**Reports from George Banziger to Green Sanctuary Committee**

**For meeting of February 18, 2024**

**George Banziger**

ReImagine Appalachia – Upcoming events sponsored by ReImagine Appalachia:

-Information session on planning grants – February 29, 11-1 (I sent this to the Washington County Commissioners)

-March 5, noon-1 p.m.– Sustainable manufacturing

I attended a session on “flood policy network” on February 13. A study was reported that documented the major flood events from 2016-2022 in KY, OH, and WV. Survey results in this study showed that people in these flood zones see as most important to their response to flood events how to make federal funds easier to access and easier to understand when they are victims of flood events. The National Climate Assessment provides good information on the costs of the federal government responding to all these events (many of which are attributable to more intense storms due to climate change) relative to the costs of prevention by investing in addressing climate change.

Citizens Climate Lobby (I serve as the group leader for the Marietta chapter)– We are focusing on lobbying our U.S. Senators at least until June 2024 when a general election will take place to name a successor to Congressman Bill Johnson, in OH 06 District; Johnson accepted the presidency at Youngstown State U. in January, 2024. We will be discussing our greater collaboration with the Mahoning Valley Chapter (Youngstown area, also in OH 06). We shall also discuss pending climate legislation in the U.S. Senate.

Organization of Clean Energy & Climate (I serve on the advisory group of the OCEC non-profit)- I just submitted (on February 14) an application for a grant of $7,582 to the Marietta Community Foundation. This grant, if awarded, will support acquisition of agricultural supplies for the (already built) 5,000 sq ft greenhouse for the purpose of growing vegetables; it will also support acquisition of curricular materials for CTE (career/technical education) students in Washington County in the areas of computer skills, heat-exchange technology, and agricultural skills.

The heat-exchange technology is also being considered in connection with the planning for a major aquatic center in the area. This technology would be utilized to heat the water and buildings for the proposed aquatic center. The location of the aquatic center has not yet been determined; Dr. Tao, Executive Director of OCEC, is pressing for the OCEC site (just off Route 7 between Marietta & Belpre) to be the location. I also serve on the advisory group which is developing the plan for this aquatic center.

Dr. Tao is working on grant proposals for additional applications of the heat-exchange technology in the region and for support of renewable energy to power the data centers used to generate heat at the OCEC site. He is seeking these grants from the U.S. Department of Energy.

Devola Pollinator Project – I have acquired and placed in my own native plant garden 12 native plants from Native Roots, Inc I am in communication with Gary Conley of Rural Action in Athens, who is arranging a sufficient quantity of native plant seeds to distribute to others in Devola who are interested in establishing a pollinator corridor and converting a portion of their yards, which have been disturbed by the insertion of new sewer device, to native plants. Once obtaining those seeds from Rural Action at my own cost, I’ll distribute them on a first-come-first served basis to those committed to planting these seeds.

Save Ohio Parks – Although oil & gas companies are planning their movement into public lands in Ohio, Save Ohio Parks is still active in mobilizing against bids made by these companies to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. The group is pursuing from the Ohio Secretary of State 501 ( c ) (3) status for educational and organizational purposes and 501 ( c ) (4) for lobbying purposes. I have helped them in the former effort. I was asked to serve on their steering committee but declined.

Injection Wells – There is no update at this date on the legal case that Bob Lane and his oil & gas producer colleague are pursuing. I was contacted by Wanda Sheard who is the Democratic candidate for state representative in our district. I advised her that once she embarks on her campaign for the general election, she might be able to garner support across the political spectrum in Washington County to actively oppose injection wells. Her likely (depending on the result of the primary election next month) Republican opponent is Kevin Ritter, who seems unwilling to press disposal companies and ODNR on this issue.