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Choli Lightfoot , NMR-GP	Larry Ridenour , landscape architect	
Marge Myers , NMR-GP	Uzair Shamsi , Chester Engineers	
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Sue Thompson , Carnegie Museum of Natural History	Residents: Sukanya Basu, Dean Benjamin, Marilyn Ham, Anne Mates, Betty Mullock, Richard Piacentini, Kate St. John, Loree Speedy	
Susanne Varley , <i>Nature Observer News</i>		

Vegetation, Habitat and Environmental Education Roundtable Discussion

Thompson: Maybe a first way to start is if there is anyone that has questions or comments they would like to start with?

Benjamin: I am here for a concrete purpose. In a couple of weeks I plan to go to an elementary school across the street from me. I would like to get ideas of how I can approach a teacher with a phone call and say here are some things you might consider doing in your class, are you interested? How do we get teachers involved in this project?

Thompson: In terms of starting this out, let's just talk about the habitats at Nine Mile Run. How many of you were on the tours this morning and what areas of the Nine Mile Run site do you like? What areas do you appreciate most and the reasons why?

Mates: This was my first time coming to Nine Mile Run. I was just overwhelmed when we walked in and I was at the bottom looking up the slag heap. I had never seen it from that perspective. I have only seen it driving by on Commercial Boulevard.

Thompson: So in a sense, you are saying that the slag heap has value in terms of perspective and sort of just something to see.

Mates: To see what was done. To see that shopping cart all the way up there. It was really amazing to see what we did.

Piacentini: It seems, based on what John Oyler said today, the place has a potential for the whole thing being turned into green space by greening the sides of the slag. Like they did in Allentown.

Thompson: That's certainly a potential. I have the same perspective too. There are parts of this site with the barren slag however that present an interesting landscape. So maybe part of it has educational value in leaving some of it intact and not trying to turn it all into an artificial green space. To actually let succession happen as an educational process.

Goto: What did you think about the plants?

Bannon: There is lots of variety. How many habitats have been identified down there? I know there is wetlands. What sorts of habitats have been identified down there?

Thompson: We have divided into five basic types and then there are subdivisions within them. (shows map)

Bannon: Generally are habitats defined by the vegetation?

Thompson: Yes. Basically a habitat is a vegetation type. Vegetation types are just speaking of the plants in general. When we talk about habitat it is the other organisms that have specific habitats which fall within vegetation types. The basic ones are forests—within that are more mature forests and secondary forest growth. There are stable meadows. Riparian flood plain and wetland zone are all plants that are adapted to wet areas. Meadows on the slag area. Areas where we have very beginning succession growth on the slag slopes. Then the very primary succession where there are a few grasses and down to the barren slag where it has not even started to happen yet. That is a rough overview, there are finer divisions among that. In all of those areas there is a combination of introduced and native species. That is another concept that people can discuss here. Is there a value in maintaining native species?

Shamsi: Have you yet identified any ecosystems associated with the slag, and if we go ahead with the residential development what effect will it have on that ecosystem?

Thompson: Well, there is a certain type of vegetation, it is a non-natural habitat that is created on the slag. It certainly is a distinctive one. It is an open, barren, dry zone with very distinctive plant growth that isn't found in Pittsburgh. It is a unique habitat for this region. I became interested in this project because we are doing studies on what we call natural barrens. Barren sites in Pennsylvania. Barren sites are sites that plants don't grow well on for whatever reason. A lot of times, it is because of high mineral concentration. Like serpentine barrens which have a high concentration of serpentine in the soil. Or sand barrens where the soil doesn't retain water, much like the slag area here. So we were doing the same kind of studies we are doing here on Nine Mile Run on natural barrens. We haven't finished any of them yet, so it will be interesting to see what the

comparisons will be between the natural barrens and the artificial, man-made barrens at Nine Mile Run.

Goto: It is interesting, last week Susanne and her boss, Chuck Tague, said that lots of birds come from Frick Park and during the winter time there are lots of birds because there is lots of grass and plants that make seeds and berries that the birds can eat. But the interesting thing that I heard from Susanne and Chuck is that the mockingbird is nesting for the whole year down on Nine Mile Run near the Mon. In the 1950s there weren't any mockingbirds. According to Chuck they really like multiflora rose, which is kind of invasive. They really love the berries. The area is very special slaggy soil and brings special species that bring other unusual habitats to the area.

Piacentini: I wasn't sure if I understood his question, but it seemed to me that he is asking if you put up houses and have to regrade the slag, will you destroy any of these unique habitats?

Shamsi: Let me explain a little bit more. An ecosystem means a system and with the soils and plants and animals they are interdependent and over a period of time, in the 70 years, the soil, plants, and animals have learned to live interdependently. And now it has become a sort of unique environment. Now we are introducing the human development with the proposed development. My recommendation is that if this 70-year-old environment is of any value to Pittsburgh, the residential development should be planned in such a way that it does not disturb the ecosystem.

Thompson: We are not involved with what is happening with the design of the housing development. We are involved in making recommendations in a rivers conservation planning grant, of what to do with Nine Mile Run and that valley. Obviously, grading the slag and moving the slag creates a different valley to work with. From the development side and housing side, I think that people don't want to live in a slag pile. They want to live where they have a yard and trees. So something would have to be done. This is a successional habitat and it would not change much because the conditions are so very harsh. It would take a very, very long time for natural succession and organic decomposition of the vegetation to occur. So for anything to change, we would have to speed that up. In terms of a full ecosystem, not enough studies have been done to ever really look at it. We are doing the very first insect studies. When

talking about diversity and what kinds of life you have at any site on earth it is always the insects that are the primary component. We don't even know yet what we have there. The samples are being taken this summer and will be analyzed this winter. So whether we have anything really special we don't know. We know that we have the hop tree which is a threatened species in Pennsylvania. This is a category that is legislated — endangered is the highest category and threatened is next. It has legislated protection. This particular species (the hop tree) grows a lot in sandy areas. In fact, the kinds of soils created in the base of the slag by the slag may have created prime habitat for the plant at the site that John Oyler talked about, Blue Mountain, there are a couple species of plants that are heavy metal tolerant, that are very rare, that grew only at that site. This happens in natural sites such as serpentine plants. These are classic areas where you get barrens and not much plant growth though there are some plants that are globally rare that grow only in those habitats because they are tolerant of the high metals that other plants aren't tolerant of—they grow in those sites and other plants can't compete in those sites. So at times some of these sites actually create habitats that are conducive to growth by things that are otherwise rare or endangered species and if you have the plants you will probably have the insects also. Many of the insects are very plant dependent.

Goto: So when the city and developers talk about developing a greenway—green—what does it mean? It is not just any of the plants they are planting in the park; it has to be very specific to the area.

Piacentini: Are you saying that the whole scope of this creative inquiry is just to look at the river? Not looking at the entire Nine Mile Run project site?

Goto: We are looking at basically from Commercial Street near the trailer to the River. Just the valley, not the top. That is the developer's site.

Piacentini: We can't talk about the potential green space in that area without talking about the development.

Lightfoot: We are talking about the slag slopes, the flat space on top is not our domain.

Bannon: So basically what you guys are trying to do is encourage a rebirth of the natural habitat on the slag slopes and in the valleys that are going to be surrounding the areas of the housing development which will be on the tops of the slag heaps.

Thompson: What we are trying to do is find out what the public is interested in seeing happen in this area. The Carnegie Museum of Natural History has been asked to provide some data that will go into a proposed conservation plan for that area about how you might conserve that stream. But in terms of a recreation green space, housing development—I think that is what these forums are for—to say what the public thinks is useful in this area. What do you want to see.

Basu: What other kind of feedback have you received?

Goto: We went to the community meeting, especially the city presentation about the development. It is real funny because a lot of people that live next to the site are worried about a lot of real issues for instance, traffic. Over 1,000 new houses—what will happen to the street traffic? Also, the toxicity of the slag and the dust. Those questions come out first. And also—access—nobody likes people cutting through their backyard to get to the green space. But some people talk about deer and wild turkeys. The city never really includes those issues — about habitat and about living things. Of course, everybody cares, we all know that, and children, they all like that; but for some reason in city planning meetings those things are not embedded, and our team started wondering about the meaning of 'greenways'. We just talked about that. It is not just about plants. People are worried about traffic and toxicity and what will happen to our neighborhoods. That is first, of course that's first, but we need another time to discuss what else has been left out. So this is the time to talk about the things that have been left out. But actually, these are really important issues.

Piacentini: I don't think there are any residents in that area who would object to having the whole area turned into greenway.

Bannon: And forget the development even on top of the slag area?

St. John: Some of the nicest birds are at the top.

Thompson: It is certainly a distinctive habitat. There are very different plants, very different animals, insects. It is a totally different kind of place.

St. John: Because at the top it is open and almost like a field. And so there are birds that like to be on edges near fields like Indigo Buntings, which, where I live on the other side of the Squirrel Hill tunnel, you don't see any Indigo Buntings there.

Shamsi: I'm a little bit confused here. What I had heard on radio and t.v. and what I have read so far it appeared to me that we are doing this because we want to make the new housing development livable for the people. Today I am learning that that is not the issue. We are just trying to find out what is the best use of the area. What I knew is that we have already decided that the residential development is coming and we are trying to make the environment more pleasant for the people and that is why we are building the greenway and there are some concerns about not disturbing the existing system.

Thompson: I think what you are confused about a little bit is the issue from whose perspective. Obviously, the issue from the perspective of the city is driving the activity on many of the fronts here - the perspective of increasing the tax base in Pittsburgh. Building a housing development in that area, and having an improvement of the Nine Mile Run valley in conjunction with the green space, that would be attractive to potential home buyers of houses on top. So that, obviously, is an interest in their perspective. Now in my perspective I am not at all interested in the housing development. If you are asking me personally what my perspective is in working on this is that we are working on one aspect. And from the housing development I know nothing about it, I haven't read the master plans. I know as much as you do from various news reports, but I am not an expert on that, I am not part of the city government.

Lightfoot: One of our big goals is that this greenway isn't for the housing development. It is for the whole city of Pittsburgh; Frick Park is for the whole city of Pittsburgh, this should be for the whole city of Pittsburgh as well. And we would like to find out what people who aren't involved in the housing development want in this area, so that those aren't the only people who are listened to. The city, with increasing the tax base, aren't the only people who have a say in this.

Bannon: I don't live around here, but I would say keep it green.

Myers: One of the reasons it is wonderful is because it is so different. You drive around town and you spend time in the various places in this region and suddenly you are in a place that is so different from anywhere else. When you are there you look at things and you have an experience that you can't have anywhere else. And that has real value.

Thompson: Marge, you are talking about the areas of real barren slag as being so different? Yeah. I think that is the real question. People say green or greenway, but is there value in leaving it? Educational value, aesthetic value, habitat value in leaving areas of very open barren slag.

Bannon: Nature will come back.

Myers: And the thing itself, just this thing, is a lesson of some sort, I mean I don't know exactly what that is I haven't decided, but I mean it is steel history in it, by looking at it and a whole bunch of other things.

Speedy: It's different because it was created by man, this is man's influence. And I don't think that as a society we can afford to ignore those areas or forget those areas. I mean you look at a community map you don't see Squirrel Hill slag dump. There are not signs that say this way to the slag dumps. Most people have probably found out through, maybe birders or people who have encouraged them to visit there. We can't forget what our industrial past has done or even our industrial present is doing, we have to look at those costs and you can turn around and look at it and say oh my gosh that's ugly, but we still have to look at this and say this is the result of the steel industry. And I think there is a lot of value socially to that.

St. John: I think the part of it looking different is that when you go there and from a far away vista it looks really ugly to see the barren parts but when you get there and see the flowers coming up you think, "Wow!" You know those particular flowers are more valuable because they are so unusual. So you see clover all over the place; you don't care about clover. But when you go there and see clover close-up, you think, "Oh yes, it's clover." You can see clover in the middle of winter there, which is also kind of interesting.

Myers: Do you think it is ugly really?

St. John: I think it's Pittsburgh, you want to say look this was done, on a big scale. The only other place you can look at a slag pile, and it doesn't look the same at all, is at Century Three Mall. That just looks like, oh well, it's a mall. It must look barren because it's a mall.

Myers: Well, I don't think it's ugly, I don't know why, I associate it with moon scapes or something. For some reason it doesn't look ugly to me.

St. John: It is actually kind of encouraging to see nature coming back despite what industry has done. The only thing I regret is

that because it has some ugly characteristics or barren characteristics, people tend to dump in a place like that. So there is a lot more garbage there than you ever find in Frick Park. People think this is a wasteland and throw waste there. But if there are people there, maybe it will be less like that. When I've gone in winter, there are motor bikes. Like in the fall and early spring, like February, everything looks awful. Motor bikes and ATV's really make the place look yucky.

Mates: One of the things that I was very concerned with is the connection with Frick Park. I don't think we can afford to lose that because that is what is so necessary for the wildlife, especially.

Goto: Susanne can you say something more about Frick Park? What would you like to see in this area?

Varley: There is so much forest fragmentation. Frick is great the way it is but it needs to grow a little bit, mammals need room to expand. Even when you have birds that aren't reproducing, they are going to have to find their own territories and you know Frick Park can only hold so many of anything.

Thompson: I think both from the wildlife perspective but also probably for an economic perspective, it would be valuable to have a corridor from Frick Park to the river. And that is something that is also a development issue and it is the development in Pittsburgh of our waterfronts. I think, somehow, this project should tie into that, but that is obviously valuable land that we have only just started developing. There has to be the human aspect that you can make the connection from our parks and things down to the waterfront.

St. John: I have done the walk myself from Frick down to the river, but the only time you can really go through the section from Commercial Street into Frick is in winter when all the prickles and everything and the bushes are all dead. But that whole section has a sort of trashed element to it. In the winter you see all of the trash.

Thompson: I think one interesting idea that emerges from this group is that people have talked about greenway and I think the assumption is that greenway is forested and we can change it into something else. But there seems to be impressions that if we do that we're going to lose part of our history. Our natural history.

Ridenour: Our unnatural history.

Thompson: The history of man in Pittsburgh. Has there ever been any

expression of a historical site? I know there has been some talk of creating a mill historical site. And it seems like a big slag heap like this would be an essential part of something like that.

Ridenour: I am going to play devil's advocate here for a minute, because I am a dyed in the wool conservationist, but somebody has to pay the bill. I don't know how much the city had to pay for that property, but as a landscape architect I think that you can have development and conservation and the natural element. I think the greenway from Frick Park to the river is a given, and I think that everybody has bought into that. I know if we tried to take on the top and say that is a nice area to study etcetera, well, somebody has got to pay the bill. I think if done right that development can be an asset to the city. God knows the city needs tax revenue and things of that nature.

Piacentini: There is a lot of money available for brownfield areas and this whole thing could turn into a greenway. There is no need for the development.

Ridenour: This study that you are doing I think is a good laboratory to be able to transfer this technology to the many other brownfields sites we have in the city and in Allegheny County. I mean we don't have to save this one, because there's plenty more in Western Pennsylvania, and there are technologies evolving in different places by the people themselves with the aid of scientists like you and the federal government. Just as an example, I have learned in the last year, up in the Johnstown area where all of the rivers have become just awful as our legacy for strip mining and deep mining over the years, is now being cleaned up at a very rapid rate. And they're using biology, wetlands as passive treatment to clean up this acid mine drainage. It is wonderful to see this happening. We have a lot of work to do. We have a lot of brownfield sites throughout the area that need the same attention that we are giving Nine Mile Run. What we are learning here today is how vegetation and habitat and all these things can be transferred in one form or another through environmental education, through writing, through various projects. I think we need to do that. I am glad that Carnegie Mellon is involved and we need to concentrate on Nine Mile Run, but we need to transfer what we learned here to all of these other projects. I know that Kristy is working on the Chartiers Creek valley. They've got some problems down there. I mean, projects like this are happening all over Western Pennsylvania.

Mates: One of the values here is that you are in a large urban area. You have access to so many more people than you do if you use those other sites. This site can be a valuable site for education. And for history and like I said you have access to many more people than you do in, say, Johnstown. Because people may go there on a trip, but here you can have thousands of children go through and see things.

Thompson: On the topic of education, is this site valuable the way it stands right now for educational purposes? What are the pluses? What are the minuses?

Benjamin: It is difficult, especially for little kids, to get anywhere beyond the end. So we need to provide access. Providing access is expensive when you talk about allowing little kids. There is also the fact that the stream is so polluted right now there is actually a disincentive. You don't want to put kids anywhere near it because you will be slapped with lawsuits when they come down with dysentery. So there is a chicken and egg problem; do you clean up the stream first so the kids can get down there and see or do you leave the current ecosystem intact, sewage and all?

St. John: I don't have much background about how the sewage got there. If development occurs on the top at least they won't exacerbate that problem, but will there be storm sewer drainage into the creek bed. What are the plans to fix the streams?

Lightfoot: There are some combined sewer overflows that are happening into the stream, that is how most of the sewage is getting in there. There is some talk of possibilities of illicit connections and some leaking in the trunk sewer, but the sites have not been confirmed. That's how it is getting in there. As far as the development goes, they have talked about the need to fix that trunk sewer to tie in, but they are still not certain about that.

Ridenour: It is not just a city problem, because that watershed encompasses about four different municipalities. So it becomes very political very quickly.

Lightfoot: The problems are occurring. We are seeing them in Pittsburgh. But, the problems are also coming from the surrounding communities. As far as stormwater, that is going to have to be an issue the developer is going to have to deal with. Whether they pump it down to the stream, or they use it to try and water some of the slag up there hasn't been determined yet.

St. John: So if they determine in a certain way, then they would say, "Okay, whenever there is a really big storm let's just throw it down in the valley."

Lightfoot: It is one solution they could have for stormwater. It might be able to help some of the other problems. Right now we have flash floods in the area but we also have really low flow in the stream at the non-flash flood times.

Shamsi: Where is the money going to come from?

Thompson: That's a key question that Larry and Richard raised, as in, what's driving the funding and where is the funding coming from. I think from the city, and especially from the URA—they are seeing the housing development as driving the funding. Richard suggested the possibility of other types for federal funding from recovering brownfields. The money is obviously a key question. Where is the money coming from that you can have all kinds of grand conservation schemes or whatever to take the whole valley and turn it into a historical conservation park? The key question always is where? Where is the money?

Piacentini: I bet you could find funding for that.

Thompson: Don't... Not me! But the argument from a historical perspective too—this is a key part of the history of Pittsburgh of what Pittsburgh was, and what's happened in this area.

Speedy: I'm curious about the logistics of fixing a sewer line. I mean, is that something only a municipality can fund and fix? Or, would you or could you get federal grant money to fix the sewer lines of Pittsburgh?

Thompson: The Clean Water Act!

Lightfoot: Well, it is city property, I believe.

Shamsi: Let me answer the question because we did the Nine Mile Run Trunk Sewer Study for that area in 1995. As implied from the name, it was a "sewer study". What we found when we looked at the area as shown there, is that the watershed doesn't stop there. It goes several miles upstream. The reason it's called 'Nine Mile' is because it's nine miles long from its origin to where it ends at the Monongahela River. This Greenway Project, I think, is on the first one point three miles.

Benjamin: It's called Nine Mile Run because that's the distance from the point along the Mon River.

Shamsi: Right.

Speedy: It's Nine Miles?

Benjamin: Almost exactly.

Shamsi: The sewer problems that you see in this area, from the conclusion of the study, is that they are coming from the upstream municipalities like Swissvale. The major contributors are not really conclusive about where it's originating, but there were no sewer overflows. Sewer overflows means past a certain capacity. If you put large stormwater and a lot of sanitary sewage in, then the capacity is full and the water comes out of the manhole and goes into the creek and pollutes it. Now who's responsible for fixing those? There are several communities which connect to this trunk sewer. Trunk sewer means the main sewer which is collecting sewage from other communities. There are several communities involved. Somewhere, in some street and in some community, if you have a leaking sewer or manhole there, its water has some potential to eventually come back into your greenway project area. Sewers are built parallel to or next to a stream. So, maybe, that little tributary is the best place to build them. That is why the trunk sewer is also parallel to Nine Mile Run. Every time there is an overflow, if there is a waterbody or a water course, it will go there and eventually come here. The municipalities are responsible for fixing them. The city of Pittsburgh cannot. Whichever municipality that manhole is located in, they are responsible for fixing that. However, nobody fixes them because of the shortage of money. Sometimes the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), if they hear enough from citizens about nuisance, they issue the municipalities orders to do what we call corrective action plans (CAPs). A lot of times, with inadequate capacity in the systems, citizens complain, which forces them to do CAPs. In a smaller community, they do not have any money. Their tax base is very small and they are not proactive. They don't do anything unless an administrative order or consent decree is issued. Once they are issued, under a 90-day consent decree, it seems like money is no longer an object and they are ready to fix the problems.

Bannon: Yes, we are experiencing a very similar problem in the South Hills along Chartiers Creek. A lot of the municipalities are allowing water or sewage to spill into the water. What we're engaged in right now is setting up teams of observers at the points where the sewage is coming up so that we can document it and turn it in. Once they are reported, all of a sudden the municipalities seem to come up with all this money to stop it. Otherwise, they go to

court and they get fined. So, you can stop that. We were part of a class action suit and our conservancy got a nice sum out of that. What it takes is community groups to get the public aware that there is a problem, monitor it and then turn them in.

Goto: Two weeks ago we had a water workshop and there is some documentation. If you are interested, we can send you the issue document and the RECAP.

Mates: Are there groups monitoring it?

Goto: Yes, once a week. We do 12 spots total and then six spots once a week and we bring them to the County Health Department. We have about five more minutes and we kind of have to conclude. I would like to ask you about education, especially for younger children, what would you like to teach about this area? We kind of stopped because of the stream and also the access to it is hard, but how about in the long term? For instance, I don't think it is an interesting idea to bring school children to the Century Three slag heap. I mean, compare Nine Mile Run and there. There are some reasons for that. This is also, I am asking two questions. The first is what you would like to teach to children about this area? The second one is if this project will last for 15 years, what kind of changes would you like to see in the greenway? That might be related to what you would like to teach to children because children will see what we will see too.

Varley: You think children would have a chance to learn the sins of the past and they will be able to see if they go on a field trip every two years or so just from how the gradual development is changing and how nature is taking over? When they are in their 40s, they can say well when I was seven it used to look like this. When I was nine, these plants were introduced, these birds started coming back, these mammals started coming back. And then by time I was a senior, this was going on, and now that I am an old person of 45, I can tell you not to allow these slag heaps to happen again.

Thompson: It certainly does seem to be a site where you could very easily teach environmental awareness. There is such a stark contrast. I mean, we are all talking about trying to teach environmental awareness and increase environmental awareness. It is kind of tough to do sometimes until people sort of experience it for themselves and until they see what man can do versus what happens in just a natural area.

Mates: One of the things we talked about was access. But a lot of what is important to teach is right at the beginning. Look at how few plants grow here and which kinds grow here. As we go further into the site, you will see others. Just look over there and you can see that they don't grow over here.

Thompson: Especially from that Duck Hollow entrance, you are very quickly into where you can contrast very bare slag and look down to the riparian creek side vegetation.

Goto: Also, it might be interesting to just leave some area alone and see what happens from now on. And like John Oyler said, have test sites and show the difference of what man can do and what nature does by itself. And in more artificial circumstances, how the plants might change. That might be interesting, having many different sites instead of just treating the slag one way.

Werner: This site cuts across so many different subject matter. You can talk about politics, aesthetics, history. You can talk about so many different things. You can use it as a lab area and teach science. This often goes back to how a child fits into the world and how their actions fit within the environment. Also, it is in an inner city and any kind of wooded area is special.

Benjamin: It is a tough sell though. If you look at it from the teachers perspective, you've got two to three field trips per year and you've got a choice between Fallingwater, the Frick Nature center, a slag heap, and the science center. I think that if I was a teacher, the slag heap would be way down on the list. Unless there was some kind of a hook. You almost have to present your ideas to the teachers like you are marketing a resort or something. You should bring your class here because..., and I don't know what to fill in there.

Lightfoot: Do you think that if there were these test sites and actual experiments going on that maybe kids could help out with, that kids could plant the slag?

Benjamin: I saw a newspaper article two to three months ago where a retired guy from DEP went out and got samples everyday, I think, from somewhere upstream on the Allegheny River. He brought the stream to the student. Every week he would bring in his water samples and the kids would do their little chemistry. These were fifth and sixth graders. They would plot the E.Coli and the BOD (biological oxygen demand) and had these

charts they were making. They knew that when there was a rainstorm, there would be a spike in the E. Coli the next day. I am not sure if they were actually doing E. Coli tests, but they were doing a number of them. And maybe they were also incorporating tests from the health department. That is something they could do. Then maybe they could come and see the site once a year and say: "Hey that's where our water samples are coming from."

Mates: Maybe you could do an adopt-a-site. This is a site that we are doing this experiment on and it was adopted by this school. And this other school adopted this other site.

St. John: There is a teacher in the Quaker Valley school district who has done that for Little Sewickley Creek. She is a biology teacher.

Bannon: They did that at Chartiers Valley for scrub grass.

Benjamin: But does anyone have any other ideas of why you should come to Nine Mile Creek? Because...your toilets flush out into Duck Hollow?

Bannon: All little kids love a good story. If you started out with "Once upon a time there was a slag dump..." and here is our vision for the future. They love heroes too. So they would want to be part of that story. You start their education and their involvement very young with the once upon a time here is what it was here is what it is now. Then have the sort of longitudinal program within the whole school district grades K-12 to get them involved at a variety of levels as they can appreciate it.

Mates: It could be Pittsburgh's own project.

Goto: If it is a once upon a time story, do you think we should have a good result for children?

Bannon: Yes, you want to end with a very positive note. End with a success story and let them feel that they are part of the success and that they helped make it happen. The more you can pull your community and your children in, the better off you are.

Basu: I just had an idea, I am not quite sure how it is going to work out, but like Carnegie Museum of Natural History, there are specimens and everything in a building. Could this be an open natural museum to the children? I am not sure how it is going to happen, but this is just a little bit of an idea I have. An open museum, it doesn't have to be all over technical or all over housing project. There could be an area that is just for the public, for children, or for school and college-going students as a

natural museum for what it was before, what it is now and what it can be in the future.

Thompson: I think you basically summarized what we have been talking about. It is a very idealized kind of thing here, not talking about the economics for the moment, that this site would make an ideal open museum that talks about history of the area, ecology, aesthetics (artistic). Some people have expressed this; that there is a certain beauty of the slag heaps. There is this artistic aesthetic sense that people get.

Benjamin: It is an installation piece.

Thompson: You can go there and see the contrast of bare slag versus vegetation and it is an open museum. I think that is essentially what we have all been saying. That is a very nice summary. Then, of course, we have that realist among us, and there is that little voice in my head that says where is the money coming from. But, I think, when we are talking about what you want to do and what you want to see, you have to push that voice to the side and talk about these kinds of ideas and then later on get practical.

Benjamin: I was reading in the transcripts from the last workshop. They were talking about the problem of cleaning up the sewage and addressing the sewage problems. Right now, all of the communities are in violation of the pollution regulations to the tune of \$25,000/day, which could be fined if the law were enforced as it is. But nobody wants to go to everybody and hit them up for \$100 per household. The point of that was that somebody made a comment and one of the experts at the table said that regulation has not worked and that the only way to do it is to motivate a grass-roots response. If all of the mayors and all of the councilmen in the four principle municipalities suddenly get hearings from their constituents saying why don't we clean this up, then they will move fast. That was the gist. That leads me to believe that one of the first things we need to do is imprint another identity onto all of the residents: "Yes I am a resident of Wilkinsburg, Edgewood, Swissvale, but I also live in the Nine Mile Run drainage basin." When I was distributing posters for this thing a day or two ago, I was amazed that maybe ten percent of the people that I talked to even knew what Nine Mile Run was. I got blank stares and I had to explain. Somehow, there needs to be a consciousness raising and I don't know

exactly how to do that. Letting everybody know where is down hill from here. Seeing Squirrel Hill not as a neighborhood, but as just a ridge that separates Four Mile Run from Nine Mile Run.

Bannon: Have you heard of the Clean Water Initiative? That is sort of a grass-roots thing happening, at least for us in the South and West Hills. I can give you a contact person.

Myers: Is it a local thing?

Bannon: I am pretty sure, but I could be wrong. I am just one of the people that goes and looks at the sewage coming out.

Thompson: Have there been any discussions about having a watershed association for Nine Mile Run? Because that is what we are talking about. That would bring awareness if people paid a fee every year to their watershed association.

Benjamin: That would be a great idea. For instance, there is not a single sign in the entire drainage ditch saying that this is Nine Mile Run. All you see is "The water is unsafe, stay away." I had this idea of painting big stripes across the streets at the edge of the watershed maybe three colors, like gray, blue and green. The gray slag, the green boundary and the water in the middle. Then point downhill, "This is Nine Mile Run. You are entering the Nine Mile Run watershed." Put those on I-376, on Braddock Ave., on the main drags at least and maybe get real ambitious and maybe even on every little neighborhood street. That would at least say, "Hey, here's Nine Mile Run," and break down the sense of, "I'm Wilkinsburg and that's a Swissvale problem." Turn it into, "That's our problem and we live in Nine Mile Run."

Bannon: You sort of have to identify it as a regional thing. A region that is going to be impacted, not just one community versus another. You have to get the people involved, not the government. The governments don't care until the people come to them. So if you inform all of the people of your problem, then go to the governments.

Shamsi: Saw Mill Run had a citizens group—Saw Mill Run Task Force. They were a very active group of people like you and they waited and had a lot of patience. Eventually they got a \$30 million dollar project from ALCOSAN. They are building a parallel interceptor so that they have more capacity and Saw Mill Run stream won't stink.

Bannon: There was an immediate concern though, because the sewage was backing up into the people's houses.

St. John: That certainly brings it home.

Thompson: Again with Nine Mile Run, as you flush your toilets, take out your bath water, you don't think what is happening with all of the water. It is not caring about what is happening downstream.

Shamsi: Now California has started a watershed program, check it out on the web. It is called Know Your Watershed program. It is sponsored by EPA. Everybody knows the name of their county and of their municipality and nobody knows the name of their watershed. So on the web, most of the watersheds in California are on a map and you just enter the name of your city and it takes you to your watershed and you click there. So, everybody in the community should know their watershed. From this will come a sense of belonging to a region. And the people will be really afraid to throw anything on the road because it will get in the catch basin and in the sewer and in the trunk line and in the Nine Mile Run. That is how you can get cooperation from different municipalities.

Mates: Since there is already a web site is there a way to connect into other web sites? To convey that kind of information.

Myers: Sure.

Thompson: I know there are watershed maps on the larger scale for Pennsylvania.

Mates: Maybe some of those places already have groups going and they could link up.

Benjamin: We are talking about a relatively short horizon here, maybe a five-year plan. At most only 10 to 20 percent have internet access right now.

Bannon: We had the same problem so we printed up pamphlets, on recycled paper of course, and we got 16 people and we leafleted the whole town in four hours. In four hours, we did 3,000 households.

Benjamin: Another idea for this knowing your watershed is how about just put a sign on the bridge out of the tunnel that says Nine Mile Run? You cross every bridge that say this is, like, the Allegheny River. You would reach maybe 90 percent on the Pittsburgh region in two months because everyone uses that parkway.

Piacentini: Sue, you had made a comment before about where the money is going to come from to be realistic. The grading is going to cost city taxpayers \$60,000,000. And, certainly, what we are talking about, turning this into a museum type site, will cost a lot less than that.

Thompson: That is a good point, we have problems from both sides. There is grading and things from the development that are a major problem in terms of the greenway

and it is very expensive. There is the sewage problem coming from the other end which is also a major problem. And, in some ways remediating the site to a very lesser extent and keeping it as a sort of outdoor experimental museum and laboratory is the cheapest of any of the alternatives.

Piacentini: And probably the most desirable one.

St. John: Probably the only argument that could be made is lost potential revenue from the tax base. But if you wanted to sell the site, and it was known that in the basin it was sewage, people aren't going to buy.

Speedy: That is why I have always been surprised that people bought homes at Rosemont.

Mates: It smells.

Benjamin: No, the houses are too high.

Speedy: Still the ones at the end are looking over a slag pile.

Werner: Does anyone know about the industrial heritage sites they are trying to set up in Pittsburgh? There are actually a series of sites that they are trying to save as open museums. You might want to talk to them if you are really serious in pursuing this idea.

Myers: It is called Steel Industry Heritage Corporation and they have proposed to put a museum in one of the old mills. And, as Jane says, some other sites too.

Thompson: It would bring money into the region through tourism. The history of steel and the industrial heritage of this region. I always love those kinds of things when I travel. Factory tours and things that show you the history of that region. If you lose the tax base from one thing, maybe you collect the revenue from another source. I grew up in Indiana and we don't have slag dumps.

Piacentini: It really is impressive.

Thompson: It is not as impressive from the top as it is from the bottom there.

Mates: There is this consortium of people looking at this, but is there an action group already formed? There is no action group already formed. That would be an important step I think.

Thompson: In the last workshop, there was talk of a Friends of Nine Mile Run group being formed. I don't know if anything has happened with that, but is that what you mean by an action group right?

Benjamin: I think we all more or less fall into that category. It exists in principle.

Thompson: When we are talking about Nine Mile Run as a greenway, in a sense, Nine Mile Run already exists as a greenway. It is just not an official one, but it is there and people use it for various recreational purposes.

Benjamin: As it is right now, I think a lawyer would probably look at it as an attractive nuisance and that whoever owns it is inviting to be sued by the first person that sprains their ankle on that broken down trestle. The city of Pittsburgh owns it and took over all liabilities. Right now, the city does not encourage people to go there, even though the first time I looked at it, I saw it as an extension of Frick Park. It would cost a lot of money to take it from its current state to something they could let people in safely.

Goto: Do you know of any schools that might be interested in the Nine Mile Run issues? The Children's Museum and myself, we are working up some activities to teach children about the Nine Mile Run site.

Thompson: Supposedly, the grade school near Frick Park has an environmental orientation for Regent Square or whatever. I am not sure. The people in City Parks were telling me that the other day.

Benjamin: I am going to see if Kelly School is interested.

Werner: We have one that is really on board.

Thompson: Thank you for participating.

