

Watershed Committee of the Ozarks, Inc.
Monthly Meeting Minutes
January 6, 2017
Midtown Carnegie Library
Meeting Called to Order at 7:30 AM

Watershed Committee Update—Ms. Greene opened the meeting.

Roll Call

Review of Minutes—December minutes were reviewed.

Watershed Committee Update—Mr. Kromrey recognized outgoing Board Chair, Eric Dove and welcomed incoming Board Chair, Laura Greene.

Water Quality, the By-Product of Soil Health— Drexel Atkisson, District Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA—Mr. Atkisson set up a demonstration on a table where he had one glass jar with coffee grounds at the top and one glass jar with cocoa at the top. He poured water through the coffee grounds just fine but when he poured the water onto the cocoa, the water spilled over and didn't soak all the way through. He said this demonstrated aggregate soil, which is the coffee and non-aggregated soil which is the cocoa. Soil health and water quality are linked as sediment transport affects water quality and is greatest during storm events. Mr. Atkisson showed slides of aggregated soil, which hadn't been tilled, and non-aggregated soil, which had been tilled. The non-aggregated soil had brown run-off and the aggregated soil had less runoff, and the water was clear. He showed a picture of sediment migration via urban stormwater. Runoff occurs when rainfall exceeds infiltration capacity. Soil structure is the grouping of soil particles into aggregates, which can form plates, columns, blocks or spheres. Aggregated soil is what is formed by the living biology of the soil and is cottage cheese looking. Soil should be half-something and half-nothing. He said good soil structure includes small open spaces and is less dense than compacted soil. The structure of good soil permits air and water movement. He showed a slide called "Soil Food Web" and explained how cover crops help feed life into the soil and how tilling the soil does the opposite. He showed a picture of aggregated soil and non-aggregated soil. A picture of soil tilled and soil not tilled. Mr. Atkisson said the NRCS is committed to soil quality. He said there are four positions in the State that are focused on helping producers adopt principles of soil health and water quality. 75% of most producers in the State are using some no-till practice but very few are using cover crops with no till. He would like to see up to 75% of producers in the State adopting no-till and cover crops.

Missouri Department of Conservation Update —Andy Austin — Mr. Austin said the big mandatory sampling effort last fall included 19,000 tests for chronic wasting disease. Of those 19,300 deer, three tested positive; one in Adair County, one in Jefferson County, and one in Franklin County. He said 1,500 results are still pending. Eagle Days at the Springfield Nature Center is January 21, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and January 22, from 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. 2016 saw 14 new state records for fish caught and three were caught in Southwest Missouri.

Regional Issues— Ms. Melgren, the Director of the Tri-State Water Resource Coalition, said they are planning on a research study about the attitudes of water quality and water quantity throughout the region. Tiffany Frey said it is the 20th Anniversary of James River Basin Partnership and they will be kicking off their anniversary year at the Mudhouse coffee shop downtown on January 20th. Loring Bullard reminded everyone to weigh in on local issues that affect water. Karen McKinnis said the Springfield-Greene County Health Department still has some free shingles vaccines available to persons over 60.

Other Business— Ms. Greene passed out a survey about the time of the meeting.

Meeting adjourned 8:30 a.m.

Minutes taken by Kelly Guenther