



## Meeting Minutes

If information contained herein is thought to be inaccurate or incorrect, please contact writer at once for resolution.

**PROJECT:** Lower Grand River Watershed Project      **MEETING DATE:** March 4, 2003  
**SUBJECT:** Steering Committee      **MEETING START:** 11:30 a.m.  
**MEETING SITE:** Walker City Hall      **MEETING ADJOURN:** 1:30 p.m.  
**PREPARED BY:** Mr. Jason E. Buck      **PROJECT NO.:** G02408

**ATTENDING:** Ms. Kristine Huizen - Frey Foundation  
Ms. Erika Rosebrook - Kent County Administration  
Mr. Brian Donovan - City of East Grand Rapids  
Mr. Tom Doyle - Barry County Drain Commissioner  
Mr. Scott Conners - City of Walker  
Ms. Janice Tompkins - Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ)  
Mr. John Koches - GVSU, Annis Water Resources Institute (AWRI)  
Mr. Jerry Felix - Grand Valley Metropolitan Council (GVMC)  
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. Ms. E. Wendy Ogilvie opened the meeting with introductions from the Steering Committee members.
2. The February 20, 2003, Grand River Forum (Forum) meeting was discussed. Exit surveys showed positive comments about the small group work session. Steering Committee members agreed that the breakout session was good to have individuals from all backgrounds and experiences coming together to form a consensus about the concerns, goals, and desired uses for the Lower Grand River Watershed (Watershed). More time for small group discussion will be incorporated into future Forum meetings.
3. The subcommittee updates were dropped from the agenda since all Steering Committee members were in attendance for the updates at the Forum.
4. Watershed Goals
  - a. The small group discussion generated a list of water quality/quantity concerns, goals and desired uses, water pollutants, and possible solutions for the water quality impairments.
  - b. Worksheets completed by those in attendance at the Forum meeting were compiled by the AWRI. Trends that developed were as follows:
    - Development impacts, bacteria, hydrology, and sediment were the top concerns for the Watershed.
    - Recreation was by large the most desired use for the Watershed's water resources.
    - Other desired uses were wildlife habitat and educational opportunities.
    - Steps to correct water quality problems were mostly in the area of smart growth techniques and enforcement of existing regulations and ordinances.

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- c. The Steering Committee used this list to start discussing goals for the Watershed. Mr. Scott Connors suggested that a mission statement would be useful to provide a concise definition to what this project will become and what it supports. Mr. Connors went on to explain that a large percentage of the public perceives the Grand River as very polluted and not capable of supporting recreational fishing and boating. A goal of the Watershed project should be to increase awareness of the successes in cleaning up the Watershed's water resources.
    - Mr. John Koches commented that many of the goals listed here are really objectives to protect water quality. Therefore, the goal for the Watershed should be to protect water quality and to provide opportunities for recreation, wildlife habitat, and a focal point for celebrating a community's water resources.
    - Ms. Janice Tompkins suggested that rural areas should be areas for focusing on recreational water uses and urban areas could focus on celebrating the water resources.
    - Ms. Tompkins also commented that water quality is not always indicative of good wildlife habitat. Instead, we should focus on stream quality. Rather than limiting the definition to streams, Mr. James E. Smalligan, P.E. suggested that habitat include lakes, rivers, and drains and be referred to as Water Resource Quality.
  - d. Final consensus was reached that a mission statement for each of the desired uses will be developed by the Planning Committee and reviewed at the next Steering Committee meeting. The desired uses are as follows:
    - Recreational Use
    - Wildlife Habitat Quality (both aquatic and terrestrial)
    - Outreach Efforts
    - Human Water Consumption
    - Planning and Development Uses
5. Pilot Project Areas
- a. The selection criteria for the Rural and Urban Subcommittees was reviewed.
  - b. The Rural Subcommittee selected three subwatersheds:
    - Lake Creek Subwatershed #14 78
    - Sand Creek Subwatershed #14 99 and 14 100
    - Cedar Creek Subwatershed #14D 18 and 14D 19
  - c. The Urban Subcommittee selected three subwatersheds:
    - Grand River Subwatershed #14 97
    - Grand River Subwatershed #14 89
    - Buck Creek Subwatershed #14 93 and 14 94
  - d. Summary sheets for each of the selected subwatersheds were reviewed by the Steering Committee.
  - e. The Steering Committee members discussed what the criteria would be for selecting Pilot Project Areas and how many projects could be completed.
    - Mr. Brian Donovan suggested that preference should be given for projects that are within the Phase II communities that have provided match funds for the 319 grant.

- Ms. Tompkins informed the Steering Committee that she has been assisting the Sand Creek Watershed and is in the process of developing a Watershed Management Plan (WMP) with this group. However, she would like additional support from the Watershed project.
- The Steering Committee agreed that three Pilot Projects Areas would be selected from rural, urban, developing, and a lake watershed.
- Mr. Tom Doyle suggested that the Rural Pilot Project Areas should address drainage problems to offer solutions to drain commissioners who need to provide adequate drainage for agriculture and still protect water quality. None of the nominated Rural Pilot Project Areas has a designated drain as the main receiving waterbody. The Coldwater River, suggested by Ms. Tompkins, is a designated drain that suffers from many water quantity problems when it enters into Kent County. The Coldwater River is engineered in Ionia County to handle increase surface water runoff, however, in Kent County it is no longer a designated county drain. The Coldwater River will be submitting a 319 WMP to the MDEQ in the next few weeks. Addressing the county drain concerns could be a focus for the Watershed project.

f. Selecting Rural Pilot Projects

- The Cedar Creek Watershed has many opportunities for study, including the Pierce Cedar Creek Institute, W. K. Kellogg Biological Station, and the Barry County MSU Extension. However, the creek does not have a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL). The focus on the Cedar Creek Watershed would be how to preserve areas that are near pristine. A pilot project in the Cedar Creek Watershed may not be as applicable to other subwatersheds in the Watershed; therefore, the Cedar Creek Watershed will be given lower priority.
- Lake Creek and Morrison Lake, in the Lake Creek Watershed, are of interest to the MDEQ and the Morrison Lake Improvement Board (MLIB). The MLIB has completed a WMP for Morrison Lake and Ionia County has been very progressive in developing water quality criteria for the entire county. The MDEQ plans to conduct more research on Lake Creek in future Surface Water Quality Assessments. Lake Creek has concerns with *E. coli* and animal feeding operations that are impairing recreation use in Morrison Lake and causing nuisance aquatic plant and algae blooms in Lake Creek. However, the Watershed does not have any TMDLs. Lake Creek will be studied if funds and time remain in the Watershed project.
- Sand Creek was selected as the Rural Pilot Project Area.

g. Selecting Urban Pilot Project Areas

- The Grand River #14 89 was reviewed. Since the Watershed contains Reeds Lake and York Creek, the Steering Committee agreed that the communities of Walker and East Grand Rapids would be supportive. York Creek has a completed WMP and Reeds Lake has many years of water quality data. The Watershed contains many communities that have donated funds to the project. However, much of the Watershed is the Coldbrook Creek. This creek is almost completely contained in enclosed drains, and would not be able to offer visual clue to improving water quality as a result of the Watershed project.
- The Grand River #14 97 contains three superfund sites, is heavily channelized, and has a TMDL. There are opportunities for improving water quality in this subwatershed. The City of Walker aggressively monitors this area with the exception of the Johnson and Millennium Park area. Part of the Millennium Park project will be restoring wetlands and stream bank restoration.

- Buck Creek covers a number of the Phase II communities participating in the Watershed project. The Buck creek and its tributaries are designated trout streams. A TMDL is in place for 2006 for *E. coli*. The Watershed has potential for habitat restoration and recreational use.
- Mr. Koches pointed out that the three Urban Pilot Project Areas and Sand Creek are all hydrologically linked. The fact that these watersheds share hydrologic boundaries should not be ignored. Comments from the committee suggested that all three Urban Pilot Project Areas should be addressed as one unit.
  - Critical areas would be identified and inventory would only be completed in those areas.
  - To complete a Pilot Project Area this large would require a more detailed scope of work to ensure that this project could be completed within the project's budget and deadline.
  - The AWRI will focus on Rural Pilot Project Areas and will assist FTC&H with Urban Pilot Project Areas.

#### 6. Other Business

##### a. Evaluation Team Meeting

- March 12, 2003, at FTC&H from 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- Check in at reception desk upon arrival.

##### b. Mr. Connors will represent the Steering Committee at the Evaluation Team Meeting.

#### 7. Future Meetings

##### a. Sustainability Meeting

- March 6, 2003, at FTC&H from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

##### b. Steering Committee Meeting

- April 15, 2003, at East Grand Rapids City Hall from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

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#### **DISTRIBUTION:**

##### Attendees

Mr. Chris Kenyon - City of Ionia  
Mr. Jim Beelen - Allendale Township  
Mr. Tom Leonard - West Michigan Environmental Action Council  
Mr. Jim Holtvluwer - Georgetown Township  
Mr. Paul Geerlings - Ottawa County Drain Commissioner  
Mr. Corky Overmyer - City of Grand Rapids  
Ms. Abigail Matzke - AWRI  
Ms. Laurie Beth Nederveld - AWRI