

Rural Action



2015 Annual Meeting Discussion Circle Notes

Discussion Circle: Expanding the Southeast Ohio Food Economy

Tom Redfern, director of Sustainable Agriculture and Forestry, led the session, describing the current project work being performed.

Chesterhill Produce Auction

The Chesterhill Produce Auction is a food hub that aggregates and distributes produce from over 120 local farmers into the surrounding communities. This generates an asset based agricultural economy in Chesterhill as well as a tourist destination, attracting visitors to the area. Produce from the auction is delivered to local restaurants, grocers, school districts, and Country Fresh Stop locations. The Chesterhill Produce Auction is a social enterprise of Rural Action, helping to fund food access programming.

Country Fresh Stops

Country Fresh Stops are locations in the community such as corner stores, hospitals, and universities, providing an opportunity to purchase fresh produce in areas that have little or no access to healthy, local foods. At present, CFS locations are in Roseville, Chauncey, McArthur, and two locations in Parkersburg. This is funded by The Sisters of Saint Joseph Heritage Foundation, the Osteopathic Heritage Fund, and the Perry County Health Department.

Farm to School

The Farm to School program makes it possible to provide local produce from the Chesterhill Produce Auction and local farms to school districts. Through a partnership with Hocking College produce is prepared (cut to order, frozen) by students from Hocking College's Culinary program who are learning about the benefits of sourcing locally. When school is not in session farm to school volunteers help with processing. Food safety training was provided by Hocking College for volunteers. Partnering Schools include Athens City Schools, Alexander Local, Federal Local as well as Tri-County Career Center, Trimble Local, Morgan Local, Franklin Local, Belpre City, Marietta Local, and Vinton County Local School Districts who are in the planning phases. In addition to produce deliveries the program also offers educational opportunities including the recent Farm to School Day event, tastings of local produce, garden activities, and cooking classes taught to second graders through the Live Healthy Kids program. The Farm to School Program is funded primarily by a USDA Farm to School Support Grant. The Sustainable Agriculture Staff includes Tom Redfern, Director of Sustainable Agriculture and Forestry, Bob Fedyski, Local Food Specialist, Megan Conkle, AmeriCorps VISTA, Carrie Carson, AmeriCorps VISTA, and three summer VISTAs.

Perry County

Sustainable Agriculture work in Perry County includes the development of Perry County Blue Ribbon Pork, a brand that will be shared by a farmer's cooperative group. This past year pork was sold in Carpenter's, Seaman's, and used at the Somerset Oktoberfest. Recipes for sausage and brats were developed by Chef Alfonso Contrisciani of Hocking College. A new community kitchen is also being developed in Somerset. The kitchen will provide shared use infrastructure to those looking to create value added products and will also serve as a storefront to sell these items as well as a bakery. Rural Action also provides technical assistance to the Somerset Community Garden. Funding for work in Perry County is provided by a USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant.

Education

The Sustainable Agriculture program also provides educational opportunities for farmers and agricultural professionals such as extension employees. The Season Creation Professional Development Program was created in partnership with Green Edge Gardens in Amesville, OH to allow Green Edge to teach their peers about their unique year round growing model that utilizes high tunnel infrastructure. This program was funded by the SARE Professional Development Program. Rural Action also sponsors Good Agricultural Practices trainings presented by the Athens County Extension. GAP trainings teach farmers about food safety practices that should be followed on the farm. The Sustainable Agriculture program also focuses on educating consumers of local produce through the "Healthy Home Consumer Guide". The book provides storage, selection, and simple cooking techniques for many local produce items that are locally available.

Discussion

Tom showed the current food hubs in Appalachian Ohio on a map, indicating where the Country Fresh Stops, Farm to School institutions and the area of influence surrounding the CPA. Tom explained the significance to rural areas of food networks and how those networks' existence can benefit the rural areas around them not just by providing food, but by providing a value chain where stakeholders partner around a shared mission.

New Board member Mark Snider asked many good questions about the inner workings of the food hub concept, and how it is all funded and marketed. Carrie Carson (AmeriCorps VISTA) and Ryan Leach (COMCorps member) each provided some statistics on number of farmer's active at CPA last year, and how many schools were participating in Farm to School. Tom identified the primary funding source as the USDA via Rural Development funds, Farm to School, FMPP and SARE grants. Second most would be private funding from The Sisters of Saint Joseph, area health departments, and earned income from the CPA. The third largest funding source is assistance from OU's Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine (H-COM).

Session Attendees suggested that partnering with large food distributors could be attempted, as long we can maintain our commitment to the Triple Bottom Line of economy, environment, and community. Another attendee suggested that we expand our efforts in bee protection and provide further support to bee keepers. It was also asked if we had any plans to expand our work into Jackson County as he felt there was a great need there for what Rural Action can provide. Tom said he felt that what was really needed to continue to direct the expansion of the program in the most productive way possible is an advisory board or boards to handle the specific job of deciding what work is feasible with the funds available, to pursue additional funds and to prioritize projects when funds are obtained.

It was the general agreement of the group that the current emphasis on food access, safety and healthy cooking education should remain a very top priority. To do this, someone suggested that we connect into local home economics programs in order to increase student awareness of healthy, local food options and availability and to help build a presence within local communities.

"Expanding the Southeast Ohio Food Economy" was the session led by Tom Redfern, director of Sustainable Agriculture and Forestry. Throughout the hour, he described the current project work being performed by Rural Action in this area. The Chesterhill Produce Auction is a food hub that aggregates and distributes produce from over 120 local farmers into the surrounding communities. This generates an asset based agricultural economy in Chesterhill as well as a tourist destination, attracting visitors to the area. Produce from the auction is delivered to local restaurants, grocers, school districts, and Country Fresh Stop locations. The Chesterhill Produce Auction is a social enterprise of Rural Action, helping to fund food access programming. Country Fresh Stops are locations in the community such as corner stores, hospitals, and universities, providing an opportunity to purchase fresh produce in areas that have little or no access to healthy, local foods. At present, CFS locations are in Roseville, Chauncey, McArthur, and two locations in Parkersburg. This is funded by The Sisters of Saint Joseph Heritage Foundation, the Osteopathic Heritage Fund, and the Perry County Health Department.

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Schools, Alexander Local, Federal Local as well as Tri-County Career Center, Trimble Local, Morgan Local, Franklin Local, Belpre City, Marietta Local, and Vinton County Local School Districts who are in the planning phases. In addition to produce deliveries the program also offers educational opportunities including the recent Farm to School Day event, tastings of local produce, garden activities, and cooking classes taught to second graders through the Live Healthy Kids program. The Farm to School Program is funded primarily by a USDA Farm to School Support Grant. The Sustainable Agriculture Staff includes Tom Redfern, Director of Sustainable Agriculture and Forestry, Bob Fedyski, Local Food Specialist, Megan Conkle, AmeriCorps VISTA, Carrie Carson, AmeriCorps VISTA, and three summer VISTAs.

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Session attendees, of which there were nine, suggested that partnering with large food distributors could be attempted, as long we can maintain our commitment to the Triple Bottom Line of economy, environment, and community. Another attendee suggested that we expand our efforts in bee protection and provide further support to bee keepers. It was also asked if we had any plans to expand our work into Jackson County as he felt there was a great need there for what Rural Action can provide. Tom said he felt that what was really needed to continue to direct the expansion of the program in the most productive way possible is an advisory board or boards to handle the specific job of deciding what work is feasible with the funds available, to pursue additional funds and to prioritize projects when funds are obtained. It was the general agreement of the group that the current emphasis on food access, safety and healthy cooking education should remain a very top priority. To do this, someone suggested that we connect into local home economics programs in order to increase student awareness of healthy, local food options and availability and to help build a presence within local communities.

Discussion Circle: Energy

In attendance:

Carol Davey-Sayre - Community Solutions Director
Matthew Roberts – Info and outreach for UpGradeAthens County (UAC)
Chris Chmiel – County Commissioner
Mary Finney – Ohio University professor
Jane Woodrow – Psychologist/Rural Action board member
Luke Black – Rural Action Zero Waste
Michael Lockman – Athens Transit System/sustainable transportation
Tyler Bonner – Rural Action Zero Waste
Craig Roseland – APEC
Teny Bannick – UAC Energy Efficiency Advocate
Anastasia Karpoukhina – Rural Action intern/UAC Energy Efficiency Committee

Introduction/history on aggregation by Chris:

- Chuck K. from NOPEC – assisted with the aggregation through SOPEC plans for Athens (NOPEC - works with 144 communities and has been operational for 14 (?) years)
- Roger Wilkins (Executive Directive) – helped with the aggregation process to keep energy dollars local and within the community

Other goals of the aggregation besides saving money on utility bills:

- energy efficiency
- starting local renewable energy projects
- local jobs
- Nolan Moser (Empower) helped with the RFP proposal

- A single company was unable to help with all of the goals; therefore, a partnership was created with the best energy price from AEP Energy and Empower with a focus on renewables and efficiency

UpGradeAthens County (UAC) Background:

- Georgetown University Energy Prize spurred on the creation of UAC
- focus on residential and municipal energy
- energy efficient technology has already been developed but is not utilized as much as it should be
- UAC used to raise awareness and how everyone can have an impact and reduce energy consumption and move towards energy efficiency
- connecting the dots between other local revitalizing process and how everyone can be healthier as a community
- *Example of one of the UAC projects* - Greening up schools around Athens Co.
- getting the community involved in the process
- several steps – energy education & energy assessments
- Through UAC education fund, Rural Action’s Education program will provide the outreach focusing on energy efficiency to schools
- one idea/future step for schools would be to get solar panels for the school roofs
- UAC ultimate goal is to raise the communities’ and kids’ energy IQ
- other programs focus on reducing energy use for both residential and municipal buildings

Difficulties with reaching utility companies:

State Bill 310 – freeze on the energy efficiency – energy companies are not as motivated towards energy efficiency since there is a freeze

- missing incentives for companies since the focus has been mostly on coal in Ohio
- many of the UAC staff have been privately funded and through the aggregation group

Several remarks by Carol Davey-Sayre:

- all different organizations working together towards favorable energy policy with communities
- Aggregation (bulk purchasing power)– better rate for the community and more bargaining power through the sheer numbers
- Empower – help with the turnkey efficiency program designed with SOPEC and UAC
- the focus low hanging fruit of efficiency and all local (jobs, trainings, and energy dollars spent in the community)
- Empower projects a possible creation of up to 120 jobs and stimulate over 5 million dollars in the local economy
- In Albany there are hopes to incorporate agriculture in the process with the 10-acre solar farm.
- currently trying to find buyers for the generated energy within Athens Co. communities
- will lead to local jobs (1 permanent and several temporary ones) and local taxes towards the community
- If Empower owns the solar farm, they will pay taxes which will benefit local communities (such as schools) of up to 40-50 thousand a year.

Question for the group:

How do we ensure that everyone has a chance to participate in the energy efficiency? How to involve more groups and community members?

- Foundation for Appalachian Ohio in Nelsonville, Oh – should link up with them and collaborate if possible
- Education – (need a language that will let people grab on to the message and feel inspired) in the churches, organizations, neighborhood groups, involve volunteerism where ownership can be felt, there should be more engagement
- need to include artists, musicians, etc. in this movement because they can help a lot with the promotion of the message
- Need the news and progress of UAC in a story form
- An umbrella connecting everyone with a common vision (through organizations)
- Live Healthy Appalachia – can serve as a model – education got to the younger generation and through the children it is transferred to the parents
- UAC is already working through schools and education to spread awareness on energy efficiency
- Goal is to sign up more teachers
- Big vision – Energy IQ (on an individual and community level)
- *need education/information to know how to understand your energy bills*
- *Independence and self-reliance* – big idea that runs through the Appalachian culture – creative ways to tap into this feeling (off the grid living)

Q & A:

How to deal with pro-coal people?

- There are less and less coal jobs everywhere, as well as Ohio (1000 or so) and there are over 20 thousand renewable jobs that are/will be available in the near future
- Power+ project funded through the federal government and help communities' transition away from coal
- Goal is not to fight them but actually offer them an alternative.

How can we find common threads with people that live off the grid and work together?

- looking into the regulatory part of this story
- trying to fight regulations that will make everyone be on the grid

Do you educate builders about energy efficiency?

- Yes, there are meetings to discuss standards that can be intersectional but the issue is very political
- trying to make efficiency as easy and accessible as possible

People off the grid always wonder - Why are you as a group deciding what I should pay?

- One of the benefits of doing aggregation as a community is knowing what your rights are (no additional hidden fees)
- If you purchase as a large group, there's a better energy rate

Upcoming UAC announcements to look for:

City of Nelsonville will have a retrofit program independent of Income – Home Audits (\$20) – find out what is needed for your home and \$300 will be completely subsidized by Columbia Gas

Columbia Gas and AEP Ohio – Community Energy Savers program for the whole of Athens Co. – coming in the news soon

Bi-weekly UAC column in the Athens news that promote energy efficiency

The Energy Discussion breakout group was attended by eleven people. Chris Chmeil, Athens County Commissioner gave an introduction and history of the development of the aggregation agreement currently in place. Chuck Keiper from Northeast Ohio Public Energy Council assisted with the aggregation through Southeast Ohio Public Energy Council's plans for Athens. Northeast Ohio Public Energy Council works with 144 communities and has been operational for approximately fourteen years. Roger Wilkins, Executive Director of Southeast Ohio Public Energy Council, helped with the aggregation process to keep energy dollars local and within the community. There were other goals beyond the financial (lowering utility bills) for undertaking the aggregation. Increased energy efficiency, starting local renewable energy projects, and creating local jobs were all motivations for participating in the agreement. Nolan Moser of Empower helped with Request for Proposal process. A single company would be unable to assist in achieving all the projects goals, so a partnership was created with the best energy price from AEP Energy and Empower, with the focus being on renewables and efficiency.

Matthew Roberts of UpGrade Athens County shared the background of that organization. A Georgetown University Energy Prize spurred on the creation of UpGrade Athens County. Its focus is on residential and municipal energy, based on the idea that energy efficient technology has already been developed but is not utilized as much as it should be. UpGrade Athens County's mission is to raise awareness of how everyone can have an impact by reducing energy consumption and moving towards energy efficiency. Another goal of UpGrade Athens County is to connect the dots between other local revitalization processes to facilitate everyone being healthier as a community. One example of a project by UpGrade Athens County is "greening up" schools around Athens County. The organization will get the community involved in their process using two tools: energy education and energy assessments. Through the UpGrade Athens County education fund, Rural Action's Education program will provide the outreach focusing on energy efficiency to schools. One future step for schools would be to get solar panels for their roofs. UpGrade Athens County's ultimate goal is to raise the communities' and the kids' energy IQ and to introduce other programs focusing on reducing energy use for both residential and municipal buildings.

There are several difficulties that exist when dealing with utility companies. One obstacle is State Bill 310, which institutes a freeze on energy efficiency requirements. This freeze makes energy companies less motivated to pursue energy efficiency measures. There is little incentive for companies since the focus has been mostly on coal in Ohio. Many of UpGrade Athens County's staff have been privately funded and through the aggregation groups. The session's leader, Carol Davey-Sayre, noted that all kinds of different organizations are working together towards favorable energy policies for communities. Aggregation, which represents bulk purchasing power, gets a better rate for the community and more bargaining power through sheer numbers. Empower is an organization that helps with turnkey efficiency program designed with Southeast Ohio Public Energy Council and UpGrade Athens County. The focus is on the "low hanging fruit" of energy efficiency and keeping things local (jobs, training, energy dollars spent in the community). Empower projects a possible creation of up to 120 jobs, stimulating the local economy in the amount of over five million dollars. In Albany, there are hopes of incorporating agriculture in the process with a 10-acre solar farm. Currently, Empower is trying to find buyers for the generated energy within Athens County communities. This will lead to one permanent and several temporary jobs and local taxes coming back to the community. If Empower owns the solar farm, they will pay taxes which will benefit local community entities, like school districts, in amounts of \$40,000 to \$50,000 per year.

The group then considered these questions: how do we ensure that everyone has a chance to participate in the energy efficiency, and how do we involve more groups and community members? Also, how do we deal with pro-coal people? Can we educate builders about energy efficiency? How does aggregation benefit people living off the grid? Rural Action should link up with the Foundation for Appalachian Ohio in Nelsonville and collaborate if possible. Education should be undertaken in a language that will let people grab on to the message and feel inspired, such as in churches, organizations and neighborhood groups, and involve volunteerism where ownership can be felt. There should be more engagement. We need to include artists, musicians, etc. in this movement because they can help a lot with the promotion of the message. We need the news and progress of UpGrade Athens in a story form. We need an "umbrella" that will connect everyone with common visions through organizations, perhaps using Live Healthy Appalachia as a model. They use education to get to the younger generation and through the children it is transferred to the parents. UpGrade Athens County is already working through the schools to spread awareness of energy efficiency via education. One goal of this effort is to sign up more teachers. Their larger vision includes an Energy IQ for individuals and at the community level. To do this, we need education/information to know how understand utility bills, and to reinforce independence and self-reliance, values that are very important in Appalachian culture and that many people tap into in creative ways, such as living off the grid.

When talking with people who are pro-coal, one point is that there are fewer and fewer coal jobs everywhere, as well as Ohio (1000 or so), and there are potentially over twenty thousand new jobs in renewables that are or will be available in the near future. The PowerPlus project is funded by the federal government and is for the purpose of helping communities transition away from coal. The goal is not to fight them but actually offer them an alternative. Common threads with people that live off the grid are the regulatory aspects. We need to hang together against regulations that would force all of us to live on the grid. People off the grid often wonder why a group should be allowed to decide what they pay. One of the benefits of doing aggregation as a community is knowing what your rights are, such as eliminating hidden or additional fees. Of course, purchasing as a large group obtains a better rate. Talking with builders about energy efficiency can become very political. There are meetings held to discuss standards that can be intersectional, but the key is making energy efficiency as easy and accessible as possible. Upcoming UpGrade Athens County announcements to watch for include a retrofit program with the City of Nelsonville that, independent of income, will do a home energy audit for \$20 to find out what is needed for your home and \$300 of

that cost will be completely subsidized by Columbia Gas. Be watching the news for a Community Energy Savers program for all of Athens County from Columbia Gas and AEP Ohio, as well as a bi-weekly column from UpGrade Athens County to promote energy efficiency.

Discussion Circle: Zero Waste Economy

- Need Entrepreneur Assistance
 - Help with Implementation
 - Grants with milestone requirements to avoid failure and provide support and engagement
 - Binding services to capitol
- Connecting glass recyclers to artists
 - Create Acid Mine Drainage Pigment to color glass or other materials
- Is there a connection between law enforcement and dumping/burning education?

Discussion Circle: Outdoor Education for Long-Term Impacts

Participants:

- Aerial (last name?)
- Chrissy Anderson, Capitol University field station near Logan, OH
- Mary Anne Flournoy
- Angie Plant, Millcreek Elementary
- Brian (last name?), Alden Library
- Josh Barren, OU student
- Benjamin Irvine, OU student
- Melissa Irvine, Nelsonville-York City Schools
- Brian Vatican, Rural Action
- Miranda Cain, Hocking College student
- Emily Riggs, OU student and RA intern
- Gracie Umana, Ohio Stream Restore Corps
- Joe Brehm, RA EE

- Introductions: everyone shared their name, location, favorite reptile or amphibian
- Rural Action EE Overview by Joe B:
 - Appalachian Green Teachers Project
 - Youth Environmental Stewardship Project
 - Citizen Science Initiative
 - Costa Rica Model for EE (Brian Vatican explained the three tenets of this model and how they work together to improve quality of life: EE, jobs in Ecotourism, and Restoration/Stewardship)
- Angie Plant shared her collaboration with Rural Action, including creating a field guide for her school's land lab with our help that was distributed to multiple teachers and classes within the Southern Local District. She also remarked that students are no longer looking to coal mining as a fall-back career and she is encouraging them to research other career paths. One student studied EE as a career path and said, "I think I can do this!" Another student

asked his parents for a microscope for Christmas after a program with RA and he got it. Parents say he's using it all the time.

- Miranda Cain shared her experience working with Rural Action while a camp counselor at Camp Hervida 4-H camp in Washington County and also about her experience in Morgan County Schools. She chose to attend Hocking College and study natural resources and wildlife management because of her experience with Camp H and Rural Action's EE program.
- Emily Riggs shared her new interest in wanting to facilitate outdoor education programs for a career path as a result of her interaction with Rural Action's EE program and she is currently working with RA on an internship to give her more experience.
- Group discussion focused on how outdoor education in the region can be more impactful:
 - Aerial asked about how much EE RA does for adults—not too much but adults are a major market for future ecotourism ventures
 - Students remarked that even college-aged students do not spend much time outside despite its importance
 - Angie and Melissa shared their experience that school-based EE programs DO inspire kids to spend more time outside and study natural history, sciences.
 - Angie wants to work with RA to do Great Backyard Bird Count next year with her class
 - Internships with high school students is a key connector that we are currently missing, or teaching an EE elective course in high school
 - Mary Anne would like to see an adult EE “wonder camp”, possibly at her farm
 - Potential for weekend events at schools for families to reach adults as well as kids
 - Multiple skill sets are important for high-school through young professionals ages: to make ecotourism happen, need organizing and computer skills as well as knowledge of the local environment
 - Entrepreneur classes or workshops to fill this role
 - Need to keep track of where the related jobs are (Brian V is working on that this summer)
 - Potential barrier is politics—at schools and in general. Thus it is important to reach as many kids as possible with EE so that even if they do not end up pursuing a career in natural resources, they are engaged with the environment, know about it, and are more likely to be stewards
 - Melissa talked about wanting more EE and projects at Nelsonville-York. They have some great teachers already like Olivia Kittle but she would like to see composting, more staff involved in EE initiatives at their school
 - Angie replied that she helped organize a series of hikes at the end of the school year with RA EE to engage more teachers who were tentative about having people visit their class. In two days we worked with 12 new teachers because of Angie's work on our behalf. Could replicate at other schools/districts like NY
 - Overall we are igniting a lot of sparks in kids of all ages, including Miranda, who is working at a camp in WV this summer and hopes to plant that same spark in others.

Environmental Education

The Outdoor Education for Long-Term Impacts session was attended by twelve people. By way of introduction, each attendee gave their name, location and named their favorite reptile or amphibian. An overview of the Environmental Education program was given by Joe Brehm,

highlighting the Appalachian Green Teachers Project, the Youth Environmental Stewardship Project, the Citizen Science Initiative, and the Costa Rica Model for Environmental Education. Brian Vadakin explained the three tenets of the model and how they work together to improve quality of life: Environmental Education's connection to jobs in Ecotourism and Restoration/Stewardship.

Angie Plant shared her collaboration with Rural Action, including creating a field guide for her school's land lab with our help that was distributed to multiple teachers and classes within the Southern Local District. She also remarked that students are no longer looking to coal mining as a fall-back career and she is encouraging them to research other career paths. One student studied Environmental Education as a career path and said, "I think I can do this!" Another student asked his parents for a microscope for Christmas after a program with Rural Action and he got it. Parents say he's using it all the time. Miranda Cain shared her experience working with Rural Action while a camp counselor at Camp Hervida 4-H camp in Washington County and also about her experience in Morgan County Schools. She chose to attend Hocking College and study natural resources and wildlife management because of her experience with Camp Hervida and Rural Action's Environmental Education program.

Emily Riggs shared her new interest in facilitating outdoor education programs for a career path as a result of her interaction with Rural Action's Environmental Education program and she is currently working with Rural Action as an intern to give her more experience. Group discussion focused on how outdoor education in the region can be more impactful: what is Environmental Education currently doing for adults, how do school based programs encourage kids to spend more time outdoors, how does Environmental Education help people develop skill sets (such as organizing, computer skills and knowledge of the local environment) that can aid them in environmentally related jobs and entrepreneurship. Brian Vadakin is working this summer on developing some idea of where these jobs are. Adults are a major market for future ecotourism ventures, so outreach to high school students, college students and young professionals is important. Suggestions for activities included classes participating in the Great Backyard Bird Count next year, internships for high school students (an element that is currently missing), adult Environmental Education "wonder camp", weekend events that appeal to adults as well as kids, and environmental entrepreneur classes or workshops.

Angie and Melissa Irvine shared their experience that school-based EE programs DO inspire kids to spend more time outside and study natural history, sciences. A potential barrier is politics—at schools and in general. Thus it is important to reach as many kids as possible with Environmental Education so that even if they do not end up pursuing a career in natural resources, they are engaged with the environment, know about it, and are more likely to be stewards. Melissa talked about wanting more Environmental Education and projects at Nelsonville-York. They have some great teachers already like Olivia Kittle but she would like to see more things like composting and more staff involved in Environmental Education initiatives at their school. Angie replied that she helped organize a series of hikes at the end of the school year with Rural Action Environmental Education to engage more teachers who were tentative about having people visit their class. In two days we worked with 12 new teachers because of Angie's work on our behalf. We could replicate this at other schools and districts like has been done in New York. Overall we are igniting a lot of sparks in kids of all ages, including Miranda, who is working at a camp in West Virginia this summer and hopes to plant that same spark in others.

Discussion Circle: Watersheds

Communicating the value of clean water

- Think of water as the whole, not just in small segments
- Droughts out west may result in immigration back east to water rich areas like SE Ohio? Perhaps Ohio born folks may choose to move home?
- SE Ohio is an oasis of water, green
- Conflict between protecting watersheds and entities that see water only as dollar signs/commodity to sell
- Working together to diversify funding hedges bets if severance tax goes away for AML work
- How do we bridge between measuring ecosystem services, natural beauty, and also \$\$?
- How do we put all these benefits in a language of \$ value that everyone will understand?
- Define success in many different languages – ecosystem, species recovery, \$\$ saved, economics, tourism dollars, so as to reach different audiences so ALL see value
- Friends of the Lower Muskingum River – land trust with watershed focus unable to take/manage additional lands due to staffing constraints

Eco-tourism

- Importance of maintaining a welcoming attitude to visitors.
 - Lake Tahoe example – “thanks for visiting, now go home!”
 - Try to maintain our SE Ohio charm
- Telling success stories – now we can share recovery not just doom and gloom of acid mine drainage
- Ecotourism has huge \$ potential, clean water is fundamental to success
- People coming to Raccoon Creek to fish, canoe because of water quality improvements

Building Community

- US jobs in the future are going to come from entrepreneurs (software, high tech companies)
 - These entrepreneurs like the outdoors, are attracted to that atmosphere here in SE Ohio
 - We can draw those types of people here to live, work, and create companies that create jobs.
 - Won't be an overnight success, but in 20 years, we can look back and see the economic success
- In-migration is important, but also stop outmigration of our young people
- Cultivate ideas, stay here in SE Ohio, be proud of your place and heritage
- Psychological and community value of green space – how to quantify \$\$ value
- How to manage balance between bringing more people and money, but maintaining the character of this place

Education

- Instill the love of nature and place early on in kids' lives
- It is so important to encourage the next generation of land stewards, decision makers
- Some kids grow up here in SE Ohio, but still aren't being exposed to a creek, the outdoors
- Kids playing video games don't smile – kids experiencing the creek do.
- Having these outdoor experiences can have positive impacts on their lives
- How to put a price on a kid smiling?

Wastewater Treatment Project

- Like the idea of wastewater treatment project – helping small communities comply with EPA mandates when they come
- Hard to convince some people to change ingrained community behaviors (septic, dumping issues)
- \$30-\$40/month was norm for septic/water – now much higher in Corning due to new sewers
- Is there a way to reduce cost to make this more affordable for residents?
- We don't want to improve infrastructure to an extent that drives us to broke

The Watershed Discussion Circle, led by Nate Schlater of Monday Creek Watershed Coordinator, first communicated the value of clean water. Water should be thought of as a whole, not in small segments. For example, droughts in the west may cause migration eastward to water rich areas like Southeastern Ohio. Perhaps people who have moved away from here might move home for this reason. Southeastern Ohio is an oasis of water and, because of that very green. This produces conflict between protecting watershed and entities that see water only as a source of money, a commodity to sell. We need to work together to diversify funding to hedge our bets if the current severance tax goes away that is funding Acid Mine remediation work. One question the group considered was how do we bridge between measuring ecosystem services, natural beauty and money? How do we put all these benefits in a language of dollar value that everyone will understand? We define success in so many different languages: ecosystem, species recovery, money saved, economics, and tourism dollars. We must reach different audiences so that all see the value of the watershed. Currently, the Friends of the Lower Muskingum River, a land trust with a watershed focus, is unable to manage additional lands due to staffing constraints.

Ecotourism has huge money making potential in our region and clean water is fundamental to its success. It is important to maintain a welcoming attitude towards visitors and still keep our Southeastern Ohio charm. Nate cited the "Lake Tahoe" example: "Thanks for visiting, now go home!" We can now tell success stories, and we should. We can now share recovery not just the doom and gloom of acid mine drainage. People who come to Raccoon Creek to fish and canoe come because of the improved water quality. Jobs in the United States in the future are going to come from entrepreneurs, such as software and other high tech companies. The entrepreneurs like the outdoors and are attracted to that atmosphere here in Southeast Ohio. We can draw those types of people here to live work and create companies that create jobs. Success will not happen overnight, but if we look back in twenty years, we will see the economic success. In-migration is important, but we also must stop the out-migration of our young people. We would like them to cultivate new ideas, stay here and be proud of their place and their heritage. How can we quantify the psychological and community value of green space in dollars and cents? How do we balance bringing in more people and money, and maintaining the character of the place?

We must instill a love of nature and place early on in kids' lives. It is so important to encourage the next generation of land stewards and decision makers. Even children growing up here in Southeast Ohio still may not be exposed to creeks or the outdoors. Studies show that kids playing video games don't smile. Kids experience a creek do. Having these experiences create positive impacts on their lives. How can we put a price on a child's smile? The final point of discussion was wastewater treatment. Many liked the idea of a wastewater treatment project, helping small communities comply with EPA mandates when they come. However, it is hard to convince some people to change ingrained community behaviors like septic systems and dumping. New sewers can raise sewer/water rates considerably, such as in Corning where rates are now much higher than the \$30/\$40 a month that they were previously. Another consideration is, can we do

anything to reduce the costs to residents? We don't want to improve infrastructure to an extent that breaks us financially.

Discussion Circle: Tourism

John Winnenberg presented "Gateway to Public Lands Collaboration: The Winding Road, Ohio's Rising Appalachia". His stated purpose was to build a collaborative community within sector groups and among sector groups, to identify and recruit creative and collaborative people and organization each sector, to consider planned and packaged experiences that highlight your sector to local residents and visitors and build upon our brand, to identify authentic products other than experiences that build local economies, to give consideration to Sustainable Development in your sector, and to identify ways to communicate in your sector (electronic rooms, face-to-face, etc.). He presented as an example the Pennsylvania Wilds. Our brand should be based on experiences that are educational and interpretive, presented by knowledgeable trained guides and local experts highlighting regional assets. It should integrate stewardship of the environment, civic life, historic treasures and local economic systems and include the arts, theatre and music. It should engage locally sourced foods and products supportive of "humanities consideration" of our story and its impact on contemporary life. It should be inclusive of youth, local schools and colleges, interwoven with local entrepreneurs and young professionals. Our brand should be small in scale, authentic and locally owned.

To organize our collaborative efforts, we must consider the structural framework, how to build capacity and product development. The framework includes the collaboration itself, creating a shared vision, decision making and funding. Building capacity would entail bringing people to the table, developing skills and taking action. We must determine what products/sectors define our brand and how we can develop and enhance them. "The Winding Road" Catalog is one such collaboration. It grew out of Gateway to Public Lands Planning and Seed Grant funding from the Appalachian Regional Commission, the National Education Association, and the Conservation Fund. It is primarily populated by events designed by persons/organizations that took part in the National Association for Interpreters Training provided by Ken Bowald, a 32-hour course, with strong involvement with Rural Action's Ohio Stream Recovery Corps AmeriCorps. It was an experiment. "We make the road by walking..." and learn and adapt from our experience. This then becomes a calling card for future development and recruiting. It was designed as an annual print publication with an electronic companion piece. It does not, however, stand alone as the sole advertisement for events, tours, etc. The host organizations are expected to market too. The catalog is expected to grow in depth and content in 2016 and beyond.

John quoted astronaut Ron Garan, from his work *The Orbital Perspective: Lessons in Seeing the Big Picture from a Journey of 71 Million Miles* on collaboration: "A partner's different perspective is valuable, but the very fact that it is different means that it will require work, humility, time and resources to incorporate that perspective. At times, this will require checking one's pride at the door." He then talked about the marketing and distribution of the 2015 catalog, and what products might be included in the 2016 edition. Towards building capacity, the next National Association of Interpreters training was discussed, along with building a Web Development/Marketing Community using WordPress, and coordinating calendars and publicity for events. A Core Guiding Group deals with issues such as funding, setting the meeting schedule and adding new members.

The sectors, as John outlined them, are the Arts (Performing, Visual, Music, etc), Heritage and Culture, the Natural Environment (including Outdoor Recreation), Youth and Schools, Local Foods and Hospitality and Retail. Some issues for discussion included who do we wish were in our

sector and how can we go about recruiting them? What are the greatest assets in each sector? What types of creative products might we make together? Which would be included in the 2016 catalog? What supports do we need to move forward and how do we communicate? Each sector has a leader, and each county has its own focus group. The Core Guiding Group meets every other month. The Sector Leaders lead sector activities and the County Focus Groups meet as needed. A meeting was held in Shawnee on May 6 to organize by sector and to discuss future electronic gatherings via social media to plan sector initiatives. All sectors decided at that meeting that electronic gatherings were their preference.