



Lower Grand River Watershed Project

MEETING MINUTES

Project: Lower Grand River Watershed Project Meeting Date: April 1, 2004
Subject: Steering Committee Meeting Start: 11:30 a.m.
Meeting Site: FTC&H - Grand Rapids Office Meeting Adjourn: 2 p.m.
Conference Room 2C1
Prepared By: Ms. E. Wendy Ogilvie Project No.: G02408
Attending: Mr. Brian Donovan - City of East Grand Rapids
Mr. Paul Geerlings - Ottawa County Drain Commissioner
Mr. Tom Doyle - Barry County Drain Commissioner
Mr. Jim Oosting - Coldwater River Watershed Council
Mr. Karl Hausler - Michigan Department of Agriculture
Mr. Don Stypula - Grand Valley Metropolitan Council (GVMC)
Mr. Andy Bowman - GVMC
Ms. Janice Tompkins - Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ)
Ms. Laurie Beth Nederveld - Grand Valley State University (GVSU), Annis Water Resources
Institute (AWRI)
Ms. E. Wendy Ogilvie - Fishbeck, Thompson, Carr & Huber, Inc. (FTC&H)

1. Welcome and Introductions

Mr. Andy Bowman welcomed everyone to the meeting and reviewed the agenda.

2. Evaluation Reports

Evaluations questions were handed out at this meeting to ensure complete participation from the entire Lower Grand River Watershed (LGRW) Steering Committee (Steering Committee). Members were asked to complete the questions and place the sheets in a pre-addressed envelope to the third-party evaluation consultant. Members choosing to complete the questions after the meeting were asked to fax or mail them by Friday March 16th, 2004, to Ms. Kellie Dubay, Tetra Tech, 10306 Eaton Place, Suite 340, Fairfax, VA 22030, fax (216) 861-2960. All evaluation comments will be kept confidential and will not be seen by project staff.

3. Lower Grand River Watershed Management Plan (WMP)

Ms. E. Wendy Ogilvie reminded the members that draft copies of Chapter 2 of the WMP were distributed at the previous meeting. Comments on this chapter should be sent to Ms. Ogilvie or Mr. Jason E. Buck. Ms. Ogilvie distributed a draft of Chapter 1 of the WMP. The following comments were noted and Chapter 1 will be revised accordingly:

- More information about the uniqueness of the LGRW and the LGRW project.
- Mr. Tom Doyle offered to send information about the demographics of Barry County to be added to Section 1.1.2.
- Demographic section should tie in more to the impacts that changes in demographics have on the land and water quality. What does growth mean to the LGRW?



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Lower Grand River Watershed Project

- Explain source for information about urban clusters, and provide a description.
- Include the goals and objectives of the Lake Michigan Lakewide Management Plan and the Upper Grand in Section 1.2.

4. Grand River Forum (Forum)

Mr. Bowman explained that the previous Steering Committee meeting focused on the specifications of an organization. The Vision Committee is looking at the elements of public awareness, data management, and organization that will make the LGRW organization effective. All of the strategic components have similar needs that must be met in order to create the desired type of organization.

Mr. Bowman reviewed the activity that took place at the Forum on March 16, 2004. The vision, mission, and core values for the Lower Grand River are being developed by the Vision Committee:

Vision

Swimming, drinking, fishing, and enjoying our Grand River Watershed: Connecting water with life.

Mission

Discover and restore all water resources and celebrate our shared water legacy throughout our entire Grand River Watershed community.

Core Values:

- LGRW activities are diverse, inclusive and collaborative.
- LGRW efforts are sustainable and high quality.
- LGRW images and messages create a widely shared sense of legacy and heritage.
- LGRW methods and products are holistic and employ a systems approach.
- LGRW organization and program evaluates progress and rewards success.

The Vision Committee created tables that identify strategic components for public awareness, data management, and organizations that tie back into what is needed for the vision. Each component includes objectives that contribute to the vision, mission, and core values. The focus group sessions, conducted by the Vision Committee, identified strategic needs for those components: partners, communications, technology, infrastructure, financing, skills, and evaluation. The tables were presented at the Forum and the attendees filled in the information for the needs of each component.

Mr. Bowman presented the information collected at the Forum.. The Steering Committee was asked to review and provide additional comments on the organization component.

The following comments were provided by the Steering Committee pertaining to the Strategic Component of Organization (attached):

Objective 1

Be efficiently and invisibly staffed. The work of a LGRW organization must be well known and highly regarded, independent of staff members, and services offered.

- What does invisibly staffed mean? Change the word to mean that the image is formed by the watershed organization, not the individuals that staff the organization.



Lower Grand River Watershed Project

- Organization must communicate well with all generations.

Objective 2

Include a wide range of membership types. This should involve sub-basin representation, local and county governmental officials, other government agency representatives, nonprofit organizations, private businesses, riparian, lake and other water-based associations, and dedicated individuals.

- Emphasize a wide base of membership and numerous partnerships.
- Communications should involve all areas of the LGRW and meetings should rotate locations.
- Use membership fees or an incentive contribution (do not say tax) for funding. Often individuals will not become involved or interested in something until they have to pay for it.
- Skills of facilitation are needed.
- Recognize if representatives on the organization are truly representing their group or just promoting their own agenda.
- Build more incentives for membership. Do not just paint a rosy picture; identify what needs to be done.

Objective 3

Be the custodian of the vision, mission, and strategic direction established for the LGRW. This should include routinely conducting reviews of vision, mission, and direction as well as taking steps to reassure the LGRW community that apparent independent activities throughout the LGRW are being directed to those ends.

- Keep the founders of the organization in touch as the organization develops
- Continual communication with key players
- Encourage two-way data networking with technology
- Use community surveys and membership questionnaires to evaluate effectiveness

Objective 4

Be acknowledged as the "go to" place for water issues by coordinating, convening, lobbying, catalyzing and facilitating. A highly credible manner and image must be maintained.

- Develop partnerships with statewide organizations, such as the Michigan Water Environment Association.
- Smaller subwatershed groups within the LGRW should be able to get help from the LGRW organization in getting the word out about their groups' efforts and activities.
- Use broadband networks and expanding technologies (LAN-WAN).
- Provide services and products for subwatersheds to generate funds.
- Encourage theme of "Water - the universal solvent".



Lower Grand River Watershed Project

- Make this the place that answers the “911 calls” for water related issues. Develop flow in the structure so that the support is there and resources can be used (letters of support, scientific data, direct to correct agency for enforcement, etc.)

Objective 5

Provide the types and degrees of services that are really desired and be seen and understood as doing that. This includes being an acknowledged source of information and direction on water issues. Most importantly must involve environmental community, public/private business sectors, and local governments.

- Ensure that services stay within the vision of the organization and are not sidetracked by chasing grant funds.
- Keep a pulse on the LGRW to make certain that the right services are being offered.
- Develop partnerships with other groups involved in water issues.
- Use advertisements for communication of services.
- Charge fees for services to generate funds.
- Keep funding at a level that will enable a paid staff to have stable funding.

Objective 6

Institute the celebration, heritage, and legacy aspects of the mission within both the LGRW and our entire Great Lakes region through continual scanning, inventorying, evaluations, reporting, and recognitions.

- Expand membership through these activities to generate funds through membership fees.

Objective 7

Be a well-known organization whose "role" is distinctive and widely understood.

- Develop effective marketing plan to increase communications.
- Use technology to enable those interested to link with the data management component.
- Use focus groups on a continual basis to measure awareness of organization and what it can do.

5. Where do we go from here?

Mr. Bowman stated that at the conclusion of this project a provisional organization will be created that has the ability to reinvent itself under GVMC or another agency. The organization cannot be entirely created at this point, and a transition time is needed to get a better definition of what the organization is to become.

GVMC will take the responsibility of getting the LGRW organization through this process.

Members of the Steering Committee asked if bylaws were needed for a provisional organization. Mr. Bowman responded that bylaws could be developed, but Mr. Donovan suggested that the bylaws should not be drawn up until the organization has developed a more permanent structure.



Lower Grand River Watershed Project

Ms. Janice Tompkins offered an example of the bylaws, strategic plan, and work plan that the partners for the Saginaw Bay Watershed developed, which she believes to be an appropriate model for the LGRW. These documents are attached.

A workshop to explain how to use the Lower Grand River WMP will be open to all LGRW stakeholders. Notification of the workshop must reach everyone in the watershed for an effective public participation effort. Members discussed the best methods to deliver the notices, and suggestions were made of direct mail, e-mail, and newspaper notices. The LGRW website will be highlighted in the notification as a place for those interested to get more information.

The members of the Steering Committee are asking all committee and subcommittee members to link the Lower Grand River website to the existing websites of their communities or organizations as soon as possible. The Lower Grand River website is:

<http://www.gvsu.edu/wri/isc/lowgrand/index.htm>

Assistance is available at AWRI, if needed, to create the link on the websites.

6. Next Meetings

- Thursday, May 13, 2004, FTC&H - Grand Rapids Office
- Thursday, June 24, 2004, location to be determined.

7. Adjourn

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Attachments
By e-mail

Distribution:

Attendees

Mr. John Hardy - Maple Row Dairy
Mr. Scott Conners - City of Walker
Mr. Chris Kenyon - City of Ionia
Mr. Jim Beelen - Allendale Township
Mr. Jim Holtvluwer - Georgetown Township
Mr. Tom Leonard - West Michigan Environmental Action Council
Mr. John Koches - GVSU, AWRI
Mr. Corky Overmyer - City of Grand Rapids, Environmental Protection Services
Ms. Kristine Huizen - Frey Foundation
Mr. James E. Smalligan, P.E. - FTC&H
Mr. Jason E. Buck - FTC&H