

PURE WATER FORUM Board Meeting

August 26, 2016

MillerCoors Plant, Elkton

**ATTENDEES:**

John McCloskey (Merck)	Otis Bilkins (PWF)	Tara Sieber (DEQ)
Jean Andrews (Shenandoah Valley Wastewater Treatment Plant Network)	Jeff Rinker (MillerCoors)	Brad Fink (DGIF)
Charlie Newton (SVSWCD)	Joe Lehnen (DoF)	James Moneymaker (DEQ)
Beverly Pearce (Denizen Media)	Tom Benzing (JMU)	Michael Gottfreckson (New River Valley Regional Commission)
Laura Naftel (PATB)	Walter Heeb (Miller-Coors)	Chris Anderson (WHFF)
Bill Latham (SVSWCD)	Matt Kowalski (CBF)	Ben Craig
Brenda Meade (VCC)	John Reeves (FoSR)	
	John Hiseman – DOF	
	Bob Peer – DEQ	

**BUSINESS MTG:**

Approval of minutes: Otis Bilkins made a motion to approve the minutes from the May 13, 2016 meeting. Seconded by Jean Andrews. Motion carried.

**Correspondence:** none

**Treasurer's Report:** Otis Bilkins passed around documents: the financial report to date, 2016 DEQ grant budget narrative and the Peak at the Bay fiscal sponsorship to date. Tom Benzing moved to approve the documents as presented. Seconded by Joe Lehnen. Motion passed.

**President's Report:** the Executive Committee has been planning for the quarterly and annual meetings. The DEQ 2017 roundtable grant request is to be issued soon with a fall submission date.

**Small Grants Committee:** Requests have slowed. The announcement continues to be posted on the PWF website. Grantees have one year from the date the grant is signed to complete project. Purpose is to support the goals of the PWF in the Valley.

**Website:** Continues to see an increased number of visitors. Information and registration for the annual meeting will be posted soon.

**Education:** no updates.

**Board Development:** see updates under 'new business'.

**Grants:** President John McCloskey submitted the financial update to DEQ and went over the financial narrative form.

**Old Business:** Annual planning meeting: Thurs., October 6 at the Frontier Culture Museum in Staunton with a theme of stakeholder engagement and field trips in the Upper Middle River watershed. A keynote speaker has been contacted but not yet confirmed.

**New Business:**

**Direction for Board Development Committee:** several members have served on the board for four or more years. Discussion ensued on recommendations for changes when members reach tenure. Tom has stepped down but offered to assist and recommended reviewing bylaws so that the board remains balanced across representative categories. The slate of officers for upcoming year needs to be determined.

Several committees need additional representatives and there are a few positions vacant on the board such as recreation and agriculture.

Jean Andrews suggested reaching out to the MS4 localities such as Harrisonburg and other counties. Tom suggested considering attendees from last annual meeting. The Virginia Forage and Grasslands Council may be a good contact as they have agricultural representatives. The bylaws contain the description of what representation is needed on the board.

There is a distinction between serving on the board and being a non-voting member.

**Partners Float Trip:** Sun., September 25 (12-4 pm) with lunch provided. Emailing an invitation to boards of supervisors and county administrators was discussed, including an RSVP request. Beverly Pierce offered to draft such an invitation and will get the specific details from Paul Bugas. The invitation will also be shared with board members. It was agreed that the more advance notice the better to encourage attendance. The stretch of river will be determined by weather conditions and water level.

**Partner News:**

Otis Bilkins: Mercury remediation on South River is underway, two miles from Constitution Park. Waynesboro funded a study for the old landfill at Sunset Park to start by 2018. A grant was awarded to restore the Crozet tunnel which, at 4000 feet, was the longest tunnel when first constructed. It will become part of the greenway.

Brenda Meade: Announced she is the new executive director of the Valley Conservation Council. They have a member campaign underway and are working on an agricultural conservation easement in order to keep farmers on the land.

Tom Benzing: Trout Unlimited has a change in the Middle River stocking rules with year-round catch-and-release fishing. About four and a half miles of the river were opened in 2011 with regulations on the size of fish what can be kept. They advocate for citizen science, pipeline monitoring and getting volunteers out to monitor water, particularly near development. His research has focused on thermal rates and how warm water can get before trout are negatively affected.

Brad Fink: DEQ and DGIF met with Elkton officials and the project is moving ahead for remediation of the landfill and the eroding bank. Construction may begin next year. The creel survey is concluding. Research is underway to determine how much people are spending to float the river. DGIF is also researching the depletion estimates on small mouth bass. Meetings have been held to discuss the sites for the boat ramps and public landings in Shenandoah County.

Friends of Shenandoah River: They are working with national parks and the Battlefields Foundation on water quality baseline data. A bacteria testing program is to begin on river water. Considerations are underway for a possible satellite lab for headwaters so all samples don't have to go to Shenandoah University. They have a 'Know your Watershed' program for students in Loudon County.

Tara Seiber: Algae technicians have been on the river this summer testing out new techniques and trying to answer when algae has reached a nuisance level. The study runs May - November and they are trying to determine how long the algae continues to flourish. Modifications are underway of old TMDLs in Rockingham County due to benthic, pH and sediment concerns with consideration of how to remodel and recalculate for today's conditions.

Laura Naftel: Seventh grade students took a trip with CBF Sept 25-27. Two schools are in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade program. One of the high schools with research on salamanders is on hold until the new biology teacher is contacted. This is funded through a two-year research grant. Matt Kowalski offered to assist. Students may be invited to the December meeting for a presentation on their trip to the Bay.

John Reeves: He is the water captain for Rockingham County/City of Harrisonburg through CBF 55 which is a statewide program. They consider ramifications for new stormwater permits.

Charlie Newton: The Page County Fair is currently underway.

Matt Kowalski: There are rotational grazing projects underway in the Valley and a regional conservation partner program for livestock operations in a larger geographic area focusing on bacteria and sediment issues. A 319 grant is being submitted in partnership with DEQ.

Jeff Rinker: will be attending the Virginia Natural Resources Leadership Institute.

Jean Andrews: Next meeting of the Storm Water Network is Sept 22. Questionnaire on quarterly meetings with speakers to be arranged. There has been good support and attendance at the meetings.

John McCloskey: They continue to take down old buildings, making space for new construction and creating more of a campus setting. Bio-similar research is underway. Science Technology Days are underway at the plant. The use of chlorine gas as a disinfectant is being removed in order to search for safer alternatives and a mixed oxidant system is being implemented. Sulfur dioxide is also being discontinued and replaced with a brine solution.

Beverly Pierce: the Shenandoah River Project is proceeding well. It is to be a large format book exploring the Shenandoah River and its valley in depth. There will be digital tools that expand upon the book's content and takes advantage of the layered and interactive features of the internet. The project has many collaborations/partnerships such as photographers, historians, scientists, recreational users, museums, nonprofits, etc. The goal is to celebrate the river and the organizers are working with Chesapeake Commons which works with watershed groups. There will be a Smithsonian traveling exhibition to help people get in touch with the river that most see from their car window as they pass over a bridge. Letters of support are encouraged from PWF members.

Presentation by John Stonebraker, MillerCoors Vice President and Plant Manager: Water savings and energy conservation are very important at the plant which has the capability of producing eight million barrels of beer annually. It is the most modern, large scale brewery in North America and one of the most energy efficient breweries in the world. It has the largest solar array in the US and the waste water

treatment plant has a membrane installed which removes phosphorous and nitrogen which are present in barley.

MillerCoors has been in the Shenandoah Valley for 30 years and started the Pure Water Forum 20 years ago.

The company owns 1800 acres in the Shenandoah Valley.

The plant has 450 employees with an average of 15 years of service and an annual budget of 800 million. Management consists of 28% women and 17% minorities and there is a goal to increase these percentages.

By 2020, a goal is to achieve landfill-free operations at all major manufacturing facilities. The company strives to save water by looking for ways to be more efficient, particularly with the cleaning of equipment. They want to restore 100% of watersheds and participate in reforestation programs.

They work with community groups on local project such as taking care of public boat ramps. They have partnered with the Shenandoah National Park Trust to re-work the fire road in Beldor Hollow. This year, they are restoring the fire road in Madison Hollow.

Question: What is the impact of craft breweries? Blue Moon is the number one craft brewery in the US which MillerCoors owns. Craft breweries represent about 17% of total sales. American light lager is growing in popularity (Coors Light, Miller Light, Budweiser).

Question: How does wheat and barley grow in the Valley? They are both small grains but have different growing characteristics. Barley needs a lot of water at certain times- it is high in sugars and carbohydrates and has to be malted. Less wheat and rye is used in the local brewing process.

Next Quarterly Meeting: Friday, December 2, Merck meeting house