appendix I, the big brown bat's scientific name was not in italics.
 - *Correction was made.*
- In Appendix J, the Brandy Springs Park in Mercer County also has baseball/softball fields, tennis court, pond, and gazebo.
 - *Corrections were made.*

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

- Where there any abandoned mines, quarries, or sinkholes?
 - *Appendix D has a listing of mines and quarries in the watershed.*
- What was the percentage of land that is private or public ownership?
 - *The percentages were added to the text.*
- Identify any group shelters, sports fields, and scenic vistas.
 - *They are already included and can be found in Appendix J.*
- Include a management recommendation that states that a biodiversity management plan be developed that includes restoration and maintenance of native species and elimination of invasive exotic plants within the study area.
 - *A recommendation was added.*

**Rachel Carson State Office Building
P. O. Box 8475, 6th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17105-8475**

July 18, 2005

Bureau of Recreation and Conservation

(717) 783-8526

Mr. Mark Killar
Director of Watershed Services
Western Pennsylvania Conservancy
246 South Walnut Street
Blairsville, PA 15715

RE: Western Pennsylvania Conservancy (Multiple)
Shenango River Watershed Conservation Plan
BRC-RCP-8-25

Dear Mr. Killar:

We have reviewed the draft of the river conservation plan for the above referenced project as received by this office on April 4, 2005. The narrative report and the drawings were evaluated for the required minimum scope of work for Rivers Conservation Plans that are funded under the Keystone Community Grant Program. We are approving your plan contingent upon your addressing the following comments in finalizing the plan.

General:

The plan report and each must acknowledge Keystone funding by including the following citation on the plan's cover page:

This project was financed in part by a grant from the Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund under the administration of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation.

Narrative Report:

Land Resources:

Were there any abandoned mines, quarries or sinkholes?

What was the percentage of land that is private or public ownership?

Cultural Resources:

Identify any group shelters, sports fields and scenic vistas.

Management Recommendations:

We suggest including a management recommendation that states that a bio-diversity management plan be developed that includes restoration and maintenance of native species and elimination of invasive exotic plants within the study area.

Please review the above comments with your consultant and respond in writing and/or incorporate changes in the final draft of the plan.

In order to close out this grant project and for authorization of the final grant payment, the following items need to be submitted to the Bureau:

1. Three (3) copies of the final study report and one (1) PFD file on CD, along with verification that the Conservancy has received the required number of copies of the report and plan drawings.
2. Final Payment Request properly completed and signed. A copy of the form is enclosed. Copies of cancelled checks and invoices are required with this submission.
3. A letter from your consultant stating that the consultant contract has been paid in full.
4. A copy of a resolution passed and signed by the local governing body certifying that:
 - The project was completed in accordance with the grant contract;
 - All project expenditures have been made and were in accordance with the grant contract;
 - The River Conservation Plan and related materials are acceptable to the Conservancy; and,
 - The Conservancy will use the River Conservation Plan to guide future recreation, park, open space development, operations and maintenance.

A form of resolution is enclosed for your use. Attached are documents for the Pennsylvania Rivers Conservation Registry should you wish to apply.

Your cooperation on the above matters will be most appreciated. If you have any questions or comments on the above or as you continue with your project, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

M. Wesley Fahringer
Recreation and Park Advisor
Planning Projects Section
Grants Project Management Division

Enclosure(s)

cc: Mark Kulich, Regional Advisor

MWF:mwf