Silver Creek / Sleepy Hollow Creek Watershed Action Planning
Meeting Notes
Thursday, March 17, 2011 • 1:30 – 3:30 PM
Oakwood Hills Village Hall, 3020 North Park Dr., Oakwood Hills, IL

1. **Welcome & Introductions**
   Participants were welcomed and everyone was provided with an opportunity to introduce themselves (see attendance list). Watershed Coordinator Lynn Rotunno gave a brief overview of the planning process and meeting agenda.

2. **Draft "Introduction" Chapter Overview**
   Dawn Thompson of CMAP introduced the draft introduction chapter of the watershed plan. Planning participants have previously expressed interest in combining the Silver Creek and Sleepy Hollow Creek Watershed plans into one document because of similarities in the watersheds and shared watershed communities. In order to support this recommendation, one watershed plan will be produced for the Silver Creek and Sleepy Hollow Creek Watershed Planning Areas together. Dawn asked if participants would like to see additional information included about the Fox River. Participants agreed. Comments included the importance of baseline data and questions about what type of water quality data is currently available. There was a general suggestion to use language throughout the plan that is understandable to non-technical audiences. Lynn asked for participants to contact her with additional input at watershedinfo@mcdefenders.net or 630-674-5900. A draft of the introduction chapter can be downloaded from http://foxriverecosystem.org/silver.htm under "Resources & Documents."

3. **Results of Code and Ordinance Worksheets, Green Practices Surveys**
   Dawn reviewed the model development principles and rating system of the Center for Watershed Protection's Code and Ordinance Worksheet. The Worksheet was used to review government codes and ordinances throughout the watersheds to assess successes and opportunities for protecting water resources. Government participation in the process was good with all except two jurisdictions participating. The development principles are divided into three major categories. Considering both watershed planning areas together, the average *impervious surfaces* score was 18 out of 40, the average *best management practices* score was 24 out of 36 and the average *critical lands protections* score was 18 out of 24. There is a total possible overall score of 100. The average overall score in the Silver Creek and Sleepy Hollow Creek Watersheds was 61. Dawn discussed future opportunities to improve protections for water quality including the possibility of holding local site-planning roundtables to systematically review existing development rules in the context of the model development principles and determine if changes can or should be made to local development rules. CMAP could be available to assist with these site-planning roundtables. The possibility of including this recommendation as a watershed plan management objective was discussed.

   Participants contributed comments and questions regarding the code and ordinance review results. Questions included reasons for the score results under the *critical lands protection* section. A participant asked if the scores could be weighted based on the percentage of land that each government jurisdiction represented in relationship to the size of the planning areas. This possibility will be reviewed. Comments also included the importance of long-term protection, management, and restoration of natural areas and consideration of upland/woodland areas. A participant asked if Class III Special Resource Groundwater designation areas are being considered as a tool to protect groundwater dependent sensitive natural areas such as within dedicated Illinois Nature Preserves (more information here, see p. 26). A suggestion was made that it would be helpful to communities if site-planning roundtables were coordinated with other organizations working to protect water resources. The results of these reviews and surveys will be included in the watershed plan.

   Holly Hudson of CMAP reviewed the results of a Green Practices Survey conducted by CMAP to collect baseline data on local green practices to measure future progress, identify topics of most interest to

communities, offer technical assistance and educational resources, facilitate the exchange of ideas and knowledge among peers, and partner with other technical assistance providers. Seventy-five percent of government jurisdictions have currently responded to the survey request. Highlights included 89% of jurisdictions utilizing rain gardens, vegetated swales, &/or tree filters on their property, and 78% responded they were actively promoting natural landscaping. Twenty-two percent of the jurisdictions responding had a policy, incentive, or regulation to reduce water use, and 33% had a policy, incentive, or regulation to promote rain barrel use. Over half of the jurisdictions that responded were interested in learning more about organic weed killers, fungicides, and fertilizers. Participants asked about opportunities to reduce mass grading. Stormwater credits for infiltration were also discussed.

4. **Site Planning & Site Design Techniques to Minimize Stormwater Runoff**
Holly presented information on seven key elements of site planning and site design techniques for new development to minimize stormwater runoff. Principles include avoiding steep slopes and maintaining natural contours, minimizing impervious cover, maintaining and expanding native vegetation land cover, and preserving highly permeable soils. Information on street and right of way design and emergency response was presented. Links to more information include the Congress for New Urbanism, case study examples, and standards in the model ordinance language of the NIPC Conservation Design Resource Manual. Participants discussed developer incentives, emergency response issues related to site planning techniques, and other site design information.

5. **Opportunities for Open Space, Natural Areas, and Green Infrastructure**
Holly reviewed new maps and information developed for the open space, natural area, and green infrastructure planning discussion. Maps are available at http://foxriverecosystem.org/sleepy_hollow.htm under "Watershed Planning Meetings." A handout presenting definitions/explanation of open space/natural area/green infrastructure related terms was provided. For example, *green infrastructure* can be defined – on a watershed or regional scale – as the interconnected network of open spaces and natural areas, such as greenways, wetlands, parks, forest preserves, and native plant vegetation that naturally manages stormwater, reduces flooding risk, and improves water quality.

   An open discussion was held for stakeholders to provide input towards the development of a green infrastructure "vision" map to include in the watershed plan. General recommendations include integrating floodplains, hydric soils, riparian corridors, buffers, fragmented natural areas, Illinois Nature Preserves, and McHenry County Natural Area Inventory sites. There was a recommendation to utilize Class III groundwater protections to protect recharge areas associated with groundwater-dependent nature preserves such as fen wetlands. Other recommended strategies include increasing the size of isolated conservation areas, reducing habitat fragmentation, and increasing landscape linkages. A participant suggested that outreach be expanded in the future to additional watershed landowners. A participant asked about including drain tile information.

   Participants then utilized large paper maps to identify and mark potential future opportunities for open space, natural areas, green infrastructure, and trails within the watersheds. Recommendations included restoration and conservation opportunities, streambank and shoreline stabilization, oak stand preservation, conservation easements, possible trail connections in the southern portion of the Silver Creek watershed, and protections for headwater streams. Participants identified additional existing green infrastructure resources and other information to include in future maps. Results of input will be presented at the April meeting.

6. **Announcements, Next Meeting**
Lynn announced that new outreach brochures for each Watershed Planning Area are now available. Participants were asked to assist with distribution of these brochures within the watersheds by providing them at public locations and upcoming local community events.

   Lynn briefly discussed the idea of creating a formal name for the stakeholder planning group and asked participants to consider ideas for the next meeting.

Kerry Leigh, Trustee with the Village of Oakwood Hills, discussed habitat restoration and trail construction efforts being conducted by the Village around Oakwood Hills Fen. She invited planning participants to an upcoming lake festival this summer.

Holly mentioned she is planning a second stream assessment volunteer training for late March or early to mid-April.

The next watershed planning meeting will be on Wednesday April 13, 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. at the Cary Park District Community Center, 255 Briargate Rd., Cary. Topics will include information on computer models being utilized to help estimate the amount of pollutants generated in the watersheds and some initial modeling results. For more information, visit http://foxriverecosystem.org/planning.htm .

Lynn announced details on an upcoming tour of the City of Crystal Lake Wastewater Treatment Plant #3 on Wednesday, April 20, 12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m., 400 Knack Blvd., Crystal Lake, IL
This plant is within the Sleepy Hollow Creek Watershed Planning Area. Jim Huchel, Wastewater Division Superintendent, will lead a tour of the plant that will include viewing treatment plant facilities and information about operations within the watershed.

After the meeting, everyone was invited to a get together/St. Patty's Day celebration at Tony V's II in Cary.