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

**For Meeting of May 19, 2024**

**George Banziger**

ReImagine Appalachia. Some upcoming events (register on their web site)

-May 27, 11 a.m. -1 p.m. Appalachian Sustainable Finance Hub (facilitating resources & connections for economic development)

-May 30 REAP Funding, Rural Energy for America Program (funding for farmers and small businesses in rural areas to promote energy efficiency)

Citizens Climate Lobby (I serve as the group leader for the Marietta chapter)

We have continued our enhanced collaboration with the Mahoning Valley CCL chapter (also in OH 06). Since Bill Johnson has left his seat in the House (January 2024) to assume the presidency of YSU, we have been focusing on our two US senators. CCL-Ohio is still looking for someone to serve as liaison with Senator Sherrod Brown’s office.

No response yet from Senator Vance’s office on my idea to arrange an “Appalachian Forum” to discuss energy end environmental issues with a staff member from his office. I’ll resend the request.

CCL-National encourages us to focus on lobbying sitting members of Congress and not to engage in partisan support for particular candidates running for office in our CCL capacity, nor should we protest issues like fracking in our capacity as CCL members. I told John Sabin, our temporary state coordinator of CCL, that we in eastern Ohio are very concerned about issues like fracking and injection wells and will support candidates with similar views to ours and will publicly protest issues like fracking under public lands while not identifying our membership in CCL. These activities may detract from the time we can devote to CCL actions. An example of this issue is the active support of many of us in CCL 06 for the Democratic candidate for Congress in this district in anticipation of the June 11 special election.

Organization of Clean Energy & Climate (I serve on the advisory group of the OCEC non-profit)

We received official notice last week that OCEC has been awarded a grant of $7,582 from the Marietta Community Foundation. This grant will support the acquisition of supplies for the greenhouse at the Gravel Bank Road site (between Marietta & Belpre) and costs of curriculum development in applied computer technology (relevant to heat-capture practices) and agriculture (relevant to growing vegetables in the greenhouse).

Dr. Tao, Executive Director of OCEC, and I are identifying and pursuing other grant options, particularly from the U.S. Department of Energy.

He has also made arrangements with the Washington County Commissioners to provide heating (from data centers) for the county jail.

Devola Pollinator Project

On April 18 I delivered seeds, planting instructions, and a species list to the first family to request the seeds. I look forward to delivering the sowing materials to the remaining families who have already expressed interest and more families as word of mouth spreads the message about the project. Last week I posted on Next Door Devola another reminder about the availability of seeds for native plants from me while also reminding people in the area about the FUUSM plant sale and the June 1 event at Marietta Farmers’ Market where native lants will be available for purchase.

Injection Wells

I have no news about the legal case Bob Lane has taken against injection well companies. My offering for the Climate Corner of the June 1 edition of the Parkersburg News & Sentinel is about fracking.

GSC members may have read about our newly appointed (by the governor) state senator, Brian Chavez, who is the Chief Executive Officer at Deeprock Disposal. There was a major leak at one of his company’s injection wells, which ODNR cleaned up. He has yet to reimburse the state for the costs of that clean up. I sent a letter to Governor DeWine about this matter, pointing out that Chavez was a poor choice to represent the 30th Ohio senate district because of his interest in injection wells, which are opposed by a broad cross section of citizens in Washington County.

Save Ohio Parks

SOP is urging those concerned about fracking under public lands to send comments to the Oil & Gas Land Management Commission about the latest “nominations” for fracking at Egypt Valley Wildlife Area and Keen Wildlife Area. These two “nominations” will be discussed by the OGLMC on May 20 in Columbus. SOP is organizing a protest of this anticipated approval at the Ohio Department of Public Safety, 1970 W Broad St. Columbus, gathering at 12:30 p.m.

Anne Sparks who is on the SOP Sterring Committee may offer more details on SOP.