

# Raritan Basin Watershed Management Project

## 1999 Work Group, Executive Committee and Characterization & Assessment Committee Meetings: Stakeholder Evaluations and Project Team Responses



Each Work Group, Executive Committee (except) and Characterization & Assessment Committee (except one) meeting in 1999 concluded with a meeting evaluation by attendees. The meeting evaluations had some consistent questions and some questions oriented to the specific agenda items. In addition, open-ended questions were part of each meeting evaluation to allow attendees to provide any thoughts they felt appropriate.

Rutgers Center for Environmental Communication both developed the meeting evaluation forms and summarized the responses. They also tabulated the answers to each question. The Project Team then reviewed the RCEC evaluation summary to determine whether changes were needed to improve Committee meetings.

The Project Team believes that the stakeholder evaluations provide a valuable resource for the project, and therefore decided to provide the summaries to the public through the Project Web Site at [www.raritanbasin.org](http://www.raritanbasin.org). To provide full information, the evaluation summaries have been annotated (in bold, blue text) as appropriate to identify Project Team responses. We have not annotated any positive comments, feeling that they speak for themselves. Minutes of each meeting are available on the Project Web site as well, and so this document does not include information on meeting content.

1999 meetings covered in this report are identified below by hyperlinks to each meeting evaluation:

<a href="#">March 26</a>	Work Group
<a href="#">April 20</a>	Work Group
<a href="#">May 17</a>	Characterization & Assessment
<a href="#">June 30</a>	Characterization & Assessment
<a href="#">August 11</a>	Characterization & Assessment
<a href="#">September 15</a>	Executive Committee
October 13	Characterization & Assessment (no evaluation performed for this meeting)
October 20	Executive Committee (no evaluation performed for this meeting)
<a href="#">October 27</a>	Work Group
<a href="#">November 30</a>	Watershed Rapid Improvement (Action Now) Projects
<a href="#">December 1</a>	Executive Committee

The meeting evaluations are listed in this document by committee, starting with the Work Group and continuing through Executive Committee, Characterization Committee and Watershed Rapid Improvement Projects. To assist those who have not been involved in the process, the different committees are described below:

- **Work Group** – A “plenary” body of all people who have expressed any interested in the project and who are on the mailing list. There were approximately 120 people on the mailing list at the end of 1999. The Work Group meetings focus on overall project development and progress review. The Work Group was more active when the project was being set up.
- **Executive Committee** – One representative from each of the Project Team organizations (Natural Resources Conservation Service, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection-Raritan Bureau, New Jersey Water Supply Authority, North Jersey Resource Conservation & Development Council, Rutgers Center for Environmental Communications, South Branch Watershed Association,

Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association, United States Geological Survey, Upper Raritan Watershed Association) and one representative from each of several interest areas – agriculture, builders, county/local government, wastewater treatment utility, and water supply purveyor. This committee focuses primarily on ensuring that the project is running smoothly, meeting stakeholder needs, and building properly toward Phase 2 for actual management plan development.

- **Characterization Committee** – Any interested members of the Work Group. This committee helps develop the methods, approach and scope of technical and public reports developed by the Project Team (the “Characterization and Assessment Reports”), and then reviews and critiques draft products as they are developed. By its nature, the Characterization Committee tends to be oriented to fairly technical issues. Meetings usually have between 30 and 40 participants.
- **Watershed Rapid Improvement Projects** – Not actually a committee, but rather a workshop to help Basin interests develop projects to improve sub-watersheds of the Basin, for potential funding by the NJDEP and others. One meeting was held in 1999, and a second in February 2000.

The Project Team has been very pleased with the very constructive nature of criticism received. Issues have ranged from “meeting room comfort” to detailed project issues. The Project Team wishes to thank the meeting participants very much for their input and their efforts to improve the project. Based on their comments, the most important 1999 changes to Work Group, Executive Committee and Characterization Committee meetings were:

- Adding the extensive use of Issues Papers, distributed prior to the meetings, to guide discussions of the Characterization & Assessment Committee;
- Efforts between meetings to involve people from under-represented interests;
- Focused agendas and decision points to make meetings efficient;
- Trying to separate the roles of presenter and facilitator to make meetings more productive and get more people involved in the discussions;
- Emphasizing the role of graphics and presentations to help people understand the issues;
- Limiting the number of issues addressed at any one meeting to allow more conversation on each agenda item.

Memo



**To:** Raritan Watershed Project Team  
**From:** Ginger Gibson and BJ Hance, Research Associates, CEC, Rutgers University  
**Date:** 3/28/99  
**Re:** Evaluations of March 26, 1999 **Work Group** Meeting

Here are the results of the evaluations of the March 26, 1999 meeting. We received 30 responses.

**A. Close-ended questions.** The results of the first four close-ended questions were as follows (scale = strongly agree, neutral, strongly disagree). As you can see, a majority of those who filled out evaluations felt the meeting was well organized and productive and gave them a clearer understanding of the Raritan watershed effort. On the other hand, only 1/3 of those who filled out evaluations felt they had a clearer understanding of their own roles in the process than they had before the meeting; the majority of these responses were neutral with one strong disagreement. This is understandable, given the informational nature of the meeting. Additionally, we had some feedback that the scale was too limiting; therefore, we will expand the next evaluation to include agree and disagree (in addition to strongly agree and strongly disagree).

1. I felt this meeting was well organized.  
28 strongly agree, 1 neutral
2. I felt this meeting was productive.  
25 strongly agree, 4 neutral
3. I have a clearer understanding of the Raritan Watershed Management effort than I did before the meeting.  
21 strongly agree, 5 neutral, 1 disagree (because knew a lot already).
4. I have a clearer idea of my role in the process than I did before the meeting.  
9 strongly agree, 17 neutral, 1 strongly disagree.

**B. Open-ended questions.** The evaluation asked attendees to respond to three open-ended questions. A laundry list of comments was provided, which cover a range of topics, including meeting process, outreach, project progress, etc. Although the comments from the last three questions overlap, we have listed them separately, as they appeared on the evaluations, but grouped them into common categories. As you can see, there were many comments in all categories about meeting process and preparation, stakeholder outreach and representation, facilitation, use of jargon, etc.

**Project Team Responses:** This meeting was the first Work Group meeting following project funding, and before hiring of NJWSA staff. The open-ended questions in this evaluation were oriented more to project ideas than to meeting evaluation, although both kinds of input were received. Many of the project suggestions were incorporated into later meetings; others should be addressed in the remaining months of Phase 1 or the initial year of Phase 2.

Based on ideas received, the Project Team has emphasized the use of visual outputs (maps, PowerPoint presentations), getting product out ASAP rather than waiting until all results are in, broadening stakeholder involvement, assessing stakeholder needs from and concerns about the process, explanation of technical jargon and avoidance of it where possible, having agendas and important information (e.g., issues papers) go out ahead of meetings, etc. An upcoming emphasis will be on stakeholder training. The Project Team has made use of in-house facilitation rather than bringing in outside people to this point, in part because Phase 1 heavily emphasizes technical, rather than policy, issues. However, "third party" facilitation is being strongly considered for parts of Phase 2.

5. What information would you like to see covered in future meetings?

Meeting process

- educational forums;
- brainstorm ideas;
- minutes from previous meeting sent out to stakeholders or Emailed
- project organization and coordination in the next few meetings
- set up a preliminary group to identify chairpersons
- visions and goals; make sure that we know who everyone is.
- structure recommendations (committees and work groups);

Background information

- get a listing of everyone's programs
- List of projects in process
- breakdown of existing working stakeholder groups (general description, specific identification if possible)
- models – brief overview of successful management plans already identified by Cook or specific outreach and evaluation programs (models and templates of successful survey and evaluation tools)

Data

- results, results, results as they come in
- more mapping (visual effects)
- Summaries of findings and progress as program develops.
- water quality monitoring data
- impact of agriculture on watershed
- link water quality to water supply – real data.
- Open space and forest relationship

Outreach

- Explain why do we need to do this! Generate public enthusiasm for this effort. Spread the word.
- input from other groups not represented here today – what are concerns of builders, and trusts, etc.
- we are missing the representatives of some of our key stakeholders
- organizations and contacts that will be involved in the future
- think forward – linking partners to actions
- more about what people expect to get out of this process and what they can expect

Project progress

- status of each task
- how will the information presented be integrated into a plan – priorities for the area, goal setting, etc.
- resources assessment and needs

6. Do you have any suggestions for making upcoming meetings more effective?

Training

- more internal office corps training about the basin – geology, topography, hydrography, climate, rainfall, development patterns, etc.
- visuals - maps, possibly GIS

Jargon

- stress to presenters and members of the group to stay away from the alphabet soup of acronyms, or at least make sure the group knows what they mean.

- a lot of acronyms for technical jargon and various associations
- a glossary of terms (for people who are not all that familiar (i.e., TMDL, conservative constituents, etc.)
- Jargon listing – we used abbreviations and slang during presentations. Do a parking lot for slang – or put on program meeting / evaluation.
- Repetitious – see above

#### Scheduling

- schedule in advance - set monthly schedule now.
- more on solving the problems

#### Facilitation

- possible facilitation based upon the complexity of issues
- facilitation

#### Process

- make the content visual and substantive
- future meetings should/could and will be more participatory
- ask everyone to give an answer/idea regarding a topic (people can pass if they don't have an idea) this will get ideas from everyone.
- make them task oriented assignments etc. to report on so people feel they are 'doing' not just 'meeting'.

#### Meeting preparation

- distribute agenda in advance
- distribute important information in advance in order to prepare for discussion
- identify homework and agenda items
- provide a flow chart of stakeholders – need to identify major aspects and groups and start to form subgroups

#### 7. Additional comments?

##### Facilitation

- Facilitator: it would be more beneficial I believe to keep this function in house at present (prospective history etc.). This could be revisited after 3 months or so?
- I don't think an outside facilitator is needed until the objectives of the meetings aren't being accomplished.
- Facilitation okay per meeting of 3/26/99

##### Evaluation

- BJ – can you truly assume that your role will not be adversarial?

##### Outreach

- More outreach needed to county and municipal government (especially with elected officials)
- I would like to see the geographic distribution of stakeholder representation. I believe that this will be a vivid indication of whether or not we are reaching areas that are always reached.

##### General

- This is an 18 month project – we have to move quickly to get things done. Do not overemphasize public participation.
- Good luck on extremely important effort to protect the states water quality.
- Many thanks!
- Keep going forward
- Great food.
- Great food.

Memo

**To:** Raritan Watershed Project Team

**From:** Ginger Gibson and BJ Hance, Research Associates, CEC, Rutgers University

**Date:** 4/27/99

**Re:** Evaluations of April 20, 1999 **Work Group Meeting**

Here is a summary of the results of the April 20, 1999 meeting. We received 28 responses.

**A. Close-ended questions.** As can be seen below, the majority of those who completed the evaluations felt that the meeting was well organized and productive. The majority also felt that their ideas were important to the meeting and that the information presented on GIS was useful. Since breakout groups were not used in this meeting, many respondents did not evaluate question 5. However, of those that replied, many felt they had a better understanding of the purpose of the Watershed Management Group. There was a mixed response to question 6. More than half of the respondents felt that they left the meeting with a better understanding of their role in the watershed management process, 8 respondents were neutral, and only 4 respondents disagreed.

**B. Open-ended questions.** There were several suggestions about the format of the meeting including reducing its length and starting earlier. Suggestions for future breakout groups included limiting the groups to 8-10 people, and having a spokesperson for each group. Other suggestions included providing a list of previous attendees, adding a youth group, listing the sources of GIS, and including the Leagues of Municipalities and Women Voters on executive communities.

**Project Team Responses:** Regarding the close-ended questions, the Project Team especially noted that a number of people did not feel that they ended the meeting knowing more about their role in the process than before the meeting. At this time, the evaluations did not ask for specific explanations of negative comments – later meeting evaluations added such questions. Therefore, we had no way to know whether or not the answers indicated a problem. Some respondents already may have had a satisfactory idea of their roles but were forced to answer negatively because of the question's phrasing. Others may have been truly dissatisfied with the meeting. Open-ended responses included another plea for more diverse interests (a continuing issue through the process, and one that the Project Team tries to address regularly), and meeting improvements. In future meetings, attention was paid to ending on time (addressing concerns of meeting length), to providing water and healthier snacks. Start times remained at 9:30AM due to travel schedules.

**Raritan Basin Watershed Meeting  
Work Group Meeting  
April 20, 1999**

Thank you for taking the time to provide feedback on this meeting. Your comments will help improve future meetings. All responses are anonymous -- only summarized results will be reported.

1. I felt this meeting was well organized. (Circle one)  
Strongly agree (14)      Agree (14)      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly disagree
  
2. I felt this meeting was productive. (Circle one)  
Strongly agree (15)      Agree (11)      Neutral (2)      Disagree      Strongly disagree

3. I felt my ideas were important to this meeting. (Circle one)
- |                |       |         |          |                   |     |
|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|-----|
| Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly disagree | N/A |
| (6)            | (15)  | (6)     |          |                   | (1) |
4. The information presented on GIS was useful to me. (Circle one)
- |                |       |         |          |                   |
|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| (5)            | (13)  | (10)    |          |                   |
5. The break out groups were beneficial to understanding the purpose of the Watershed Management Group. (Circle one)
- |                |       |         |          |                   |     |
|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|-----|
| Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly disagree | N/A |
| (5)            | (10)  | (4)     |          | (1)               | (8) |
6. I have a better understanding of my role in the watershed management process than I did before the meeting. (Circle one)
- |                |       |         |          |                   |     |
|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|-----|
| Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly disagree | N/A |
| (4)            | (12)  | (8)     | (2)      |                   | (8) |
7. Do you have any suggestions for making upcoming meetings more effective?
- This meeting was run very effectively
  - Should not be more than 2-2.5 hours
  - Start earlier, perhaps 9:00 am
  - Provide a list of previous attendees & their organizational affiliation
  - Go over the how, what, why we're here
  - This meeting was good
  - Add youth group
  - Try not to piss off partners
8. Do you have any suggestions for making break out groups more effective?
- Could have gotten more interaction in 8-10 person groups, but this worked OK -- DJVA
  - If/when there is a breakout group, each group should have a spokesperson
  - Worked well. Ginger is a good facilitator. Good teamwork with BJ to keep things moving
9. Additional comments?
- Glad to be included
  - Should list sources of GIS & layers if available
  - Meetings don't need to be so long
  - Provide water, not just soda & coffee
  - Is it possible to get less sugary snacks?
  - Include league of municipalities and women voters on executive communities

Memo

**To:** Raritan Watershed Project Team  
**From:** Chris Krupka and Erin Beare, CEC, Rutgers University  
**Date:** November 1, 1999  
**Re:** Evaluations of October 27, 1999 **Work Group** Meeting

The following is a summary of the evaluation results of the October 27, 1999 Work Group meeting. 23 people attended the meeting and we received 21 responses.

- A. **Closed-ended questions.** As shown below, the majority of those who completed the evaluations felt that the meeting was well organized and productive. The majority felt the pace of the meeting was just right; however, four people felt that the meeting moved too slow. Most respondents also felt that their ideas were important to the meeting and that the information presented at the meeting was useful to them. A majority of respondents want to be involved in Phase II of the project (Education/Outreach), although five people did not answer this question.
- B. **Open-ended questions.** There was an array of answers to how people want to be involved in the Phase II, including drafting municipal ordinances, working with local watershed organizations, and general public outreach and education. Some ideas for "Action Now" Projects were streambank restoration/stabilization, buying land for preservation, low-flow monitoring, and stream walks. Several people suggested "staying on track" to make upcoming meetings more effective. Some also expressed concern at the lack of attendance at this meeting.

**Project Team Responses:** This was the first Work Group meeting since the spring. It was intended to be an update for those who had not been attending the Characterization Committee meetings or otherwise staying up-to-date with the project. However, most attendees had been regular participants in the meetings of May through September, and attendance was lower than for most Characterization Committee meetings. One negative comment made this point – the meeting covered old information and was not valuable. Frustration was also voiced with keeping track of the many different parts of the watershed process. Finally, the difficulty of having the meeting chair also make presentations and facilitate was raised again. The Project Team and Executive Committee discussed these issues at a later meeting and decided that Work Group meetings should not be held for updates, but only when substantive issues need discussion and deciding. Also, the need for a Web site that includes a lot of background information was emphasized, so that "update presentations" would not be needed. (The Web site was opened in January of 2000.) Finally, when a presentation is being made, the presenter should not be facilitator as well.

**Raritan Basin Watershed  
Work Group Meeting  
October 27, 1999**

Thank you for taking the time to provide feedback on this meeting. Your comments will help improve future meetings. *All responses are anonymous* -- only summarized results will be reported.

**1. I felt this meeting was well organized.**

Strongly agree (5)	Agree (16)	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
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**2. The pace of the meeting was:**

Too fast

Just right  
(17)

Too slow  
(4)

**3. I felt this meeting was productive.**

Strongly agree  
(2)

Agree  
(13)

Neutral  
(5)

Disagree  
(1)

Strongly disagree

**4. I felt my ideas were important to this meeting.**

Strongly agree  
(12)

Agree  
(7)

Neutral  
(2)

Disagree

Strongly disagree

**5. The information presented at this meeting was useful to me.**

Strongly agree  
(4)

Agree  
(11)

Neutral  
(5)

Disagree  
(1)

Strongly disagree

**5a. If you chose “Disagree” or “Strongly Disagree” for #6, please explain why you feel that the information presented at this meeting was not useful to you.**

- I did not say too much at this meeting. I've been to all the other meetings, read email, etc.; this was a repeat of the other meetings. I felt this meeting wasn't really necessary.

**6. Which agenda items were most useful to you? Why?**

- The "Schedule for Remainder of Phase I" item was most useful. The proliferation of ideas and information often obscure the actual progress and path of the project.
- The Characterization and Assessment report.
- The schedule for the project.
- All.
- Phase II for management plan development.
- Recap on methodologies discussion.
- Overview of phases, including status report.
- Schedule and summary, just hearing what people are thinking.
- Timeline.

**7. Do you want to be involved in Phase II (Education/Outreach) of the Raritan Watershed Project?**

Yes  
(16)

No

**7a. If yes, how would you like to be involved? (E.g., drafting municipal ordinances, being involved in public outreach, working with local watershed organizations)**

- Public outreach and education issues—assisting in educating the public.

- All of the above—especially municipal ordinances—have some information from a course I took, also from a "Follow the Flow" workshop for public education.
- Any of the above.
- Municipal ordinances, public outreach.
- Working with local watershed organizations.
- Implementation through GIS analysis, watershed based zoning, Riparian Preservation, land conservation focused on water quality and quantity.
- Municipal ordinances, working with local watershed organizations.
- Seminars to educate.
- Public outreach through watershed organization.

#### **8. Do you have any ideas for "Action Now" Projects?**

- Yes, many.
- Streambank stabilization/restoration.
- Conservation easements.
- Re-writing ordinances for stream buffers, open space preservation.
- Buildout analysis—particularly in areas with actual resources—measure what is left at current rate of development.
- Low-flow monitoring to show effect of development on flow.
- Open space conservation projects.
- Stream walks to identify potential pollution impacts.
- Promotion of model ordinances.
- Environmental education mailings (general) to households.
- Buy land (forest)—has been shown that no matter where in a basin forest land exists, it has a positive impact on water quality.

#### **9. Do you have any suggestions for making upcoming meetings more effective?**

- Keep the pace you had in this meeting.
- Provide handouts, let partners do updates, ask for feedback during talk not after.
- "Gong" people who stray too far off the conversation.
- Key points that people make relative to agenda, too many tangents.
- We need to evaluate the "full work group" vs. "Characterization & Assessment group." For a full work group we need a change in the meeting format. Needs more structure as we went far from the schedule. It was obvious here of the need for education and the frustration that may occur in the future if we don't plan for the management phase.

#### **10. Additional comments?**

- Often it was not clear how the discussion related to the agenda.
- Stay on track.
- The development of a watershed management plan is now like trying to grab a bucket of eels without the bucket.
- Very poor attendance—need to find out why. Probably was ok to have a status meeting but it didn't really work, avoid in the future, have discussion oriented meetings only.
- Appears to be resistance, at times, to suggest revision to proposed schedules by author and facilitator, Dan Van Abs. Should these roles remain connected? Otherwise, well-organized and managed meeting.

MEMO

**To:** Raritan Project Team  
**From:** Chris Krupka, Ginger Gibson and Erin Beare  
Center for Environmental Communication, Rutgers University  
**Date:** 9/27/99  
**Re:** Evaluations of September 15, 1999 **Executive Committee** Meeting

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The following is a summary of the results of the September 15, 1999 Executive Committee meeting. We received 10 responses.

- A. **Closed-ended questions.** As shown below, the majority of those who completed the evaluations felt that the meeting was well organized and productive and that the pace of the meeting was "about right." A majority agreed that their ideas were important to the meeting and felt that they understood the purpose of the Executive Committee. Although a majority felt that the information was useful to them, some members of the committee were still unsure of their role in watershed management after this meeting.
- B. **Open-ended questions.** One participant suggested a Raritan fish ladder as an idea for an Action Now project; however, another Executive Committee member felt that that this question was a little premature at this time. Some ideas for making Executive Committee meetings more effective are: focus on decision making, make meetings focused and short, and hand out materials that the Project Team receives to the rest of the committee.

**Project Team Responses:** This meeting was the first for the Executive Committee. Key responses were on improving the focus of the meetings, so that the members could make efficient use of their time. The Project Team worked with the Executive Committee over time to focus their role, which is to help guide the structure of the project, but not to have decision-making authority over the substantive results (e.g., what methodology to use for a Characterization & Assessment Report).

**Raritan Basin Watershed  
Executive Committee Meeting  
September 15, 1999**

*Thank you for taking the time to provide feedback on this meeting. Your comments will help improve future meetings. All responses are anonymous -- only summarized results will be reported.*

1. I felt this meeting was well organized. (Circle one)

Strongly agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (1)	Disagree	Strongly disagree
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2. I felt this meeting was productive. (Circle one)

Strongly agree (3)	Agree (7)	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
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7. I felt my ideas were important to this meeting. (Circle one)

Strongly agree (2)	Agree (6)	Neutral (2)	Disagree	Strongly disagree
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8. I understand the purpose of the Executive Committee. (Circle one)

Strongly agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (1)	Disagree	Strongly disagree
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9. The information presented was useful to me. (Circle one)

Strongly agree (3)	Agree (6)	Neutral (1)	Disagree	Strongly disagree
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10. I have a better understanding of my role in the watershed management process than I did before this meeting. (Circle one)

Strongly agree (2)	Agree (4)	Neutral (2)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree
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11. The pace of the meeting was about right—neither too fast or too slow. (Circle one)

Strongly agree (3)	Agree (7)	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
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**8. Do you have any suggestions for Action Now projects?**

- Raritan fish ladder.

**9. Do you have any suggestions for how to make Executive Committee meetings most effective?**

- Focus on decision-making.
- Focused and short.
- Please hand out stuff to rest of board that the Project Team gets.

**10. Additional comments?**

(None.)

October 13, 1999

Memo

**To:** Raritan Watershed Project Team  
**From:** Ginger Gibson and Erin Beare, CEC, Rutgers University  
**Date:** December 2, 1999  
**Re:** Evaluations of December 1, 1999 **Executive Committee Meeting**

The following is a summary of the evaluation results of the December 1, 1999 Executive Committee meeting. 11 people attended the meeting and we received 10 responses.

- A. **Closed-ended questions.** As shown below, the majority of those who completed the evaluations felt that the meeting was well organized and productive. Everyone felt the pace of the meeting was just right. A majority also agreed that their ideas were important to the meeting, although one individual strongly disagreed that their ideas were key. Most respondents felt that the information presented at the meeting was useful to them, and that the results of the Stage 2 Needs and Resources Assessment will be useful to them.
- B. **Open-ended questions.** Respondents said the Stage 2 Needs and Resources Assessment will be useful for: education and outreach, client understanding, NJDEP related watershed management, seeing if we are on track, keeping current on mood of groups anticipating changes, and demonstrating progress and project direction.

**Project Team Responses:** As noted in prior meeting evaluations, negative responses (such as the one regarding whether their ideas were important to the meeting) aren't always explained. Experience indicates that they are rarely explained, in fact. Therefore, the Project Team decided to add specific questions to elicit more information regarding negative responses. Otherwise, the responses to this meeting were mostly positive.

**Raritan Basin Watershed  
Executive Committee Meeting  
December 1, 1999**

Thank you for taking the time to provide feedback on this meeting. Your comments will help improve future meetings. *All responses are anonymous* -- only summarized results will be reported.

**1. I felt this meeting was well organized.**

Strongly agree (4)	Agree (6)	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
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**2. The pace of the meeting was:**

Too fast	Just right (10)	Too slow
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**3. I felt this meeting was productive.**

Strongly agree (1)	Agree (7)	Neutral (1)	Disagree	Strongly disagree
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**4. I felt my ideas were important to this meeting.**

Strongly agree (7)	Agree (2)	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree (1)
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**5. The information presented at this meeting was useful to me.**

Strongly agree (2)	Agree (8)	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
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**6. The results of the needs and resources assessment will be useful to me.**

YES (8)	NO (0)	NO ANSWER (2)
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**6a. If yes, how will you be able to use the results?**

- client understanding
- useful for NJDEP related watershed management
- to see if we are on track
- keeping current on mood of groups
- education and outreach development
- demonstrate progress and project direction
- anticipate changes

**7. Additional comments?**

## Memo

**To:** Raritan Watershed Project Team

**From:** Ginger Gibson and BJ Hance, Research Associates, CEC, Rutgers University

**Date:** 5/21/99

**Re:** Evaluations of May 17, 1999 **Characterization Committee** Meeting

Here is a summary of the results of the May 17, 1999 meeting. We received 22 responses.

**A. Things to note.** This group of evaluations contains more equivocal responses than in the past. This is not surprising given that this meeting dealt with more difficult issues than previous larger informational and get-acquainted meetings — we're now getting down to the work. In particular, the following three items may bear some attention in future meetings: 1) whether people feel their ideas are important to meetings, 2) whether technical issues covered are relevant to those in attendance and are presented in relevant ways, and 3) how meetings reinforce people's sense of their own role in the Raritan process. In addition, there were a number of comments about decision making that suggest that more attention needs to be paid to that process. Our sense is that these evaluations reinforce earlier decisions by the group that large group meetings should only be held when there is a clearly articulated purpose or an issue that cannot be dealt with in a smaller group.

**B. Close-ended questions.** As can be seen below, the majority of those who completed the evaluations felt that the meeting was well organized and productive. The majority of participants also felt that the information presented on report formats was useful to them. There was a mixed response to question three. Fifty percent felt that their ideas were important to this meeting. The other fifty percent were either neutral or did not answer the question. There was also a varied response to question five. Eleven participants, forty-five percent, felt that the discussion of available data and GIS outputs was beneficial to understanding the purpose of the Watershed Management Group. Seven were neutral, one disagreed and four did not respond. In response to question number five, ten participants, forty-five percent, felt that they had a better understanding of their role in the watershed management process than they did before the meeting. Ten were neutral, one disagreed, and one did not respond.

**C. Open-ended questions.** There were several suggestions that addressed the diversity of attendees as well as a way of reaching attendees outside the meeting format. Other suggestions addressed facilitating decision-making as a priority, exploring comments more fully, and amending the content and timing of the information being disseminated. Additional comments included thanks and an inquiry as to what would be done with feedback.

**Project Team Responses:** This meeting was the first Characterization & Assessment Committee meeting. The more technical nature of the meeting (focused on data, technical methods, etc.) brought out an issue that has existed throughout the remaining meetings – there are those who are comfortable with technical issues and those who are not. Among the technical specialists, each will have more or less interest in any one topic. Therefore, each Characterization Committee meeting addressed issues that were too technical for some, and not of great interest to others. As a result, some people obviously felt “closed out” of the discussion, and were concerned about the lack of opportunities for “interested technophobes” to be involved. Receiving information at this meeting (rather than before) only exacerbated the problem. The Project Team decided to address this issue by sending out detailed “Issues Papers” ahead of each meeting, and then letting each stakeholder decide whether they wanted to attend. Generally, 25-35 people attended each meeting, but not always the same people. The attendance issue again received attention, common to every major meeting.

**Raritan Basin Watershed  
Characterization Committee Meeting  
May 17, 1999**

Thank you for taking the time to provide feedback on this meeting. Your comments will help improve future meetings. All responses are anonymous -- only summarized results will be reported.

- |    |   |                       |               |                 |                 |                   |            |
|----|---|-----------------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|------------|
| 1. | I felt this meeting was well organized.   | Strongly agree<br>(8) | Agree<br>(13) | Neutral<br>(1)  | Disagree        | Strongly disagree |            |
| 2. | I felt this meeting was productive.   | Strongly agree<br>(3) | Agree<br>(11) | Neutral<br>(7)  | Disagree<br>(1) | Strongly disagree |            |
| 3. | I felt my ideas were important to this meeting.   | Strongly agree<br>(2) | Agree<br>(9)  | Neutral<br>(8)  | Disagree        | Strongly disagree | N/A<br>(3) |
| 4. | The information presented on report formats was useful to me.   | Strongly agree<br>(5) | Agree<br>(11) | Neutral<br>(5)  | Disagree<br>(1) | Strongly disagree |            |
| 5. | The discussion of available data and GIS outputs was beneficial to understanding the purpose of the Watershed Management Group.   | Strongly agree<br>(2) | Agree<br>(8)  | Neutral<br>(7)  | Disagree<br>(1) | Strongly disagree | N/A<br>(4) |
| 6. | I have a better understanding of my role in the watershed management process than I did before the meeting.   | Strongly agree<br>(1) | Agree<br>(9)  | Neutral<br>(10) | Disagree<br>(1) | Strongly disagree | N/A<br>(1) |
| 7. | Do you have any suggestions for making upcoming meetings more effective?  |                       |               |                 |                 |                   |            |
|    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expanded attendance is an issue that needs to be addressed.</li> <li>• Contact no shows and find out why.</li> <li>• For large group meetings that require a decision, reduce available options presented.</li> <li>• Have people with concerns verbally share them as thoroughly as possible.</li> <li>• Needed more time to look at and assess.</li> <li>• The meetings are required but decisions just have to be made. Cannot just keep getting input.</li> <li>• Possibly more "voice" or "input" from all individuals or represented groups at the meeting.</li> <li>• Need more stakeholders.</li> <li>• Too much on the agenda!</li> </ul> |                       |               |                 |                 |                   |            |
| 8. | Do you have suggestions about data from the Raritan characterization and assessment?  |                       |               |                 |                 |                   |            |
|    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historic data/characterization needs development.</li> <li>• Volunteer monitoring data or mention ongoing efforts.</li> </ul>  |                       |               |                 |                 |                   |            |

- Need to work on more to define process/content better.

9. Additional comments?

- Thank you.
- I'm not sure that all comments were explored.
- What will happen to formats explored today? Revisions for today, comments?
- I was a little concerned that the group (USGS) who is preparing the characterization and assessment never spoke at the characterization and assessment meeting.
- In terms of dissemination of the findings of the WC&A, I would like to see less emphasis on the use of current technology [Ed. note – Web sites and e-mail] as the primary candidate of information (detailed or not). No matter how "affordable" it has become, it is still elitist. Both monetarily and attitude-wise (there are an awful lot of interested technophobes).
- Please provide a list of names and numbers for the people who have attended meetings regularly. This way we can contact each other outside the meeting format.
- Data/info earlier so we have time to review/digest and provide informed feedback.

Memo

**To:** Raritan Watershed Project Team

**From:** Ginger Gibson, Chris Krupka, and Erin Beare, Research Associates, CEC, Rutgers University

**Date:** 7/6/99

**Re:** Evaluations of June 30, 1999 **Characterization Committee** Meeting

The following is a summary of the results of the June 30, 1999 meeting. From a total of 26 meeting participants, we received 26 completed evaluations.

- A. Close-ended questions.** As the results below indicate, the majority of those who completed the evaluations felt that the meeting was well organized and productive. A majority felt neutral about their ideas being important to the meeting. The majority also felt that the discussion of Riparian Corridor Assessment Methods and Critical Habitat Assessment Methods was useful to them. The majority also felt comfortable with their level of participation in the Raritan Workgroup.
- B. Open-ended questions.** There were some suggestions about explaining definitions and abbreviations better. There were also suggestions about changing the place of the meeting. Also, there was a general concern about why some people were not attending the meetings.
- C. Things to note.** Many people felt neutral that their ideas were important to the meeting. This may be something that can be checked on more with in-person follow-up discussions.

**Project Team Responses: The use of technical jargon and abbreviations continued to be a concern for attendees. Overall, this meeting received better reviews than the May 17 meeting, perhaps because it focused on two environmental topics, rather than a complicated list of data issues (allowing a better flow of conversation). Continued feedback on technical definitions, etc., led the Project Team to put more effort into Issues Papers that provided both detail on the technical issues and some background information for less technical attendees. The issue of meeting locations comes up periodically, in part from people working in Trenton or the eastern part of the Basin. When asked, the Characterization Committee was willing to meet in Clinton, but the Project Team has moved other meetings to more central locations (e.g., New Brunswick, Bridgewater Township).**

**Raritan Basin Watershed Project  
Characterization Committee Meeting  
June 30, 1999**

Thank you for taking the time to provide feedback on this meeting. Your comments will help improve future meetings. All responses are anonymous -- only summarized results will be reported.

- 1. I felt this meeting was well organized.

Strongly agree (17)	Agree (8)	Neutral (1)	Disagree	Strongly disagree
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- 2. I felt this meeting was productive.

Strongly agree (12)	Agree (14)	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
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3. I felt my ideas were important to this meeting.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
(4)	(10)	(10)		

5. The discussion on Riparian Corridor Assessment Methods was useful to me.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
(8)	(18)			

5. The discussion on Critical Habitat Assessment Methods was useful to me.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
(5)	(19)			

6. I am comfortable with my level of participation in the Raritan Workgroup.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
(3)	(18)	(3)		

7. Do you have any suggestions for making upcoming meetings more effective?

- Less use of abbreviations. Those not directly working in the field had trouble following abbreviations.
- When definition is important like in the T and E discussion descriptive information must be provided.
- Meetings seem to go along all right. Some time lack of discussion might be due to early stage of project.
- Smaller discussion groups, maybe have sub-committees.
- When a definition is important you need to provide information.
- Need to hear examples of the conceptual issues that are discussed – example map overlays, etc.

8. Do you have any suggestions about data for the Raritan characterization and assessment?

- Use of volunteer data.
- Encourage statewide endangered & threatened species coverage.

9. Additional comments?

- Need to see why some people are not attending the meetings.
- Move location of meeting within the basin area.
- Move location of some meetings to Trenton to limit some people's driving times.
- More productive meeting-great to ask for comments and agreement.

Memo

**To:** Raritan Watershed Project Team

**From:** Chris Krupka, Ginger Gibson, & Elizabeth Nasi, CEC, Rutgers University

**Date:** 8/12/99

**Re:** Evaluations of August 11, 1999 Raritan **Characterization Committee** Meeting

Here is a summary of the results of the August 11, 1999 Characterization Committee meeting. From a total of 33 attendees we received 24 responses.

- A. Close-ended questions.** As can be seen below, the majority of those who completed the evaluations felt that the meeting was well organized and productive. The majority also found the general project update, the information presented on GIS data sources and the information presented on impervious surfaces useful to them. There was a mixed response as to whether people felt their ideas were important to the meeting and whether they felt they had a better understanding of their role in the watershed management process.
- B. Open-ended questions.** Suggestions for upcoming meetings included fewer topics to discuss, shorter meetings, more input from the quieter people in the group, and the possibility of including a second facilitator. There was another request for water to be available. One comment focused on one of the points raised in the needs and resources assessment regarding the “general project update”; a slightly more detailed presentation or “show and tell” from each organization might address this concern.

**Project Team Responses: Shorter meetings, or meetings focused on fewer topics, came up as an issue this time. The technical nature of the discussions continued to be a problem. Project Team members continued to try and address this issue. Unfortunately, some felt that lengthy presentations and the lack of jargon slowed things down, but others required such considerations to be effectively involved. Facilitation also was an issue – the perception was that there were too many “quiet” attendees. Project Team responded by having the chair no longer do presentations, to avoid a duplicate role that made facilitation difficult. And we realized that the provision of drinking water had fallen by the wayside!**

**Raritan Basin Watershed Project  
Characterization Committee Meeting  
August 11, 1999**

1. I felt this meeting was well organized.

Strongly agree (6)	Agree (17)	Neutral	Disagree (1)	Strongly Disagree
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2. I felt this meeting was productive.

Strongly agree (2)	Agree (18)	Neutral (4)	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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3. I felt my ideas were important to this meeting.

Strongly agree (2)	Agree (10)	Neutral (12)	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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4. The "General Project Update" was useful to me.
- |                |       |         |          |                   |
|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| (4)            | (12)  | (6)     | (2)      |                   |
5. The information presented on GIS data sources was useful to me.
- |                |       |         |          |                   |
|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| (4)            | (15)  | (5)     |          |                   |
6. The information presented on impervious surfaces was useful to me.
- |                |       |         |          |                   |
|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| (6)            | (16)  | (1)     | (1)      |                   |
7. I have a better understanding of my role in the watershed management process than I did before this meeting.
- |                |       |         |          |                   |
|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| (1)            | (8)   | (13)    | (2)      |                   |
8. Do you have any suggestions for making upcoming meetings more effective?
- Try to have less to discuss per meeting. Many topics require in depth discussion that gets cut off due to time constraints.
  - All is well.
  - Keep up the good work!
  - Name tags (since there are new faces today)
  - Meetings should be shorter.
  - Unlike the last meeting, we needed more participation from "silent" folks. Especially because there were more vocal individuals.
  - Issues discussed today digressed from C&A-more relative to Phase 2 Management.
  - Use of a facilitator to help Dan or designate a facilitator to assist.
  - Committee is rather large with input from a small percentage. Maybe the inclusion was too inclusive.
9. Do you have any suggestions for making future presentations useful?
- All is well.
  - Could we have more presentations so people can visualize what we are talking about?
  - Additional explanation of acronyms and terms as needed.
  - Have them first in agenda. Shorter committee discussions when one is scheduled.
10. Additional Comments.
- We need rain.
  - It was good to hear the comments and perspectives of the new people in the group.
  - Drinking water as a beverage. Please.
  - Could we have tea or water in the AM?
  - The "General Project Update" was vague for those missing last meeting and those who are new.

**To:** Raritan Watershed Project Team  
**From:** Chris Krupka and Erin Beare, CEC, Rutgers University  
**Date:** December 8, 1999  
**Re:** Evaluations of November 30, 1999 **Rapid Watershed Improvement Projects**  
(Action Now) Meeting

The following is a summary of the evaluation results of the November 30, 1999 Action Now meeting at the Cook College Campus Center. We received 31 completed evaluations.

- A. **Closed-ended questions.** As shown below, the majority of those who completed the evaluations felt that the meeting was well organized and productive. The majority felt that the pace of the meeting was “just right”; however, there was quite a range of responses to this question, from “too slow” to “too fast.” A majority of respondents agreed that their ideas were important to the meeting, and all felt that the information presented at the meeting was useful to them. A majority had heard about the Raritan Watershed project before this meeting.
- B. **Open-ended questions.** Most respondents had heard about the Raritan Watershed project from either project team member organizations or the news media (though one commented that the meeting had not been well advertised). Some respondents cited the “breakout time” as the most helpful agenda item of the meeting, but many also suggested that they would have preferred it to be longer. Some also indicated that the facilitators of the breakout groups should have been more prepared and talked less so that others could express their ideas, while one person commented that presenters’ use of acronyms was confusing. Finally, one respondent noted that this meeting represented a “good starting point” on which to build future meetings.

**Project Team Responses:** As the responses show, this meeting had some rough edges – it was the first Raritan Project meeting focused on an action agenda rather than technical development. In response to these comments, the following meeting (in February 2000) focused heavily on the break-out groups, which were by Watershed Management Area as agreed to at this November meeting. Almost no time was spent on presentations in February, and a short time on wrap-up at the end of the meeting.

**Raritan Basin Watershed  
Rapid Watershed Improvement Projects (Action Now) Meeting  
November 30, 1999**

Thank you for taking the time to provide feedback on this meeting. Your comments will help improve future meetings. *All responses are kept anonymous* -- only summarized results will be reported.

**1. I felt this meeting was well organized.**

Strongly agree (6)	Agree (21)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (1)	Strongly disagree
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**2. The pace of the meeting was:**

Too fast (2)	Fast (1)	Just right (22)	Slow (1)	Too slow in the beginning (3)	Too slow (2)
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**3. I felt this meeting was productive.**

Strongly agree (2)	Agree (24)	Neutral (4)	Disagree (1)	Strongly disagree
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**4. I felt my ideas were important to this meeting.**

Strongly agree (1)	Agree (10)	Neutral (19)	Disagree	Strongly disagree
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**5. The information presented at this meeting was useful to me.**

Strongly agree (5)	Agree (19)	Neutral (6)	Disagree	Strongly disagree
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**6. Had you heard about the Raritan Watershed Project before today?**

Yes (29)	No (2)
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**6a. If yes, how did you hear about the Raritan Watershed Project?**

- Personal involvement
- News media (2)
- Member of project team (2)
- Natural Resources Conservation Service/watershed planning
- South Branch Watershed Association (2)
- WRMA & PG Town Environmental Committee
- The D&E Coordinator
- WMA meetings
- Upper Raritan Watershed Association
- Manager
- Common knowledge
- NJ Water Supply Authority meetings
- Colleagues and presentations by NJDEP

**7. Additional comments?**

- Too many acronyms (i.e., NPS, TMDL) on DEP overheads; too much focus on water quality instead of entire watershed as a system.
- Keep up the information and news releases about activities from the NJWSA to the media.
- Small groups appeared to be successful – people more willing to speak out about concerns and ideas.

- A necessary and worthwhile project – many good ideas and projects discussed, but not enough time for discussion.
- Better organization at the breakout sessions, as this is the most important part. Discuss their role with facilitators before the meeting. Sometimes facilitators talked too much.
- More focus on the networking part.
- Could provide longer time for groups. Really good to have those questions by Dan at end about how folks would like to meet next. People were excited and stayed past the stated end time of meeting. Good show.
- Need a handout with all involved leaders named.
- Pace was ok but I think should have gone longer by at least ½ hour or more. I felt like we were just starting to get somewhere.
- Need to pursue the concept of getting grassroots organizations with projects in touch with funders. Put the soil conservation districts on your mailing list.
- The meeting was not well advertised. Perhaps a more populous way to communicate would have brought more participants.
- Good starting point for future meetings to build on.
- As always with Raritan Basin functions – well organized and informative. Thank you all, think about public education and school outreach.