



# Lower Grand River Watershed Project

## MEETING MINUTES

Project: Lower Grand River Watershed (LGRW) Project Meeting Date: July 29, 2004  
Subject: Steering Committee Meeting Start: 11:30 a.m.  
Meeting Site: FTC&H - Grand Rapids Office Meeting Adjourn: 1:30 p.m.  
Conference Room 2C1  
Prepared By: Ms. E. Wendy Ogilvie Project No.: G02408  
Attending: Mr. Corky Overmyer - Grand Rapids  
Ms. Kristine Huizen - Frey Foundation  
Mr. Brian Donovan - City of East Grand Rapids  
Mr. Paul Geerlings - Ottawa County Drain Commissioner  
Mr. Jim Oosting - Bowne Township Planning Commission  
Mr. Don Stypula - Grand Valley Metropolitan Council (GVMC)  
Ms. Janice Tompkins - Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ)  
Mr. John Koches - GVSU, Annis Water Resources Institute  
Ms. E. Wendy Ogilvie - Fishbeck, Thompson, Carr & Huber, Inc. (FTC&H)

### 1. Watershed Organization

- a. Interim Structure - Mr. Don Stypula opened the meeting with a discussion on the financial issues of the GVMC and the concern of the board in taking on the responsibility of establishing a watershed organization. A funding source is needed to carry out this task. Mr. John Koches suggested that Mr. Stypula approach the GVMC board with the idea that a permanent Natural Resources Coordinator is needed at GVMC and the increase in dues would provide this regional environmental planning service for the GVMC members. Ms. Janice Tompkins stated that the Vision Committee had discussed developing a proposal to submit to various agencies and organizations to secure grant funding for this interim period of establishing a watershed organization. Ms. Kristine Huizen indicated that the Frye Foundation and other community foundations are frequently willing to fund this type of project, often providing the seed money for organizations to get started. The members all agreed that watershed groups within the LGRW have expressed a desire to contribute to this effort as it would assist them in their planning and implementation projects.
- b. Goals and Objectives of Organization - Mr. Stypula discussed the funding that the Urban Cooperation Board (UCB) supplied to GVMC to hire a Natural Resources Coordinator. Mr. Brian Donovan is involved in the UCB and stated that it might be possible to amend the contract with UCB to use the funding for coordinating the establishment of the LGRW Organization. Mr. Donovan agreed to contact the board to discuss the matter. The board would want to know what additional funding would be used in this effort, what the goals are, and where the organization would be housed. Members stated again that additional funding could come from foundations and watershed groups. The goals of the organization would be to provide assistance to watershed groups and municipalities in planning for water quality and oversee water quality initiatives in the region. GVMC could house this interim organization, but other visible, accessible locations would be considered. The funding would be used to write additional grants, set fee structures for the organization, and determine how to create a sustainable funding mechanism.



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- c. Survey of Community Leaders - Mr. Stypula distributed examples of two surveys that have been used in southeast Michigan to assess awareness of their watershed and water quality issues and to collect information about their watersheds. Mr. Stypula asked the members if sending out this type of survey would help generate discussion and interest in the LGRW. The members agreed that the expense and time of conducting a survey was not appropriate at this time. A letter will be drafted to be sent to all committee and subcommittee members of the LGRW project thanking them for their participation in the project and asking for their commitment to this interim organization.

## 2. Lower Grand River Watershed Management Plan (WMP)

- a. LGRW Guidebook - Ms. Wendy Ogilvie presented the draft of the LGRW Guidebook that will be used in training sessions for the LGRW tools for developing a Watershed Management Plan (WMP) in the LGRW. The guidebook is formatted after the MDEQ's "Blue Book" for developing a watershed management plan for water quality. The guidebook will be used at the MDEQ's Grantee Training session, scheduled for September 8 and 9, 2004, at the Kellogg Biological Station.
- b. Review Draft of Chapter 6 - The Grand Vision - The first sections of Chapter 6 of the Lower Grand River WMP was distributed (attached or go to [www.gvsu.edu/wri/isc/lowgrand/](http://www.gvsu.edu/wri/isc/lowgrand/) to view the entire document). The members were asked to review the document and provide comments by August 6, 2004, so the final revisions to the plan can be completed. The plan will be submitted to MDEQ by August 13, 2004.
- c. Media Event Coordination - At the previous Steering Committee meeting, Mr. Stypula recommended that this project have a media event to promote the cooperation and achievements that the communities have developed as a result of this project. The media event could be tied into the Grand River cleanup that the City of Grand Rapids (City) is organizing for this fall. Ms. Ogilvie will contact the City to discuss the coordination of these efforts.

## 3. Grant Status

- a. Buck Creek/Plaster Creek/Coldwater River 319 Grant - MDEQ has awarded grant funding to the Buck Creek/Plaster Creek/Coldwater River Watershed *E. coli* project. The project would begin late September or early October.
- b. Roles and Responsibilities - Ms. Tompkins asked to meet with GVMC, FTC&H, and AWRI to revise the work plan. MDEQ has completed much of the water quality sampling that was proposed in the grant, thus the funding that was earmarked for sampling could be used elsewhere.
- c. Sand Creek - Ms. Ogilvie inquired as to the status of the Sand Creek water grant application. Ms. Tompkins stated that project could be funded through State of Michigan's Clean Michigan Initiative (CMI) once those funds are released, but no official date has been determined for the release of those funds.
- d. The Nature Conservancy - The details of the work plan for the monitoring report card being developed through The Nature Conservancy are still being developed. The proposal will be submitted in the next Request for Proposals released by MDEQ.



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## 4. Other Opportunities

- a. Thornapple River Watershed - The Thornapple River Watershed Council (TRWC) and the Barry Conservation District (BCD) are anticipating applying for a 319 grant to develop a watershed management plan. Ms. Tompkins has encouraged them to work with GVMC, FTC&H, and AWRI to use the tools developed for the LGRW, using the Thornapple River Watershed as a pilot project for the tools. The Thornapple River Watershed is a priority in the LGRW. Ms. Ogilvie has contacted Ms. Kim Walton, BCD, who expressed interest in having the Thornapple River Watershed as a pilot project area. Mr. Steve Walker and Mr. Fred Steketee, TRWC, will also be contacted to continue these discussions. Mr. Jim Oosting is on the BCD board and will present the opportunity to the board at the next board meeting.

## 5. Next Meeting

- Thursday, September 23, 2004, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. , FTC&H - Grand Rapids Office

## 6. Adjourn

Meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Attachments  
By e-mail

### Distribution:

#### Attendees

Mr. Tom Doyle - Barry County Drain Commissioner  
Mr. Scott Conners - City of Walker  
Mr. Jim Holtvluwer - Georgetown Township  
Mr. Karl Hausler - Michigan Department of Agriculture  
Mr. John Hardy - Maple Row Dairy  
Mr. Chris Kenyon - City of Ionia  
Mr. Jim Beelen - Allendale Township  
Mr. Tom Leonard - West Michigan Environmental Action Council  
Mr. Andy Bowman - GVMC  
Mr. James E. Smalligan, P.E. - FTC&H  
Ms. Laurie Beth Nederveld - FTC&H



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