

PFPA Spring 2007 Workshop Survey and Future Workshop Questionnaire - RESULTS

14 responses were received.

Items were scored from 1 to 5 (with 5 being the highest score!)

Business Meeting

Overall: 2 5 9 4 3 1 2 1

Necessity: 9 5 1 4 3 2 1

Comments:

- * Too much business for time allocated.
- * Move the business meeting along to keep on schedule. The business meetings run over and eat into the important informational program sessions.
- * Constructive criticism - some extraneous discussions took away from topics/business items, so perhaps limiting "discussions" or questions would provide focus & timely completion.
- * Well run.

Mineral Rights Review - Betty Reefer

Overall: 7 5 5 4 3 2 1

Necessity: 7 5 2 4 3 1 2 1

Comments:

- * Good job. Thanks Betty.
- * Very interesting & appropriate to personal situations in our county.
- * Was well presented, glad PFPA offered support.
- * This was a topic that was geared to Western PA and the coal regions of the Northeast.
- * Betty did an awesome job of creating the Power Point presentation & presenting this threat to farmland.
- * I think this is something that is going to affect each county and we should get more information on, as how to handle, through the Agland standpoint.

Legislative Reviews - Kerry Golden and Kristen Ebersole

Overall: 5 5 6 4 2 3 2 1

Necessity: 8 5 2 4 1 3 2 1

Comments:

- * Needed more time.
- * Excellent source of information.
- * Always appreciated, perhaps invite/meet Diane (from Hanna's office, & is Exec Dir of Ag Comm.) Still want Kerry to attend because she has the institutional knowledge.
- * It is always good to hear from those legislative assistants, they really seem to have an ear for what is coming down the pipe which may affect our programs.

- * I liked the written summaries as provided in previous meetings.
- * Not very exciting this time – is it because the Dems are in majority & these two are reps – like Kerry said? Both are very familiar with the Act 43 and concerned with farming.
- * I don't think they were allowed much time, so I don't feel they got much time to tell us what was going on.

PDA Staff Updates

Overall: 6 5 6 4 1 3 2 1

Necessity: 6 5 4 4 2 3 2 1

Comments:

- * Good session.
- * Very important.
- * Very interesting & appropriate to personal situations in our county.
- * Doug & Wayne mentioned their wish list of ASA amendments, will PFPA see those possible changes? Could we review at some point? Brooke's comments are great – good addition to staff.
- * PFPA meeting may not be the best place for this, as only 29 of 57 counties are members.
- * Frustrating for me. I do not understand a lot of what we (County Boards/Programs) can & cannot do & why.

GIS Demonstration – Mike Anderson

Overall: 2 5 7 4 3 3 2 1

Necessity: 1 5 5 4 4 3 1 2 1

Comments:

- * Helpful to know/see.
- * Good information, but we have already setup a system which is working for us.
- * More technical than I would use, but is probably useful to others.
- * Nice.
- * I think he went into too much detail for what we would be using GIS for. He should have shown mapping more.

NRCS Update – Martha Joseph

Overall: 5 5 5 4 2 3 2 1

Necessity: 5 5 4 4 1 3 2 1

Comments:

- * Good speaker/presentation.
- * It is always good to hear about possible funding sources.
- * USDA should spend its \$ in NRCS and FSA offices, not duplicating state's efforts.
- * Concise & to the point.

PFPA Roundtable Discussion

Overall: 5 4 4 2 3 2 1

Necessity: 1 5 4 4 3 2 1

Comments:

- * This time is always good to hear issues which are affecting other county programs, and voice concerns which are affecting our county.
- * Ran out of time - maybe members should prepare questions in advance for this section. 1-2 questions would be enough though!
- * Need more time for this.

Accommodations at the Penn Stater Conference Center Hotel

Meeting Room: 9 5 4 4 3 2 1

Food and Breaks: 10 5 3 4 3 2 1

Hotel Accommodations: 2 5 4 3 2 1

Comments:

- * Great meeting room.
- * Easily accessible from the highway, and fine service.
- * Too crowded!
- * I always enjoy coming to the Penn Stater because it is very comfortable and wonderful for meetings.
- * Somewhere else, maybe, next time.

Future Workshop Sites and Dates

Fall 2007: Lehigh & Northampton Counties are co-hosting this meeting, details will follow

Spring 2008: Any volunteers to host this meeting?

- * Westmoreland County volunteered Erie County. ;)

Comments:

- * Staying close to the majority of member counties is preferable (good example: Gettysburg meeting place.)

Possible Topics for Future Workshops (Some are from WAY back, and may no longer be relevant...?)

Numbers listed are the averages from responses

- 1 Notifications - PDA looking into the possibility of appeal
- 3 Funding for the long term monitoring of easements
- 4 Access, transportation and utility right-of-way easements
- GIS Issues and Penn State. Need to make sure that Counties using their version for LESA understand exactly what the program is doing.
- 4 Conservation Easement Violations - what really is a violation? How to handle?

- * On this topic, I think we could spend some valuable time, because the issue of Conservation Plans needs to be discussed. We are 'bringing down the hammer' this year on plans - it's one thing to have a plan on file to meet the state requirement - implementation is a must. This topic really needs discussed.
- 2 Local Agricultural Promotion - what is our role??
- Environmental Assessment Audits (EPA - fuel spills, etc. what is our role?)
- 1 ACRE Update - by Attorney General's Office?
- 4 Second generation farm owners issues/stories/etc.
- 2 Tax Strategies an easements
- 3 Condemnation and eminent domain - When? Why?
 - * Happens all the time - so how good is an ASA?
- 3 Creating a solid baseline and inspection report
 - * Do we really have state guidelines on this? I am curious as to what other counties are doing.
- 3 How to deal with property rights issues (general trespassing on farms ie 4x4's, snowmobiles, educating neighbors that you shouldn't have a campfire beside a dry wheat field, etc.) What is our role?
- 3 IRS Ruling when doing Bargain Sales (working with Land Trusts, etc)
- 3 Farm Values - the future of easement prices
 - * This would tie in well with the appraisal topic.
- 2 ASA's when crossing county lines
- 3 Appraisals - when there is ag zoning. How is FMV really determined?
 - * This is good to bring to the table. After attending the PA Land Trust seminar on Appraisals at the April conference, it would be good - very good - to discuss the topic with some experts. The appraisals that the BFP require are actually not worth much.
- 4 ASA's the ongoing issue of correct recording, etc.

Other:

- * Are our standard state easements acceptable to the IRS if the landowner accepts a "Bargain Sale" as a charitable contribution?

General thoughts, comments, suggestions:

- * Thank you, and looking forward to seeing you in the future.
- * I always enjoy these meetings. They let me see what is going on across the state.
- * I think something that needs to be addressed and soon is the issue of Conservation Easement Violations. This has been an issue since day one and not ever really been addressed properly.
- * Inspections, another on-going issue. We have little-to-no supportive guidelines on what is the best way to conduct inspections. Guidance here would prove invaluable to off-set easement violations.
- * Time table needs to be adhered. When staff is ready to serve lunch for our group, then our group should be there; and as I fill this out, it is 3:30 and we are still on the 2:00 GIS topic. Maybe this should be a 2-day conference.