



NEWSLETTER

September 2013

Allegheny Highlands Alliance Quarterly Meeting Highlights September 7, 2013

Call to Order at the Thomas Learning Center, 10:20 AM

A motion was made and passed that meeting minutes be dispersed promptly and that highlights of the meetings be published in the AHA newsletter. Various platforms for distribution of the newsletter were discussed. One suggestion was that the newsletter be available on the AHA website and that its availability be emailed to AHA members and other interested parties.

Attendees listed their suggestions for some AHA future priorities. The following items are some of those topics and suggestions:

The upcoming Appalachian Festival at Frostburg, MD, on September 21 and AHA's display at this event were discussed. (See additional coverage elsewhere in this newsletter.)

The Wind Forum at Canaan Valley Resort, September 24 sponsored by Marshall University's Center for Business and Economic Research and the West Virginia Division of Energy was discussed. (See additional coverage elsewhere in this newsletter.)

A motion was made and passed that the AHA quarterly meeting scheduled for December 7, 2013 also serve as AHA's annual meeting.

Ways of expanding AHA membership were discussed. It was suggested that a wind academy, versus a forum, might help with recruitment. Frank will talk to the appropriate people to see if an academy could be hosted in western Maryland, with a possible target date of later winter / early spring.

Member group, SOAR's (Save Our Allegheny Ridges) event on November 22, 2013 was mentioned. Robert Bryce, journalist and author of *Power Hungry* will give a presentation entitled, "Power Density, Cost, and Scale: Why Wind Energy Fails".

SOAR also asked AHA to consider "Ethical Electric Claims". SOAR's Laura Jackson wrote: "There is a lot of misinformation being sent out by companies wanting people to choose them as an alternative energy supplier and promising that they will get 100% clean wind energy if they do sign up. I've been researching 2 companies that are very conspicuous in our area. Their claims are misleading that I think this would be a good project for AHA, as it isn't just a single wind project, but a regional issue. ... Maybe AHA can develop some information to counteract the claims."

Several AHA members had attended the Friends of Blackwater sponsored meeting with Kelly Fuller of the American Bird Conservancy. Kelly Fuller had made four suggestions which our group discussed. They are:

- Development of what we are for so that we are not perceived as an opposition group.
- Develop a relationship with Carnegie Mellon Engineering School. We must make a presentation to them explaining why we are working so hard protecting our mountains from a technology producing so little in our mountains.
- Prepare a comparison map showing that the very mountains that have been designated for protection for wildlife during global warming are those being developed for industrial wind energy. I believe that the map showing the mountains which need to be protected was prepared by The Nature Conservancy.

Strong suggestion that if we suggest suing the USFWS that we first discuss with Meyer Glitzenstein & Crystal in Washington, D.C.

Dr. Pam Dodds of member group, Laurel Mountain Preservation Association, said Kelly had advised that AHA should promote other resources for energy, and form relationships with oppositional groups based on commonalities of interest. The question is: What should AHA do? This led Pam to address a GAO activity, which she had listed on the white board for discussion. She said that some time ago, Congressmen Rahall and Mollohan gave a report on wind in WV, and at the time there was not enough wind to provide statistics. Her point was that we need to get legislators involved in looking into some of the specific areas of wind. Pam also mentioned a new Chesapeake Bay Group. This is a new restoration project, which is educational in nature.

Pam will attend a USF&W conference in Baltimore in late October / early November where she will give a hands on workshop on watersheds.

The question was asked if it might be feasible to do a fact sheet on individual established projects.

AHA Treasurer, Barbara Dean began a discussion of AHA's "Structure and Accountability." As time was growing short, this topic (called Structure and Goals in the motion) was decided to carry over for discussion in the December meeting.

Appalachian Festival at Frostburg University September 21, 2013

The Allegheny Highland Alliance returned to Frostburg again this year thanks to Frank O'Hara of AFA (Allegheny Front Alliance). As you may remember, last year we had perfect weather and we were able to speak individually to around one-hundred festival guests.

This year's forecast was not as generous. There was a 70% chance of rain and threatening clouds when we arrived and began setting up our canopy tent and display. In addition to last year's four "man" crew of the O'Haras and Terrys, Allegheny Treasurers' Mike Morgan and SOAR's (Save Our Allegheny Ridges) Laura Jackson were there to help explain wind energy, hand out AHA postcards, wind maps and fact sheets. They were also there to help us deal with the festival crowds which overwhelmed us at times in 2012. We were also joined for part of the day by Darlene Park of the new Maryland group, ANCHOR (Allegheny County Neighbors & Citizens for Home Owners Rights) who are concerned with a wind developer trying to overturn a protective zoning bill already in place.



The crowds we were expecting had apparently heard the same forecast as we had and decided to stay home. Even with the reduced crowds, we spoke with around fifty folks.

It was in the middle of an interview with a reporter for the University student newspaper that this writer noticed that the gray clouds had suddenly turned black. Moments later a squall line of driving rain and gusty winds lifted our canopy scattering handouts and postcards across the rain soaked quadrangle. Worse was that AHA's photographic display, consisting of dozens of mounted photographs ranging in size from 11"x14" to 20"x30", were blown down when the rack they were standing on blew over. Fortunately there were six AHA members under the canopy speaking with festival visitors.



It was “All Hands On Deck” as each of us sprang to hold on to the tent and/or shelter the display materials from the driving rain. Although many prints were damaged and a blade was broken on one of our display wind turbines, the good fortune of having six of us there at that moment saved the day.

Soaked to the skin, we got permission to drive our truck on the quadrangle and loaded our materials in the rain. Later that evening in the motel, we were able to re-wet some of the larger photos and restore them to almost new condition. Back at home the next day, a room was filled with re-drying prints and other display materials.



West Virginia Wind Forum September 24, 2013 at Canaan Valley Resort, Davis WV

A large number of AHA members signed up and attended the WV Wind Forum sponsored by Marshall University’s Center for Business and Economic Research and the West Virginia Department of Commerce’s Division of Energy. We say “a large number” because, although no one took a count, not counting the speakers, the AHA contingent outnumbered, or at least equaled, the other members of the audience.

Speakers this year were:

Jeff Herholdt, WV Division of Energy

Eric Miller, Director-Business Development, Invenergy (Beech Ridge wind project in WV)

Dave Friend, Managing partner, Laurel Renewable Partners LLC formerly known as US Windforce LLC and Dans Mountain LLC

Alan Forester, Manager-Joint Venture Governance, Shell Wind Energy Inc.

Charlie Smith, Executive Director, Utility Variable-Generation Integration Group.

Jamie Wolfe - GIS Manager, Center for Environmental, Geotechnical and Applied Sciences, Marshall University

Ward Malcom, Dean of Career, Technical and Workforce Education, Eastern Community & Technical College (WV)

Todd Katzner - Research Assistant Professor, Division of Forestry and Natural Resources, West Virginia University.



Mr. Herholdt addressed the group mentioning the various energy resources that the WV Department of Commerce promotes. In response to a question from John Terry of LMPA (Laurel Mountain Preservation Association) which started with the statement: "So far in September, there have been 11 days when there was either not enough wind to power the turbines or so little wind that they only ran for a short time at AES Laurel Mountain wind project. Also, there have been 32 similar days since the start of June". The question was: Does the WV Division of Energy get production data on wind energy projects in the state? And does the WV Division of Energy evaluate or have any way to determine which projects are successful and which are not? Mr. Herholdt's response was that the Division of Energy doesn't collect production data and has no knowledge that would enable it to determine which projects have been successful and which have not.

(Editors Note: The WV Division of Energy continues to promote West Virginia as having the best wind resource in the region.)

Mr. Miller of Invenenergy spoke of how the Beech Ridge project is open to visits from the public.

Mr. Friend of Laurel Renewable Partners mentioned that the noise issues with the Mitsubishi turbines at Pinnacle Wind in Mineral County, WV had been solved with louvers. He did not mention the previous or current lawsuits regarding turbine noise nor did he mention that the kind of noise for which his LLC is being sued is most often produced by turbine blades. He did mention, at a later time, that wind speed information missing from a Marshall University study at the Pinnacle project was proprietary information.

The moderator, speaking for the Forum's sponsors believes that AWES's (American Wind Energy Association) carbon reduction (1 for 1) estimates are inflated.

As part of several talks it was mentioned that Beech Ridge reports employing six techs and one manager and Pinnacle reports employing ten people.

In his talk, one of the industry experts gave the opinion that without the PTC and with the current low natural gas prices, wind energy cannot be competitive in the energy market; and that the only answer to wind's intermittence is a national grid which, because of the differences between grid operators as well as the monumental cost, is an impossible dream.

Marshall University wind resource studies have indicated that wind energy in the coalfield locations measured so far show insufficient wind energy for commercial development.

Interesting observations from the studies of golden eagle migration are that golden eagles migrate closer to the ground surface on ridge tops where turbines might be located, than valleys; but that golden eagles use thermals, common on less windy days, from valleys and slope sides where turbines are less likely to be located to gain elevation.

Several AHA members present agreed that in general, the Wind Forum was poorly attended and that there was a noticeable lack of questions from the audience members other than those associated with AHA and the gentleman from Invenenergy. There was no list of attendees and it appeared that there were no elected local or state representatives present. The event was not covered by the press.