



Lower Grand River Watershed Project

MEETING MINUTES

Project: Lower Grand River Watershed Project Meeting Date: October 9, 2003
Subject: Steering Committee Meeting Start: 11 a.m.
Meeting Site: Frey Foundation Meeting Adjourn: 1:30 p.m.
Prepared By: Mr. Jason E. Buck Project No.: G02408
Attending: Ms. Kristen Huizen - Frey Foundation
Mr. Brian Donovan - City of East Grand Rapids
Mr. Corky Overmyer - City of Grand Rapids-Environmental Protection Services
Ms. Erica Rosebrook - Kent County Administration
Mr. Jim Oosting - Coldwater River Watershed Council
Ms. Janice Tompkins - Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ)
Mr. Andy Bowman - Grand Valley Metropolitan Council (GVMC)
Mr. John Koches - Grand Valley State University - Annis Water Resources Institute (AWRI)
Ms. Abigail Matzke - AWRI
Ms. Laurie Beth Nederveld - 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

2. Subcommittee Updates

a. Urban

- Ms. E. Wendy Ogilvie updated the Steering Committee on progress being made in the Urban Subcommittee. Mr. Andy Bowman suggested that letters be sent out to all urban communities involved in the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Phase II Storm Water Regulations. The letter would remind municipal and township officials of the permit requirements and that a representative should be attending these meetings to stay abreast on storm water management topics.
- The Urban Best Management Practices (BMPs) Tour was well attended. Attendees were introduced to innovative storm water BMPs in the City of Wyoming and at the Rivertown Crossings Mall in Grandville.
- Components of the Buck Creek Watershed Management Plan (WMP) will be reviewed by the Urban Subcommittee.

b. Rural

- The Rural Subcommittee has not held a meeting since the last Steering Committee meeting.



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- Macroinvertebrate surveys of Sand Creek have been performed in 1993, 1994, 1996, 2002, and 2003. The survey uses methods outlined in the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) Procedure 51. A Quality Assurance Project Plan will be submitted to the MDEQ for the macroinvertebrate survey and any other surveys conducted for this project (results from the macroinvertebrate studies are attached).
- Components of the Sand Creek WMP will be reviewed by the Rural Subcommittee.
- The next Rural Subcommittee meeting is scheduled for October 21, 2003, at 9 a.m., at the Wyoming Clean Water Plant.

c. Technical

- The Technical Committee has not held a meeting since the last Steering Committee meeting.
- The BMP recommendations and schedules for implementation in the Buck Creek and Sand Creek WMPs will be reviewed by the Technical Subcommittee.

d. Information and Education (I&E)

- The I&E Committee is working on developing the I&E Strategy for the Lower Grand River Watershed (LGRW) Pilot Project Areas (PPA). This strategy will be included as part of the WMPs. The I&E Committee is currently evaluating public outreach methods, target audiences, and messages for the Buck Creek Watershed.
- Mr. John Koches noted that the AWRI staff with experience in peer review of scientific journals will be available for reviewing future I&E products.

e. Vision

- The Vision Committee has met twice since the last Steering Committee meeting.
- Vision Committee members are using visions developed in the Grand River Forum (Forum) to develop an overall vision for the LGRW. The Vision Committee has first separated out Forum comments into categories of goals, objectives, and visions. After completing this task, they met again to discuss how to use the Forums' ideas to develop a vision for the entire Watershed. The vision currently being considered is "The Lower Grand River; swimmable, fishable, drinkable, enjoyable—connecting water for life." The core values of the Vision Committee are environment, economics, and social justice.
- The Vision Committee's next task will be researching strategic plans and finding examples that would work well for the LGRW project.
- Ms. Janice Tompkins strongly recommends that the Vision Committee develop this strategic plan to focus on the issues to avoid chasing grant dollars.



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3. Summary of Panel Discussion

- a. The Watershed Organization Panel Discussion was held on September 30, 2003, at 6:30 p.m., at the Algoma Township Hall. The panelists represented an excellent mix of organization structures with a wide range of funding sources and membership.
- b. Panelists included:
 - Mr. Gary Noble, Muskegon River Watershed Assembly
 - Ms. Courtney Shosh, Friends of the Rogue
 - Ms. Jessica Opfer, Clinton River Watershed Council
 - Mr. Jim Bos, Pere Marquette Watershed Council
- c. Mr. Bowman thought that a hybrid of all the groups represented would serve the Lower Grand River. The Steering Committee needs to look at these types of organization structures to determine what works well on a regionally and at the subwatershed level.
- d. Ms. Ogilvie suggested that the Steering Committee would develop the strategy for implementing a watershed organization. These ideas would be presented to the Forum. The Forum would then serve as the vessel to carry the LGRW project into the implementation phase.
 - Mr. Koches recommended that a transition organization would be helpful during the next two years.
 - Mr. James E. Smalligan, P.E. supported this recommendation and added that a strategy should include a method to create a long-term organization that supports the LGRW's vision and mission statements.
- e. Mr. Koches commented on how the Muskegon River began as a scientific and data repository. He expressed a desire for the LGRW organization to have a strong scientific backing. This would help prioritize problems to focus funding on areas that have the highest potential for successful restoration.
- f. Mr. Corky Overmyer raised the point that for the watershed organization to be successful, it needs to have a broad range of services for riparians, businesses, and governments. This combination of services would support the watershed vision core values of environment, economics, and social justice.

4. Watershed Management Plans

- a. Schedule
 - The MDEQ has indicated that a request for proposals (RFP) for Section 319 Nonpoint Source Grants may be announced in mid to late October. Watersheds that have approved management plans are eligible for funding. The prospect of receiving Section 319 funds has made it necessary to adjust the project schedule to complete the WMPs by November 30, 2003.
 - The WMPs will be reviewed by the Steering Committee in mid-November before public presentation. Schedules for completing the WMPs for the rural and urban PPAs are attached.



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- Mr. Bowman suggested that public meeting dates and locations be set up as soon as possible to allow ample notice in newsletters and newspapers.
- Mr. Smalligan raised a concern that the accelerated schedule may make governments feel that they are being pushed into the WMP recommendations. The schedules should be adjusted to allow ample time for municipal and township review.
- Mr. Koches agreed with this concern and added that the schedule needs to include many opportunities to postpone submittal of the WMPs in the event that quality will suffer due to accelerated work schedules.

b. Water Quality Statements

- A Water Quality Statement (WQS) will be prepared for each PPA. A WQS links the designated uses with the sources and causes of the pollutants that are causing impairments to the LGRWs designated and desired uses, and the goals and objectives to restore the designated uses.
- The WQS for Buck Creek Watershed is attached.

5. Proposals

a. Section 319 Grants

- The Section 319 program will possibly have priorities for projects that address Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs), innovative rural and urban BMPs, and long-term improvements recommended by WMPs.
- There are a number of subwatersheds in the LGRW have approved watershed management plans, making them eligible to receive Section 319 funds. The eligible watersheds with TMDLs for *E. coli* and poor fish communities are attached. The PPAs are included in this list.
- The Coldwater River has a WMP that could be approved by the end of 2003. Possible proposals for the Coldwater River are innovative rural BMPs for converting county drains into wetlands.

b. Other proposals in the LGRW

- Rogue River Ecological Integrity Assessment
 - The Nature Conservancy is developing this project.
 - This assessment protocol may be useful as a pilot project for assessing other subwatersheds in the Lower Grand River Basin.
- Watershed Short Course
 - This proposal is being developed by the Center for Environmental Study (CES).
 - The Watershed Short Course is a program through the Michigan State University Extension.



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- The CES proposal includes five Watershed Short Courses that would be offered in the Grand River Basin. The courses would focus on problems unique to rural or urban areas.
- The Watershed Initiative
 - The Watershed Initiative is an Environmental Protection Agency grant program that specifically funds watershed projects.
 - A potential application of the Watershed Initiative funds could be developing a strategic plan for creating a watershed organization for the LGRW.

6. Next Meeting

- a. The next Steering Committee meeting is scheduled for November 13, 2003, at 11 a.m., at the East Grand Rapids City Hall.

7. Adjourn

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DISTRIBUTION:

Attendees

Mr. Don Stypula - GVMC
Mr. Chris Kenyon - City of Ionia
Mr. Jim Beelen - Allendale Township
Mr. Jim Holtvluwer - Georgetown Township
Mr. Paul Geerlings - Ottawa County Drain Commissioner
Mr. Scott C. Conners - City of Walker
Mr. Tom Doyle - Barry County Drain Commissioner
Mr. John Hardy - Maple Row Dairy
Mr. Tom Leonard - West Michigan Environmental Action Council