



Lower Grand River Watershed Project

Meeting Minutes

PROJECT: Lower Grand River Watershed Project **MEETING DATE:** April 15, 2003
SUBJECT: Steering Committee **MEETING START:** 11 a.m.
MEETING SITE: East Grand Rapids Municipal Building **MEETING ADJOURN:** 1:15 p.m.
PREPARED BY: Mr. Jason E. Buck **PROJECT No.:** G02408

ATTENDING: Mr. Brian Donovan - City of East Grand Rapids
Mr. Corky Overmyer - City of Grand Rapids
Ms. Erika Rosebrook - Kent County Administration
Mr. Jim Holtvluwer - Georgetown Township
Ms. Kristine Huizen - Frey Foundation
Mr. Paul Geerlings - Ottawa County Drain Commissioner
Mr. Scott Conners - City of Walker
Mr. Andy Bowman - Grand Valley Metropolitan Council (GVMC)
Ms. Janice Tompkins - Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ)
Mr. John Koches - GVSU Annis Water Resources Institute (AWRI)
Ms. Abigail Matzke - AWRI
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

- a. Mr. Andy Bowman introduced himself and indicated that he will be serving as the acting director of the GVMC and as the Watershed Administrator for the Lower Grand River Watershed (Watershed) project until a new executive director has been hired.

2. Sustainability Subcommittee

- a. The members of the Sustainability Subcommittee requested a clarification of their roles and tasks. Different definitions of sustainability have led to different interpretations. In one interpretation, the Sustainability Subcommittee would be ensuring the long-term health of the Watershed ecosystem. In the other interpretation, the Sustainability Subcommittee would be committed to continuing the goals of the Watershed project past the grant timeline and ensuring the implementation of the recommendations in the Watershed Management Plan (WMP).
- b. Mr. Bowman presented a draft model of a sustainability strategy. The scope of work for the grant project only specifies that a framework is needed to maintain the focus of this Watershed project and not to create an overall vision for the future of the Watershed. The Steering Committee recognized the value of having an overall vision, but also noted that creating a vision is beyond the original scope of work.



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- c. Ms. E. Wendy Ogilvie distributed an outline of the scope of work as described in the project's work plan and the vision strategy developed by Ms. Janice Tompkins. The Steering Committee decided that the Sustainability Subcommittee should abide by the Watershed project's scope of work and develop an organizational framework for the Watershed project, identify additional funding opportunities, and integrate goals of projects into existing organizations and activities.
- d. Mr. James E. Smalligan, P.E. suggested using an alternative to "sustainability" in the Sustainability Subcommittee's title. The Sustainability Subcommittee's name could be changed to reflect its role as a force to continue the Watershed project. Suggestions for the new name were Project Sustainability Subcommittee and Project Continuity Subcommittee.
- e. Mr. Brian Donovan noted that it would be helpful to have a separate committee define the overall vision as soon as possible. This vision would provide direction for the Steering Committee and subcommittees. Ms. Tompkins will assist in developing the vision committee and will provide direction for this group, possibly using the Grand River Forum (Forum) as a resource.
- f. Mr. Bowman discussed the possibility of partnering with the West Michigan Strategic Alliance for the long-term sustainability of the Watershed project.
- g. Mr. Scott Connors suggested that the Forum should have input on the overall vision of the Watershed. There are many users of water resources and they need to have ownership of the project. Mr. Corky Overmyer and Mr. John Koches both recommended that others outside the Watershed should be invited to participate in developing the vision. Other projects have had similar struggles with developing a vision and inviting their input could provide the needed inspiration.

3. Mission Statement

- a. Ms. Ogilvie presented the draft mission statement that was requested by the Steering Committee at the last meeting from the Forum survey responses.
- b. Ms. Kristine Huizen suggested that the mission statement be handed off to the group developing the project vision. The Steering Committee and Sustainability Subcommittee will use the Watershed project's scope of work for developing their directive.

4. Pilot Project Areas

- a. The Steering Committee requested that FTC&H review the scope of work and make a determination if all six pilot project areas could be completed with current resources.
 - The six pilot project areas were determined to be too large of an area to complete with current funds.
 - The Sand Creek and Urban Watersheds have enough data and support that these areas could feasibly have 319 approvable WMPs developed by the project deadline with current funding.
- b. The Environmental Protection Agency has announced that it will require nine elements to be incorporated into all 319 grant funded watershed projects to be eligible for 319 implementation funding.
 - The existing funding and resources are insufficient to complete the Sand Creek and the three Urban Pilot Project Areas to meet the nine additional elements.



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- The MDEQ possibly has additional funding to update WMPs to meet the nine additional elements.
 - If the Watershed project is awarded the supplemental grant funding, the Pilot Project Areas will be able to meet the nine additional elements. Any resources remaining will be applied to the Cedar Creek and Lake Creek Watersheds.
 - Ms. Tompkins will question the MDEQ program to confirm if the Watershed is eligible for additional funding to complete the nine elements and if 319 implementation funding will be available for the project if the nine elements are not included in the WMPs.
- c. The nine elements will require a greater level of pollutant load reduction estimates.
- Mr. Koches asked if monitoring programs would be needed to estimate pollutant load reductions.
 - Mr. Donovan and Mr. Overmyer stated that their communities have had long-term monitoring at several sites. This data would be available for use in the Pilot Project Area WMPs.
 - The 319 program does not require monitoring; however, it is essential for evaluating the program.
- d. The goal of the pilot projects is to create tools for other subwatershed to use to create WMPs.
- Mr. Koches suggested that AWRI work with the Technical Subcommittee to develop a monitoring framework. The framework would provide quality assurance and quality control and a common program to create comparative water quality data for the subwatersheds.
 - Ms. Tompkins informed the Steering Committee of The Nature Conservancy's program in the Rogue River Watershed to develop a Report Card for streams. The Report Card will assess the health of a watershed by looking at key parameters that indicate the level of water quality. For example, a certain species may only be present in high quality streams. If this species is not present, the Report Card would reflect a lower score.
- e. Mr. Koches presented the VSEC data interpretation of the critical areas in the Watershed.
- The VSEC information related water chemistry, land use, and stream stability to identify areas that require added protection to maintain high-quality water resources.
 - Initial results of the VSEC interpretation will be improved by using additional parameters to better correlate the known polluted areas with the resulting critical areas.
 - Mr. Koches believes that the data does not incorporate the level of storm water runoff that is received in urban areas.



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5. Subcommittee Updates

- a. The Rural Subcommittee will meet April 22, 2003, at 9 a.m. ,at the Wyoming Clean Water Plant.
- b. The Information and Education Subcommittee will meet April 22, 2003, at 10:30 a.m., at the Wyoming Clean Water Plant.
- c. The Urban Subcommittee will meet April 22, 2003, at 1:15 p.m., at the Wyoming Clean Water Plant.
- d. The Sustainability Subcommittee will meet April 24, 2003, at 1:30 p.m., at FTC&H.
- e. The Technical Subcommittee will meet June 5, 2003, at 10:30 a.m., at FTC&H.

6. Future Meetings

- a. The Steering Committee will meet May 27, 2003, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., at the Georgetown Township Hall.
- b. The Watershed website (<http://www.gvsu.edu/wri/isc/lowgrand>) posts meeting dates, times, and minutes.
- c. A reminder for the next meeting will be sent by email.

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DISTRIBUTION:

Attendees

Mr. Chris Kenyon - City of Ionia
Mr. Jim Beelen - Allendale Township
Mr. Tom Doyle - Barry County Drain Commissioner
Mr. Tom Leonard - West Michigan Environmental Action Council
Ms. Laurie Beth Nederveld - AWRI



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