

Blackberry Creek Watershed Coalition

Tuesday, March 20, 2012 ♦ 2:00 – 4:00 PM

Sugar Grove Community House
41 Main St., 2nd Floor
Sugar Grove, IL 60554



MEETING NOTES

1. Welcome & Introductions

Tara Neff, TCF, thanked the Village of Sugar Grove for hosting the meeting. Self-introductions followed. The following people attended:

Tara Neff	- The Conservation Foundation (TCF)
Holly Hudson	- Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP)
Ken Anderson	- Kane County
Megan Andrews	- Kendall County Soil & Water Conservation District (KC SWCD)
Steve Arnold	- Kane County Farm Bureau
Jerad Chipman	- Village of Montgomery
Karen Clementi	- Deuchler Environmental, Inc.
Jerry Elliott	- Sugar Grove Water Authority
Dan Lobbes	- The Conservation Foundation
Tim Loftus	- Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
Bob Rung	- Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Eric Schoeny	- City of Aurora
Barry Studemann	- Cardno ENTRIX
Lori Wolf	- The Conservation Foundation
Richard Young	- Village of Sugar Grove
Angela Zubko	- Kendall County Dept. of Planning, Building & Zoning

2. Final BBC Watershed Action Plan – overview, adoption

Holly Hudson brought copies of the final Blackberry Creek Watershed Action Plan. CMAP provided a limited number of copies to distribute to planning participants. The plan can be accessed on the Fox River Ecosystem Partnership (FREP) website from the Blackberry Creek webpage (<http://foxriverecosystem.org/blackberry.htm>) and on the CMAP website (<http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/watershed-planning>).

Holly stated that the Table of Contents also includes page numbers for figures and tables and that the descriptions of projects on page 125 are arranged from north to south in the

watershed. Blank pages are included for notes. Holly encouraged stakeholders to review Chapter 7 Monitoring Success as we move into the plan implementation phase and noted that Appendix A includes a list of planning participants compiled from sign in sheets.

Tim Loftus, CMAP, thanked Holly for her work during the last few months to make the Plan more professionally appealing since the draft was presented in December. Now we need to determine how to move forward together. Tim stated that the number one characteristic found in watershed groups that are perceived as successful is funding. The second characteristic found in successful watershed groups is participation of both short term and long term project leaders. Number 3 is motivation; number 4 is leadership, number 5 is mission, and number 6 is the amount of data. Organizational leadership for group activities is usually identified as being provided by leads in the short term projects list. Tim pointed out that Sugar Grove Township has implemented part of their bioswale project and are looking to submit a 319 grant application to pursue additional bioswale installation.

To raise the profile of the Plan to governments, CMAP recommends all levels of government adopt a resolution of support that indicates that they support the Plan, in principle, and will work collaboratively with others. Comprehensive plans in both Kane and Kendall Counties note the importance of watershed plans. CMAP is available to help support efforts to encourage Plan adoption and prefers to be invited rather than inviting ourselves. If you would like, CMAP can present a short overview of the Plan and a sample resolution to you and your board. CMAP can also help you reach out to homeowners associations that have been identified as leads – they have revenues which may be available for water quality projects.

Tim noted that the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) was disappointed that the Plan did not include agricultural recommendations or specifically address agricultural. Steve Arnold asked how 319 grants benefit agriculture. Tim responded that Best Management Practices (BMPs) can be supported by 319 funding and agricultural-related BMPs are practical in this area to address nonpoint source pollution. Tim stated that it would be fitting for us to remedy this situation for the next planning cycle. In hindsight, there were some unrealistic expectations for the Soil and Water Conservation Districts' (SWCD) engagement of the agricultural community during the planning process. Potentially, a grant with the SWCD to conduct outreach may help engage the agricultural community more overtly.

Megan Andrews noted that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) program has a cost share and is a voluntary conservation program – they don't approach landowners and provide services by request only. When practices are implemented, landowner information is protected by federal privacy laws. There are workshops and other opportunities to engage the agricultural community; however, the nature of engagement is difficult to understand. Land owners may be looking at a contract for land conversion in 10-year time frame. The co-location of SWCD & Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offices may potentially add to consumer confusion.

Ken Anderson stated that there are opportunities to reach low-hanging fruit to build momentum such as 4-H groups, community fairs, farm bureau activities, etc. These opportunities for education and outreach can be achieved a little at a time. The mandates are not what they used to be and existing programs are not able to compete against commodity prices or selling to a developer. There are some funds available for landowners, like the federal Conservation Reserve Program. Teaching our youth and existing leaders to help them understand these issues is key. The education component is important; the bigger challenge is to find resources to implement the projects.

Steve Arnold asked if there might be an opportunity to reach multiple agricultural landowners rather than individuals through the drainage district. Kane County has one and Kendall County is looking at an opportunity for equine owners.

3. CMAP's Local Technical Assistance (LTA) Program (<http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/lta>)

The LTA Program provides ordinance reviews, comprehensive planning, subarea planning, and planning policy programs. The call for proposals is in May. Collaboration counts, so be sure to talk to others in the watershed before you submit your proposal as projects are ranked against each other. If you plan to apply, be sure to cite the Plan. CMAP staff can provide assistance and help you with the wording to help ensure your application shows a well thought out idea. You may also ask the local government to pass a resolution that shows support for the scope of work including the end date.

4. 319 Grant Application technical assistance (http://foxriverecosystem.org/319_grants.htm)

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and the Fox River Ecosystem Partnership (FREP) Water Resources Committee can help you apply for 319 funds. Holly's presentation is available on the FREP website. The Water Resources Committee will review 319 Grant applications in person on the third Wednesday of every month through June directly following the membership meetings and Noon Networks. Committee members also are available via phone or e-mail from February 15 – July 25, 2012. The Water Resources Committee provides diverse expertise and can help with project scoping and cost estimates.

5. Community Reports –watershed activities, ideas, & news

Jerad Chipman stated that The Village of Montgomery submitted an application for the IKE Disaster Recovery Program. Flood impact planning must be included in the plan or updated The Village of Montgomery's application focuses on two large areas in the village where overflow is diverted to Blackberry Creek. This was a big problem in 1996 due to a culvert under Route 30. The Village of Montgomery is seeking Letters of Support. Holly noted that every county in Illinois, except McHenry County, is eligible to apply; that applications are due March 30; and that her coworker Steve Ostrander can assist with these applications. Be sure to make note of the Blackberry Creek Watershed Plan in your application.

Eric Schoeny provided an update on the Yorkville Bristol Sanitary District/IDNR dam removal project. The dam has been notched and dewatering has commenced in order to facilitate accumulated sediment removal. IDNR is testing the sediment and so far it looks good (i.e., no special handling will be required). The project includes excavation, riffle installation, and wetland mitigation. The limestone from the dam will be used for a historic monument in Jaycee Park. They are not clear on the status of the River Road Bridge reconstruction. It is hoped that the dam project can be completed by end of this year, in late fall.

Bob Rung, IDNR, stated that fish migrate out of the Fox River into Blackberry Creek. There are currently no smallmouth bass and the collapse of fish populations in the creek was documented even before the housing boom during the 80s. Fish move from the tributaries to the river for the winter. More sites are necessary to monitor this activity. Behind York High School off Kennedy Road and Jerhico Park is another long stretch where sampling is not being conducted. Holly talked to residents there. Fish may make it as far as Bliss Woods. A barrier to fish passage might be a big drop there. Their 2002 survey in Kane County documents lots of weird conditions. Sampling in the Fox Basin this year includes two sites in Blackberry Creek and 44 stations total.

Eric Schoeny stated that the Yorkville Bristol Sanitary District planned to do more sampling (summer of 2013).

Ken Anderson reported that the Village of Elburn has selected a contractor to develop their comprehensive plan, with the assistance of a Community Planning Program grant from CMAP. The Elburn plan should be completed by January 2013. Ken also noted that Kane County is still in the process of developing their 2040 plan.

Angela Zubko stated that Kendall County's countywide stormwater ordinance should be approved very shortly.

The Kendall County Farm Bureau is reestablishing Drainage Districts, one of which is in the BBC watershed. Holly will provide a copy of the Blackberry Creek Watershed Plan to Dan Reddy, Kendall County Farm Bureau.

6. Moving Forward – plan implementation discussion

- a) Watershed activities, *such as*:
 - Water quality monitoring program
 - Information/education campaign
- b) Group organization

There is a lack of water quality data in our watershed, though we know that Blackberry Creek is impaired due to fecal coliform. The Fox River is impaired for more parameters below the confluence, but we currently do not know how much Blackberry Creek

contributes. Our group may want to flesh things out to see what a stream monitoring program may look like and what different options may cost.

The Fox River Study Group is testing for fecal coliform, TSS, chloride, phosphorus, dissolved oxygen, temperature, etc., once per month at the confluence of Blackberry Creek and the Fox River. IEPA has been conducting assessments at one site by Bliss Road and one site near Kennedy on private property every 5 years for last 25 years.

For monitoring Blackberry Creek, the parameters we collect should be based on the goals of our monitoring. Use of the data could include comparing and contrasting different stream segments based on drainage areas. It was noted that mussel data can change a stream's rating.

7. Announcements

- c) FREP program: Lower Fox Land Conservation Planning
Wednesday, March 21, 2012 @ 1:00 PM (*John Church, TCF*)
Historic Kendall Co. Court House, 110 W. Madison St, Yorkville

FREP Noon Network: Norris Woods Creek Stabilization & WQ Improvement Project
Wednesday, April 18, 2012, 12:00 Noon – 1: 30 PM (*Denis Kania, SCPD*)
Norris Woods Nature Preserve, 3rd Ave., St. Charles

<http://foxriverecosystem.org/news.htm>

- d) Elgin's Green Expo – Watershed Wanderings
Friday & Saturday, May 4 & 5, 2012
The Centre of Elgin, 100 Symphony Way, Elgin
<http://www.elgingreenexpo.org/>

- e) Other announcements

8. Meeting Adjournment

9. Post-meeting Social – celebrating Plan completion!