



Working Groups

## PlanET Environment Working Group Meeting #1

Wednesday, February 22, 2012, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm  
Cansler YMCA, Community Room, Knoxville

### KEY FINDINGS

The meeting of 27 participants was called to order by Chairperson Carol Evans and was followed by self-introductions. The group was briefed on PlanET and the role of the Working Groups, and the environmental findings of the Existing Conditions Memo were reviewed. Attendees were asked to react to the information contained in the Environment Section of the memo, which they had received in advance, and to discuss the adequacy of the report. They were also asked to identify key issues, opportunities, and priorities in the subject area in the PlanET region.

### Existing Conditions Memo Suggestions

Participants seemed to find the Memo generally provided a good base for future discussion and prioritization of environmental issues and concerns in the region. The few questions and clarifications included:

- ❖ A lack of mutually recognized valid sources of information to make an overall determination about current air quality and likely prospects for meeting various standards in the near future.
- ❖ A request for an update of the GAP Analysis to better inform decision making about land conservation measures.
- ❖ More information about the impacts of VMT on air quality and how much air quality issues were impacted by air pollution from outside the region was requested.
- ❖ Input following the meeting indicated that the Memo had confusing interpretations of brownfield data.

### Priorities

**Water:** Issues and concerns around all types of water were prominent in the discussion. These included the lack of a regional strategic approach to watershed issues, polluted groundwater, flooding, stormwater runoff-particularly in quantity, water loss from utility systems, water containment, public education around water issues, lack of wetland protection, impact of horses on water quality, etc.

**Air:** Air quality, what contributes to it and its health impacts are a significant set of issues.

**Stressed Natural Resources:** The region has diverse geographic features, prime farmland soils, and high biodiversity and is part of nine watersheds. However, these resources are under stress from non-native species, danger of soil slippage, water pollution, & drought.

**Agriculture/Food Production:** Stakeholders are concerned about continued loss of farmland, farmers, and farming as an industry and way of life. They note a mismatch of production and market forces, increasing production costs and lack of local food sourcing.

**Regulatory Resistance:** Attendees noted with concern a growing resistance to regulation in response to environmental issues, lack of cooperation/coordination of local jurisdictions within the region, and some public denial of the existence of environmental issues/problems.