



# Lower Grand River Watershed Project

## MEETING MINUTES

Project: Lower Grand River Watershed Project Meeting Date: January 29, 2004

Subject: Steering Committee Meeting Start: 11:30 a.m.

Meeting Site: FTC&H Conference Room Meeting Adjourn: 2 p.m.  
Grand Rapids Office

Prepared By: Mr. Jason E. Buck Project No.: G02408

Attending: Mr. Corky Overmyer - City of Grand Rapids, Environmental Protection Services  
Mr. Tom Doyle - Barry County Drain Commissioner  
Mr. Karl Hausler - Michigan Department of Agriculture  
Mr. Jim Oosting - Coldwater River Watershed Council  
Mr. Scott Conners - City of Walker  
Mr. Andy Bowman - Grand Valley Metropolitan Council (GVMC)  
Mr. Don Stypula - GVMC  
Mr. John Koches - Grand Valley State University (GVSU), Annis Water Resources Institute (AWRI)  
Ms. Laurie Beth Nederveld - AWRI  
Ms. Janice Tompkins - Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ)  
Mr. James E. Smalligan, P.E. - Fishbeck, Thompson, Carr & Huber, Inc. (FTC&H)  
Ms. E. Wendy Ogilvie - FTC&H  
Mr. Jason E. Buck - FTC&H

### 1. Welcome and Introductions

### 2. Status of Lower Grand River Watershed (LGRW) Planning Project

#### a. Accomplishments

- The project will be ending on June 30, 2004, and many of the tasks identified in the work plan have already been completed.
- Watershed inventories have been completed in all of the pilot project areas. Watershed Management Plans (WMPs) for Buck Creek and Sand Creek have been submitted to the MDEQ and approved. These plans are posted on the LGRW website at <http://www.gvsu.edu/wri/isc/lowgrand/index.htm>. Two grant applications have been submitted to implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) and educational activities in the LGRW. One grant will focus on removing *E. coli* sources in the Buck Creek, Plaster Creek, Coldwater River Watersheds, and the other will implement recommendations in the Sand Creek WMP.
- Much of the data for the Lower Grand River WMP has been collected for the Watershed Information Matrix and the Watershed Interactive Tool. The Urban and Rural Subcommittees have contributed many ideas for selecting BMPs for urban and rural subwatersheds and these concepts are being compiled for use in the Lower Grand River WMP.



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## b. Remaining tasks and schedule for the Steering Committee.

- Ms. E. Wendy Ogilvie gave a hand out (attached) to the Steering Committee that outlined all the tasks needed to fulfill the grant requirements. The green highlights represent items that are the responsibility of the Steering Committee.
- The primary focus of the Steering Committee will be developing a sustainability plan for the LGRW project. This will be included in the WMP. The Steering Committee will review the WMP as each chapter is completed rather than reviewing the entire document at one time.
- Following the discussion of Steering Committee responsibilities, a discussion on the integration of the subcommittees ensued. This discussion was facilitated by a diagram (attached) that outlined the relationship between each subcommittee's responsibilities and the timeline for completion of their tasks.

## 3. Watershed organization

### a. Vision Committee

- Mr. Andy Bowman updated the Steering Committee on the recent focus group sessions that have been held by the Vision Committee. After developing a vision and mission statement, the Vision Committee went on to develop three themes for watershed concepts, awareness, values, and data relationships. The Vision Committee will hold a focus group meeting on all three of these themes.
- The first focus group meetings on values and data relationships have already been completed. The next focus group meeting on awareness, will be directly following the February 17, 2004, Information and Education (I&E) Subcommittee meeting.
- The Vision Committee has been working on developing a big picture vision for the LGRW. These concepts will be used to characterize what is possible for the watershed organization in the future. The identification of the steps that are needed to get to these future goals will be the responsibility of the Steering Committee. Mr. Bowman pointed out that the schedules for the grant do not line up perfectly with the schedule that the Vision Committee is following. Although the timing is not perfect, the group has been making tremendous progress and the outcomes will have implications that reach further than the scope of this grant.
- A presentation of the Vision Committee focus group outcomes will be made at the March 2004 Grand River Forum (Forum). The date and time for the Forum meeting has not been established.

### b. Role of the Steering Committee

- The next step for the Steering Committee will be to develop a strategy to bring the watershed organization through the transition at the end of this grant cycle to a fully sustainable organization.
- Mr. Don Stypula started a discussion on the perceptions of a watershed organization and how it would fit into the Vision Committee's big picture. Steering Committee members were asked to begin thinking about what groups may oppose the organization and how to present the organization to the public in a way that is positive and not just another level of government. Mr. Stypula also asked the group to begin thinking of ways that a watershed



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organization could save local governments money. Mr. Corky Overmyer suggested that the Regional Environmental Protection Agency could serve as a platform for launching the Watershed organization.

- The tasks of defining how the watershed organization would be structured and operate is also a responsibility of the Steering Committee. At the July 30, 2003, meeting, the Steering Committee brainstormed types of models for the watershed organization. This brainstorming session will be revisited at future meetings and compared to information gleaned at the Watershed organization Discussion Panel held on September 30, 2003.
- Ms. Janice Tompkins pointed out how complex the issues are in a watershed of this size. Ms. Tompkins suggested using the pull of a large organization to bring small subwatershed groups together. To do this, the Steering Committee must identify the tasks that are best handled at the large scale, and what tasks would be better for smaller localized subwatershed groups.
- Mr. John Koches suggested that the Steering Committee would begin thinking about the specific focus of the watershed organization. Having an idea of what services the watershed organization would do may offer some insight on how it is structured. Mr. Koches identified a basin-wide water quality monitoring program as a possible focus. He also noted that not every focus of the organization would have to be directly linked to water. For example, contributing to the discussion on urban sprawl and the purchase of development rights are topics that have an indirect relationship with water quality and could also be considered by the watershed organization.

## 4. Lower Grand River Watershed Management Plan

### a. Tools Developed for the WMP

- Ms. Ogilvie used an overhead (attached) that reviewed all the tools that were being developed for the WMP. Each tool will have a specific role in the development of the WMP for the LGRW and will be very useful for other subwatershed projects. Mr. Koches pointed out that with further development, the tools developed for this project could be used as aids to other watershed projects across the state.
- The watershed guidebook will be prepared as a tool for other subwatershed projects to be used to complete their own WMPs and for Phase II communities to develop their Storm Water Pollution Prevention Initiatives. The guidebook will contain useful information on how to use the Watershed Information Matrix to find facts about their watershed and where to go for more information. This will be coupled with the Watershed Interactive Tool that will be able to provide mapping of the watersheds, and links to websites and information in the matrix about their watershed.

### b. Contents of the WMP

- Ms. Ogilvie presented an overhead (attached) of the proposed contents for each chapter in the WMP.
- Mr. Jim Oosting presented a concept for providing a stand-alone executive summary for the WMP that would be easily readable and attractive. This would make the WMP more accessible and interesting to the public.



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- Mr. James E. Smalligan, P.E. discussed how the watershed guidebook would be presented to the public at a workshop. The participants at this workshop would create a draft WMP using the guidebook and the tools discussed above.
- Ms. Tompkins noted that the WMP would require two levels for the I&E Strategy. Some types of I&E Strategies work well at a large scale, such as television and radio. Other strategies, such as lawn and garden workshops and volunteer water quality monitoring work much better when used at the local level. The I&E Strategy could display potential pollutant threats to water quality and offer ideas for outreach programs that would address those types of problems. Mr. Overmyer suggested that the I&E Strategy present an approach that would connect people to the water resources around them.
- Ms. Tompkins also observed that this project would be unlike any other Section 319 WMP. It must meet the minimum grant requirements, but it will utilize many concepts that have not been tried in other watersheds. Ms. Tompkins also pointed out that this project will be used to justify to the United States Environmental Protection Agency that large scale projects can work.
- Mr. Bowman suggested that the conclusion of the WMP should provide a “jump-off” point for local governments and subwatershed groups. This plan would help these groups understand their next step to meet the LGRW vision.

## 5. Next Meetings

- Thursday, March 4, 2004, at FTC&H.
- Thursday, April 8, 2004, location to be determined.
- Thursday, May 13, 2004, location to be determined.
- Thursday, June 24, 2004, location to be determined.

## 6. Adjourn

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Attachments  
By e-mail

### Distribution:

#### Attendees

Mr. Brian Donovan - City of East Grand Rapids  
Ms. Kristine Huizen - Frey Foundation  
Mr. John Hardy - Maple Row Dairy  
Mr. Chris Kenyon - City of Ionia  
Mr. Jim Beelen - Allendale Township  
Mr. Jim Holtvluwer - Georgetown Township  
Mr. Paul Geerlings - Ottawa County Drain Commissioner  
Mr. Tom Leonard - West Michigan Environmental Action Council