

Sassafras Watershed Action Plan
Core Team Meeting
Galena Town Hall
April 8, 2009

Present: Chris Aadland, Joe Blizzard, Charlie Hayes, Kascie Herron, Kim Kohl, Nancy Metcalf, Amy Moredock, Eric Shertz, Ian Spotts, Rupert Rossetti, Ian Spotts, Diane Stoecker, Paul Sturm, John Vail, Ellyn Vail

Absent: Allen Davis, Jeff Cornwell, Jen Jaber, Mitch Keiler, John McCoy, Karen Miller, Gail Owings, Shannon Rose, John Seidel, Jennifer Volk, Mike Whitehill, Sara Wozniak, Ken Yetman

1. Update on Field Assessments and Outreach

Agriculture: Kim Kohl reported that Kascie Herron and she have been meeting one on one with the ag community and that they had received positive feedback. Most farmers have not been receptive to the idea of a separate ag committee but they are open to a June meeting.

Stream Corridor Assessment: Kascie reported that the MCC covered approximately 25 out of a possible 101 miles. SRA is aiming for 30 before the end of the season. Kascie has picked up some additional permissions in talking directly with non – responders. Findings to date include altered channels, erosion, inadequate buffers, fish barriers -- low energy projects.

Upland Assessment: Paul Sturm reported on the Upland Assessment which takes a look at impervious surfaces and storm water run-off in the watershed including potential hotspots such as: marinas, state workyards, gas stations, neighborhoods; how does pollution move. Areas are characterized based on findings.

Retrofit assessment – looks at improving treatment of impervious surfaces (rain gardens, etc.)

Marinas are difficult as there is limited space and the water table moving up and down with tides as well as boat storage.

WWTPs – visited both; 1950's technology at Galena; 60's at Betterton. Modernization needs to happen as neither is removing much in pollutants, especially Galena with regard to phosphorus. MDE has money available – may be room for SWAP to work with MDE to get funding if we're going to meet TMDL.

Highways – 301 and other roads; erosion areas – improvements that SHA can do; some expensive, some easier to fix.

Synoptic Survey: Ian Spotts of MDE gave a brief overview of the Synoptic survey. To date MDE has gone to road crossings (winter, spring, fall) and tested water quality. MDE is going to do the survey again – Kascie and Paul are going to work with MDE to try to target suspect areas. Target agricultural outreach to areas of higher nutrients and then seek foundation money to increase cost-share for cover crops, etc. Prioritization will position SRA to get funding.

Diane Stoecker noted that in shallow areas where light penetrates through the water to the sediments, algae growth is increased and thereby drives pH high, causing release of ammonia and phosphorus with anoxia (without oxygen).

Paul and Ian concurred, the synoptic survey is targeting tool, a one-time snapshot that can be repeated over time to measure changes.

2. Stakeholder Meeting

Kim reviewed the Draft agenda and sought input from Core Team. She noted the SRA Board felt the last meeting was too long at 2 hours and therefore had condensed this meeting. Kim will welcome guests and spend some time debunking myths around SRA.

Wayne Gilchrest will speak briefly on why it's important to save the Sassafras. The focus of the meeting will be Paul's presentation, referencing stakeholder concerns from the previous meeting to preliminary findings.

Break out groups will follow Paul's presentation. Groups will answer two questions: what are the goals SRA should focus on? What restoration strategies do you think will work in the Sassafras Watershed?

In July we'll come back with the goals and objectives and potential solutions we're developing and tie them back to the stakeholder goals.

3. Concerns, Findings, Sources and Solutions

Paul presented the power point for the SWAP meeting (final version available on-line under Stakeholder Meetings). The presentation elicited a broad-range of concerns and questions. Concerns focused on presentation of material to stakeholders and what format was most easily understood. Paul felt commentary that accompanied the photos would ensure stakeholders were receptive to the message. Questions were raised about phosphorous and forests. Paul responded that in the forest phosphorous binds to the soils but that forest is the least contributor overall. Kim asked about the use of phosphorous free fertilizer and what was the replacement. Diane mentioned urea and noted that it is the favored nitrogen source of cyanobacteria. Charlie Hayes noted that

most farmers use slow-release urea/nitrogen that makes point of removing phosphorous from spring fertilization.

4. SWAP Goals and Objectives

Kim noted that the solicitation of goals from stakeholders would drive Core Team goal setting and that this would be the focus of the next meeting.

5. Next Steps

Nancy Metcalf reported on additional funding in the Farm Bill and that EQIP money was available for increased levels of BMPs and other activities including incentive payments. Funding would probably be available in May.

Kim mentioned the possibility of moving meetings to WC or another venue where teleconferencing capabilities were present. This way we could include our Delaware members who are no longer able to be reimbursed for travel.