

Silver Creek / Sleepy Hollow Creek Watershed Action Planning

Meeting Notes

Thursday, May 19, 2011 ♦ 1:30 – 3:30 PM

Algonquin Township, 3702 U.S. Highway 14, Crystal Lake, IL

1. **Welcome & Introductions**

The attendance list can be downloaded at <http://foxriverecosystem.org/silver-sleepy.htm>.

2. **Draft “Inventory and Assessment” Chapter Overview**

Dawn presented highlights from the draft watershed plan resource inventory chapter including historical and current watershed conditions. The inventories describe the current land use, natural, physical, and biological features of the Silver Creek and Sleepy Hollow Creek Watershed Planning Areas.

The chapter is available at http://foxriverecosystem.org/WatershedPlanning/Silver-Sleepy/Plan/Silver-SleepyDftRsrcInventories_4-13-11.pdf. Please send comments to watershedinfo@mcdefenders.net.

3. **Green Infrastructure Framework**

Holly Hudson presented a revised green infrastructure framework diagram. The framework includes three land use categories to consider: Open Space Reserves, Developable Land, and Developed Land. Questions were raised about the category defined as Developable Land including how to address protections for Sensitive Aquifer Recharge Areas (SARA). The county is currently developing a green infrastructure plan and is identifying Core Green Infrastructure and Supporting Green Infrastructure categories. It was determined the Developable Land category would be revised to reflect participant input. Other questions raised included how to categorize farm land and integrate agricultural best management practices into the plan.

4. **Opportunities for Open Space, Natural Areas, and Green Infrastructure Map Results**

Holly presented an updated map of existing natural areas and open space. She then presented a draft green infrastructure framework map. The map identifies resources such as streams, lakes, natural areas, and buffers to consider as a framework for preserving an interconnected network of open space and natural areas. The map can be downloaded at http://foxriverecosystem.org/WatershedPlanning/Silver-Sleepy/Maps/GIFrameworkMap_5-17-11.pdf

Stakeholders expressed support for coordinating this watershed planning effort with the current county green infrastructure planning effort. There was consensus by participants that the McHenry County green infrastructure framework criteria should be used as a minimum standard for this plan.

Holly also presented a draft green infrastructure vision map that identifies additional areas to consider for conservation and restoration. A more detailed map that highlights priority areas identified by participants will be presented next month. The new map will also include Nunda Township Open Space Plan areas. John Heisler can provide more information about these areas for the plan. A participant noted that expanding buffers to 200 ft. would help to increase connections between isolated areas. Participants discussed a sod farm property in the Sleepy Hollow Creek Watershed as a priority area to consider for preservation and restoration. 40 acres to the south are currently preserved as open space. Other priority conservation areas included ADID wetlands and upland areas such as oak stands. A participant recommended that the intrinsic value of natural areas should also be considered in the plan. There was a suggestion to identify the proposed Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge study area in the plan.

5. **Introduction to Project & Planning Recommendations Discussion**

Dawn introduced possible criteria for participants to consider for identifying watershed plan project recommendations to protect water quality and watershed health. She discussed linking watershed planning goals to the green infrastructure framework. Discussion included prioritizing areas for conservation based on their natural resource value and their ability to protect habitat and water quality. Several examples were provided of possible project recommendations to protect and improve water quality including aquatic buffers, stormwater retrofits, and erosion control. Potential policy recommendations were presented as well. Other

topics discussed include long-term management of conservation areas, stewardship incentives, and land trusts. Participant support was expressed for long term management recommendations and the importance of including detailed specifications in management plans. A participant noted that the county conservation design ordinance emphasizes long term management and that these recommendations could be considered for the watershed plan. There was a suggestion to include a project in the plan to restore areas of the Prairie Ridge High School property. Concern was expressed about waste from geese as a possible source of nutrient pollution in streams and lakes and how this might be addressed in the plan.

Dawn shared information on a mapping tool that will be used next month to help participants identify specific project recommendations. Revised green infrastructure planning maps will be sent out one week prior to the meeting. A participant requested political boundaries and major roads could be included in the maps.

Information was presented on one source of grant funding available to implement watershed planning project recommendations, the Clean Water Act Section 319(h) Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program. Examples of projects funded through this program were provided. Barb Lieberoff of the IEPA will be attending the next watershed planning meeting to present additional information on state and federal funding available to implement project recommendations including 319. Participants provided input on questions to pose to Barb related to these funding opportunities. This presentation can be downloaded at http://foxriverecosystem.org/WatershedPlanning/Silver-Sleepy/Presentations/IntroProjPlanRecom_5-19-11_pres.pdf

6. **Planning Update**

Dawn discussed the draft watershed plan outline that was distributed prior to the meeting and reviewed the updated planning timeline through the end of the year.

Lynn discussed the participant-identified watershed goal to establish an ongoing community participation group to expand watershed planning and protection efforts and support project implementation. There has been strong community participation during this planning effort, providing a good foundation to consider for an ongoing participation group. A committee meeting could be held to discuss this idea in the near future. Lynn also discussed the results of an e-mail survey to create a formal name for our participant group. The results favored the name “Silver & Sleepy Hollow Creeks Watershed Coalition”. There was general consensus that this name was acceptable.

Holly mentioned that specific recommendations for lakes will be part of the watershed plan and noted there will be additional opportunities for input from stakeholders.

If there are any additional comments or questions on the topic covered at this meeting, contact Lynn Rotunno at watershedinfo@mcdefenders.net.

7. **Announcements, Next Meeting**

CMAP Board Member, Dan Shea, thanked the planning participants for all of their efforts to help develop this watershed plan. Lynn announced the next meeting will be on Tuesday, June 14, 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. at the City of McHenry, 333 Green St., McHenry. Topics will include indentifying project and planning recommendations to include in the watershed action plan. Participants were asked to consider ideas for projects and planning recommendations related to water resource protections.