

BOONE – DUTCH CREEK WATERSHED PLANNING ♦ MEETING #6

Thursday, June 11, 2015 ♦ 1:00 – 3:00 PM

Village of Johnsburg – Village Hall, 1515 Channel Beach Avenue, Johnsburg, IL

DRAFT Meeting Notes

1.0 Welcome & Attendee Introductions

Tim Loftus, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), welcomed and thanked everyone for coming. Self-introductions followed (attendee list attached). Tim introduced John Huemann, Trustee with the Village of Johnsburg, and thanked him and the Village for hosting today. Mr. Huemann thanked everyone for coming. On behalf of the residents of Johnsburg, he thanked us for the planning work we're doing to protect and preserve water, noting that he is the fourth generation of his family to be in the water supply business.

2.0 Agenda Changes

There were no changes to the agenda.

3.0 April Meeting: brief recap, questions, etc.

Holly Hudson, CMAP, briefly recapped the April Boone-Dutch meeting, mentioning McHenry County College's Sustainability Center, the solar installation at the Shah Center, and their course offerings; the items updated and added in the April draft of the watershed resource inventory; Ed Ellinghausen's chloride presentation; Brian Thomson's presentation on best practices implemented at Biltmore Country Club under the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Gold; and the discussion of BMP identification. She pointed out copies of the meeting notes were available on the sign-in table [and are posted on the project website]. Holly pointed out a couple typos and asked for any additional corrections or clarifications be sent to her.

4.0 Local Watershed Activities, News

Nancy Schietzelt stated that the Environmental Defenders of McHenry County are planning a Boone Creek clean-up event in downtown McHenry; the date is yet to be finalized. Holly said she could share the date in the monthly Boone-Dutch project e-mail to our group. She also suggested that Nancy submit it to FREP for posting on their stream clean-up calendar page.

5.0 Draft Plan / Watershed Resource Inventory Update

Holly presented three map updates. For the "local parks and golf courses" polygons in the current "Open Space" map (Figure 17 on page 33 of the draft Plan), Holly replaced those selections from CMAP's 2010 land use data layer with data provided by the McHenry County Planning & Development Department. The McHenry County data provided subdivision-owned, municipal-owned, township-owned, privately-owned, and golf course open space categories. Holly noticed that some a portion of the City of McHenry's Petersen Park at the NE end of McCullom Lake was not included in the County's layer. No date information was provided with the County GIS data. Even if a few parcels are missing, the

County layer provides a more complete picture of existing, local open space than what was delineated in CMAP's land use data. State, county conservation and forest preserve district, and conservation easement holdings remain derived from their latest databases.

Two new maps show the extent of agricultural parcels from CMAP's 2010 land use inventory overlaid with 1) farmed wetlands and 2) equestrian facilities, high-density animal operations/dairy facilities, and orchards/tree farms from CMAP's 2005 land use inventory. Holly pointed out that these features were interpreted and delineated by someone at CMAP at the time looking at aerial photography and may or may not be complete. The "equestrian facilities" polygons represent "boarding, training, and breeding facilities with associated pastures and buildings;" thus, family farms with a couple/few horses would not be delineated. Similarly, the "high-density animal operations" polygons depict production operations such as "confined feedlots, chicken farms, fish hatcheries," places where livestock are gathered before being trucked away, and dairy facilities (not including grazing land); thus, small farms with a couple/few livestock would not be captured in this data layer.

Holly did compare the polygons over 2012 aerial photography and eliminated one farmed wetland polygon which had no evidence of still being farmed next to Wold Lake. She also eliminated two orchard/tree farm polygons where subdivisions now stood. Holly pointed out that no sod farms were delineated within the Boone-Dutch planning area in CMAP's 2005 land use inventory. [Note: after the meeting, Logan Gilbertsen showed Holly where a portion of a sod farm was within the planning area.]

Ed Ellinghausen asked about "prior converted" wetlands. Ed Weskerna with the McHenry-Lake Soil and Water Conservation District, explained that if a wetland was farmed prior to 2005, it can still be farmed but it cannot be further drained. The current tile can be maintained but additional or larger tile cannot be added that would cause additional drainage. A "reverted wetland" is one that has not been farmed for 5 years and thereby becomes jurisdictional. Tim asked what percent of farmers use financial assistance programs/government subsidies. Ed W. estimated 98% and also noted the assistance type has shifted from price support to assistance with crop insurance premiums; an outcome of the last Farm Bill. Ders Anderson asked Ed W. if he know how many miles of stream buffer have been lost in McHenry County. While Ed W. did not know exactly, he noted a disturbing trend of fences coming out and buffers being eliminated. As corn prices increase, more land is going into production, and larger machinery makes it more efficient to work on larger, unencumbered tracts.

Holly then briefly reviewed the next steps in finishing the watershed resource inventory: including assessments of stream bank erosion and riparian conditions, McCullom Lake shoreline erosion, and detention basins – which is nearly complete.

Lastly, Ders Anderson indicated that he expects to monitor an additional 6 to 7 sites for fish by the end of August.

6.0 Watershed Protection and Restoration Practices

a) Site-specific BMPs

Holly noted several site-specific BMP projects were submitted for the Loyola University Retreat and Ecology Campus (LUREC) and within the City of McHenry. At LUREC, they've proposed streambank stabilization and buffer establishment along Powers Creek, restoring the pond area to a hillside seep and rerouting a portion of the creek to help facilitate fen restoration, retrofitting a portion of a dry detention basin, establishing filter strips along a parking lot and a driveway, and creating vegetated swales in a couple locations. Within the City of McHenry, Logan suggested a couple locations for Boone Creek channel restoration (including two-stage ditch profile and pools and riffles), riparian buffer strip establishment along another section of Boone Creek, a 17-acre wetland restoration, another 8 acres of wetland creation or enhancement, and rain gardens and riparian buffer at Duker and Edgebrook Schools .

Holly noted that CMAP-identified BMPs include detention basin retrofit opportunities documented during the detention basin inventory field work. She suggested that the group consider a percentage of the farmed wetland acres be a restoration target in the plan. Holly implored the group to point out any other critical areas deserving BMP attention on the aerial photo maps, located at the side of the room, after the meeting. She emphasized that submittals of site-specific BMP projects must be wrapped up within the next week so that our consultant can begin work to estimate pollutant load reductions and planning level costs associated with each BMP.

Nancy offered to explore the potential of specific sites for horse/livestock exclusion recommendations.

b) Watershed-wide BMPs / scenarios

Holly began with showing a list of suggested BMP scenario categories: urban stormwater infrastructure retrofits, stream channel and riparian corridor restoration, agricultural, and livestock and equestrian. For urban stormwater (SW) infrastructure retrofits, she provided some context from the Thorn Creek Watershed Plan Addendum whereby the objectives for urban retrofits were to manage SW at the source; use plants and soil to absorb, slow, and filter runoff; and recommend SW facilities that are simple, cost-effective, and enhance community aesthetics – all of which seem reasonable to apply in the Boone-Dutch planning area as well.

Tim continued by showing the list of urban SW retrofit BMPs that were selected in the Thorn Creek Watershed and the percent of the land area in each study unit for which they were applied for the watershed-wide scenarios. Holly noted that Thorn Creek is 104 square mile watershed, was divided into about 20 subwatersheds, and is much more urbanized than Boone-Dutch. The group was asked to comment on whether and which of these BMP scenarios they consider applicable within Boone-Dutch, and for other suggestions.

Dennis Dreher thought that the Filterra and Bacterra devices wouldn't be very applicable in Boone-Dutch except maybe in downtown McHenry. He asked if the percentage of the permeable pavement BMP [5%] represented a percentage of the impervious pavement

present or the area of the entire subwatershed. Holly recalled it was the entire subwatershed. Nancy asked about other parking recommendations that CMAP usually makes, such as smaller parking spaces. Holly noted those types of best practices will be addressed in the planning and policy recommendations section of the watershed plan. Ders offered an example that if there were 20 acres of parking lots along Route 31 in McHenry and Johnsborg, there could be a goal to retrofit 5% of that area to pervious pavement. He asked whether a private party could apply for 319 funds. The answer is yes, though they would need to realize they are on the hook for 10 years to maintain it as permeable pavement, else IEPA has the right to demand a refund of grant monies. Nancy wondered if retrofitting of car washes would be an applicable BMP. The group thought that there was a law that required recycling wash water and that direct discharge was not allowed – at some point the water would be routed to a wastewater treatment plant.

Tim pointed out the stream channel and riparian corridor restoration BMP scenarios proposed in the Thorn Creek addendum. Dennis commented that it seemed the BMPs should be tied to impairments, but Boone Creek is not impaired by nutrients or solids, though maybe McCullom Lake and the Fox River are. It seems a lot of focus should be on maintaining natural hydrology – infiltrating and cleansing runoff. Tim noted that “alteration in streamside or littoral cover” was a cause of impairment for Boone Creek, such that riparian buffer and habitat projects would be applicable. Tim emphasized we need everyone’s input regarding any site- or reach-specific areas to point out in the plan. Dennis stated that in the original Boone Creek plan, the stream was assessed for channelization and bank erosion, and that information can serve as a way to prioritize high erosion areas. Going back to impairments, Ders noted that while Boone Creek is impaired for aquatic life and McCullom Lake for aesthetic quality, Dutch Creek does not have an impairment listed since it has not been assessed by IEPA. Will IEPA still consider Dutch Creek watershed projects? Yes! Tim pointed to the Beaver Creek Watershed Plan in the Kishwaukee River Basin, where Beaver Creek had no impairment listed.

Regarding agricultural BMPs, Tim pointed out that field borders were a watershed-wide BMP in the 9 Lakes Watershed-Based Plan and that maybe a dozen denitrifying bioreactors were suggested in the Jackson Creek plan. Holly asked Ed W. what types of ag BMPs he saw as most needed/applicable in the Boone-Dutch watersheds. He stated they had just completed their transect survey which indicated a losing battle of getting more conservation tillage implemented, with a decline from 80% to 75% since the previous survey in 2013. He’s still seeing no-till practiced but on flat ground, not so much on slopes where it is needed, and its use is economic driven not stewardship driven. Tillage occurs where there is short-term (2-3 year) leasing. There is more conservation tillage in the western part of McHenry County where the land is operator-owned. Nonetheless, there are opportunities to push conservation tillage and no-till [within Boone-Dutch].

Dennis noted the opportunity to restore farmed wetlands on land acquired by MCCD; he did not see such occurring on land currently owned by farmers. Ed W. mentioned CREP (Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program), but farmers view the 10 year commitment as too long.

Regarding livestock and equestrian practices, Holly stated if there were no BMP scenario recommendations offered by the group, some general recommendations could be included in the plan regarding best practices.

In terms of other BMPs, Holly reiterated what she had heard from the group before about promoting volume-based over time-based water softeners. Tim noted that the “brush management” BMP was specified in several projects in the 9 Lakes plan. Tim also pointed out that McHenry County was a leader in chloride reduction for de-icing. Ders asked Joanna Colletti whether any municipalities were contracting with the County for the beet-juice type of deicer. Joanna thought that beet juice was a trend for a while but that pre-wetting is a more common practice now. Logan pointed out the County’s snow and ice management training. Randy Schietzelt noted the trend that as roads are upgraded, curb and gutter is being installed and thus vegetated swales are being eliminated. Therefore, there is an increased impact on streams from chloride in runoff. Dennis recommended that we question that practice of going to curb and gutter to protect groundwater quality and still encourage bioswales in Boone-Dutch. Nancy asked if anyone knew about McHenry DOT experimenting with alfalfa pellets to decrease chloride in runoff. No one had. There was discussion about decreasing the amount of snow on roads by using 6 to 12 rows of corn stalks where applicable to act as a snow fence along (100 feet off) roadways. Ed W. noted there was an incentive to do so in Minnesota but not here in Illinois. Dennis noted tall grass prairie was effective too.

7.0 Information and Education Activities: Discussion and Input

Tim welcomed everyone’s ideas and suggestions. He offered a couple examples from the 9 Lakes Watershed-based Plan: encouraging local municipalities and counties to work more with homeowners associations to maintain detention basins, promoting programs like Conservation @ Home, enacting pet waste pickup ordinances and associated information/education campaigns, and taking advantage of the Northwest Water Planning Alliance. Dennis stated that the original Boone Creek plan included significant outreach and education opportunities. Tim asked what was successful. Dennis answered that the Boone Creek group has not been all that active but they have held several forums. The biggest challenge is getting local municipalities to buy in. He sees more opportunities in this Boone-Dutch plan. The official endorsement of the County will be good.

Nancy asked if diminishing the amount of mowed lawns could be a campaign. Holly thought that was a great idea – a goal could be some percentage of turf grass converted to native gardens, meadows. Logan suggested buffalo grass as an alternative to turf grass. Ders offered the idea of the “Harvard lawn.” It’s regular turf grass but is managed using an organic approach to enhance microbial function so that the roots grow deeper.

Holly noted that the information and education (I/E) component of the plan should support the watershed management goals we crafted at the start of the planning process. She brought up a slide showing the five goals, suggesting that the I/E activities we come up with would fit in as action items under the various goals. Thus, it didn’t appear that a new goal just addressing education was needed, to which the group agreed.

8.0 Next Meeting

The next meeting is planned for Thursday, July 16, 2015, at 1:00 p.m., at a location to be confirmed. [Post-meeting note: The July 16 and August 20 meetings are cancelled. A September 17 meeting is added, and the October meeting date is changed to October 15.]

9.0 Announcements

Holly referred everyone to the announcements listed on the agenda. Nancy highlighted that Brian Daly from CMAP will be speaking about the Fox River Corridor Plan in Algonquin and Carpentersville at the July 1 Green Drinks. Tim announced that his last day at CMAP will be June 26. He has accepted a position at Texas State University as a professor in the Department of Geography and as the Endowed Chair in Water Conservation with the Meadows Center for Water and the Environment. He thanked everyone for our work together over the past 10 years.

10.0 Adjournment

The meeting ended at approximately 3:00 p.m.

ATTACHMENT

ATTENDEES

Boone-Dutch Creek Watershed Planning Meeting #6

Date: June 11 2015

Hosted by: Village of Johnsburg

<u>NAME</u>		<u>ORGANIZATION</u>
Ders	Anderson	Openlands
Joanna	Colletti	McHenry County Planning & Development
Sue	Draffkorn	McHenry County Board
Dennis	Dreher	Boone Creek Watershed Alliance
Ed	Ellinghausen	Boone Creek Watershed Alliance; Village of Bull Valley Board
Logan	Gilbertsen	HR Green
Holly	Hudson	Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
John	Huemann	Village of Johnsburg Board
Bobbi	Lammers-Campbell	Loyola University - LUREC
Tim	Loftus	Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
Brittany	Rivera	Loyola University
Nancy	Schietzelt	Environmental Defenders of McHenry Co.
Randy	Schietzelt	The Land Conservancy of McHenry Co.
Paul	Siegfried	Baxter and Woodman
Michael	Spiering	Loyola University
Ed	Weskerna	McHenry-Lake SWCD

-- DRAFT -- prepared by H. Hudson, CMAP, rev. 6/30/2015