

Poor turn out for storm water hearings surprises DER

READING — A total of 8 people turned out for the public hearings on the state's proposed index of watersheds for storm water management.

Two meetings, here, at the Penn State Commonwealth Campus, at 1 p.m. and 7 p.m. on Thursday found 5 representatives present to voice their concerns and opinions about the proposed plans.

Just two days before the Berks session, another

meeting in the state was held at the DuBois Campus where a total of 3 people attended.

Those 5 who did show up for the Berks afternoon meeting represented the Berks Co. Planning Commission, the Berks Co. Conservation District, and the Montour Co. Commissioners.

According to Eugene E. Council, Chief of the Division of Storm Water Management in the Department of Environmental Resources, his division didn't know what to expect in the line of public attendance

“These two hearings follow a series of four held recently to review the storm water guidelines. It's not too controversial a topic. And, we had met directly with 36 counties throughout the Commonwealth prior to the hearings,” Council said.

However, Council admitted he was surprised at the light turnout, actually no

turn out at the June 26 evening meeting.

The Storm Water Chief said his office has already received some written comments on the proposed watershed areas, and that the comment period is still open until July 3.

After that deadline, Council said the comments will be incorporated in the final watershed plan and submitted to the Environmental Quality Board on July 15 for adoption probably sometime in September.

Council pointed out the storm water management guidelines have already been submitted to the governor's office, and are waiting to be passed by each house.

Also in the governor's office, he said, are the financial assistance regulations which documents provisions for reimbursing counties for bookkeeping costs.

Once the storm water plans are adopted statewide, individual counties can voluntarily start up their own programs, Council added. The storm water plans and local regulations then will have an impact on everybody who engages in activities that increase the runoff characteristics of a watershed, he explained.

Council added the county governments will begin the process by studying the scope of their runoff problems in relation to land use. In an agriculturally important area, he noted, controlling soil erosion and nonpoint source pollution, covered by other laws, would mean compliance with the plan.

“Where the problem comes in,” he said, “is when the farms are sold for development. Or if there is a drastic change in management that suddenly increases the water pouring off crop fields.”

One area where the new law will help farmers, Council said, is in preventing developments and road construction crews from dumping their water into farmers' fields.

Of course, there is one

little catch. Although the law says that all public works should perform their work consistent with the watershed plan, state agencies—like Penn DOT—are not subject to local laws.

“That's going to be a big problem,” stated Council. “I suppose there will have to be followthrough by DER if local governments need an advocate when dealing with other state agencies.”

He added, however, that in the past 2 years, the attitudes in Penn DOT have been changing. “They are more sensitive to their drainage once it leaves the highway. So, I don't foresee too many problems.”

Council noted that Gene Hoffman, of the Pennsylvania Farmers' Association, and Ed Keener, the engineer for the City of Lebanon and a member of the County Conservation

District, have worked closely with DER in preparing the storm water management guidelines and watershed designations.

“Once the guidelines are approved by the legislature and the watersheds are approved by the EQB, the law calls for counties to complete their own plans within 2 years,” Council said.

He pointed out, however, that DER plans to grant time extensions if needed based on individual county request. “Under the present policy, DER is not going to seek enforcement action if there are delays.”

In closing, Council emphasized the storm water plan is not a land use control program. “We may identify needed changes, but as long as the storm water is controlled, the desired land use is still possible.”—SM

Myers named associate agent

UNIVERSITY PARK — Clyde A. B. Myers, assistant Berks County Extension agent on Penn State's extension service staff, has been promoted to the rank of associate extension agent, effective July 1.

Thomas B. King, Penn State associate dean for extension, who announced the promotion, said that an internal rank system provides recognition for extension staff members who are conducting outstanding educational programs.

Myers is conducting educational programs primarily in the area of animal science, and related

youth activities. He was appointed to the Berks County staff in 1977.

A native of Dover, he received a bachelor of science degree in animal husbandry from the Delaware Valley College of Science and Agriculture in 1972 and master of science degree from Penn State.

Prior to his appointment to the Extension staff, Myers was an agriculture instructor in the Red Lion Senior High School. In 1975, he was named Teacher of the Year by the York County Conservation District.

He is a member of Delta Tau Alpha, agricultural honor society.

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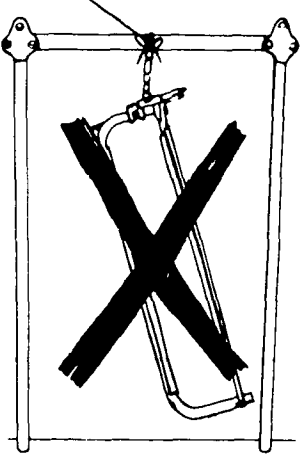


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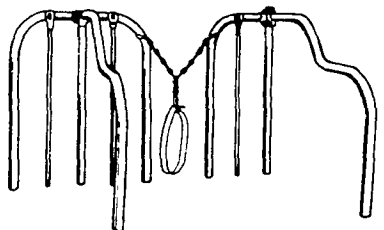
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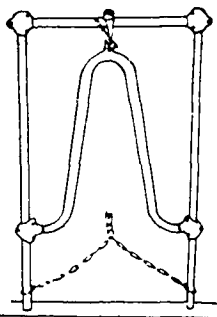
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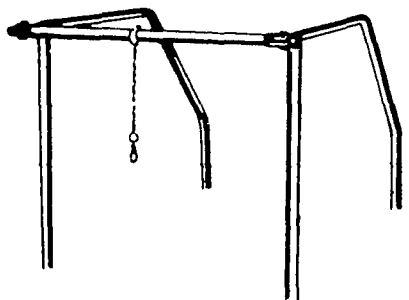
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