

Silver Creek / Sleepy Hollow Creek Watershed Action Planning
Meeting Notes

Monday, August 22, 2011 ♦ 1:30 – 3:30 PM

Prairieview Education Center, 2112 Behan Road, Crystal Lake, IL

1. Welcome & Introductions

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

2. Project Recommendations Update/Input & Discussion

Dawn presented an overview of how project recommendations will be described within the plan and a description of how pollutant load reductions for each project will be estimated. Participants reviewed a current list of project recommendations submitted by planning participants to consider for the 5 year implementation timeline. She reviewed additional criteria participants provided last month to consider for projects included in this timeline. Important considerations include projects that provide benefits for high quality fens, upland areas, groundwater quality and quantity, and education projects with high visibility. Dawn noted stream assessment results and projects in the advanced stages of planning as additional considerations. Another handout was reviewed that identified project recommendations requiring more detail to be considered for the 5 year implementation timeline. Some of the recommendations on this list will be identified as longer term planning and project recommendations. Dawn noted that the project implementation timelines will not impact future opportunities for grant applicants to receive IEPA 319 grant funding. Meeting participants identified some details to correct on the project list.

3. Identifying Critical Areas within the Silver Creek and Sleepy Hollow Creek Watersheds

Tim Loftus presented preliminary results of the critical area analysis. The analysis utilizes computer models to identify critical areas within the watersheds where surface water pollutant concentrations are relatively higher than that found in the watersheds in general. Identifying critical areas provides a tool for stakeholders to identify more effective projects to reduce pollutants in the future. Preliminary modeling results estimating the relative pollutant load contributions of total nitrogen, total phosphorus, and total suspended solids were presented in the aggregate for each subwatershed. The STEPL model was used to identify subwatersheds contributing either “low”, “medium”, or “high” amounts of these pollutants. The L-THIA model will be utilized to estimate fecal coliform pollutant loads on a subwatershed basis as well. Tim mentioned ideas for stakeholders to consider for project implementation priorities such as project costs relative to estimated pollutant load reductions and project timeline considerations. Tim presented initial draft maps that estimate current and future impacts on stream water quality from impervious land cover. Estimates were developed for each subwatershed based on models and comprehensive land use plans.

John Heisler mentioned Nunda Township is regularly collecting and analyzing fecal coliform samples. A participant asked if the model results will be used to prioritize projects within the plan. Another participant recommended that results not be utilized to prioritize projects in a way that might limit opportunities to implement some projects. Tim commented that modeling results would not be used in this way. The modeling results are a tool for local plan implementers to help identify the most beneficial projects to reduce pollutant loads in the future. Other comments included concern about contaminants that are not being modeled in the plan such as VOCs. A participant asked if 319 grants have been awarded for monitoring projects. The response was some have been awarded for this purpose. A question was asked if it was important to include separate results for each pollutant for the purpose of IEPA grant applications. It was noted that this was not necessary. There was a participant comment to include recommendations in the plan to reduce the amount of impervious surface in the watersheds.

4. Policy, Ordinances, and Planning Recommendations Discussion

Dawn reviewed some proposed ordinance and planning recommendations to include in the plan. In addition to the recommendations discussed last month, other recommendations provided by planning participants include: develop nutrient management programs, provide septic system education programs for homeowners, establish maximum wellhead setback distances, adopt pet waste ordinances, encourage wastewater reuse, integrate

water supply planning as part of comprehensive plans, require conservation design for new developments and conservation design principles in re-development, integrate the Silver & Sleepy Hollow Creek green infrastructure plan within comprehensive plans, provide landowner incentives to establish riparian buffers and restore existing buffers, develop watershed protection educational materials and partner with communities to provide educational programs, support green practices through educational workshops, establish ongoing volunteer restoration programs, and establish municipal site-planning roundtables to review existing development rules and determine if changes should be made to support additional watershed protections. Planning participants provided additional input including the importance of integrating specific lake protection recommendations. Dawn noted that this will be included in the plan. Comments also included a recommendation to develop a model lakeshore protection ordinance in the future. Several participants commented on the importance of horse manure management recommendations because of the high number of horses in these watersheds. Additional comments included emphasizing the importance of utilizing Class III Special Resource Groundwater designation to protect sensitive groundwater-dependent ecosystems, and encouraging stormwater BMPs in new development as well as retrofits in existing developments.

5. A Social Assessment of the Nippersink Watershed: Maintaining What We Value

Dr. Joan Brehm, Associate Sociology Professor, Illinois State University presented the results of a recent survey of property owners in the Nippersink Watershed conducted for the Nippersink Watershed Planning Committee and other planning partners. The goals of the study were to assess property owners' understanding of water quality issues, document property owners' current behaviors and practices that may improve or protect water quality within the watershed, and assess their level of awareness and support for the Nippersink Creek watershed plan. The findings from this study will be utilized to identify effective outreach and education strategies to help implement the Nippersink plan. Dr. Brehm noted that effective management of nonpoint source water pollution requires addressing both environmental conditions and the choices people make that impact the environment. She discussed the importance of raising awareness and improving knowledge of best management practices, supporting the need to learn new skills, and addressing barriers to specific desired actions. Overall, the survey results were very positive. Survey respondents clearly saw a connection between their actions, water quality, and quality of life in their community. There was also strong support for the recommendations in the watershed plan. 86.8% respondents agreed/strongly agreed that the way they care for their lawn and yard can influence local water quality. However, over half of respondents had never heard of rain gardens and 95% of respondents did not currently use this practice, only 35% of respondents use a phosphate free lawn fertilizer, and 13% of respondents have had some kind of problem with their septic system in the last year. The most strongly supported recommendations are expanding water quality and biological monitoring and public education activities. This information provides possible areas to target for future education and outreach efforts in the Silver & Sleepy Hollow Creek watershed planning areas. Dr. Brehm's presentation can be downloaded at <http://foxriverecosystem.org/silver-sleepy.htm> under "Presentations". The study was funded by an IEPA 319 grant. This study can be downloaded at <http://www.nippersink.org/>.

6. Education and Outreach Recommendations and Discussion

Lynn presented draft education and outreach recommendations for planning participant review and comment. These recommendations build on discussion and comments from the July meeting and integrate goals and management objectives identified by planning participant. Survey results from the nearby Nippersink watershed were also considered. Discussion included education and outreach priorities, targeted outreach approaches, addressing barriers to implementation of best management practices, education tools and resources (including a new watershed education display), and possible outreach partners. Lynn noted that the success of future outreach efforts will depend on continued support and involvement of planning participants including local residents, community leaders, organizations, and others. Planning participants identified additional possible target audiences including scout groups, garden centers, homeschool organizations, 4-H Clubs, equestrian groups and emphasis on local government staff and elected officials. Participants also noted the importance of outreach to floodplain managers, engineers, companies, and schools. Support was noted for a possible adopt-a-stream program. Other outreach opportunities identified by participants included Comcast cable announcements and outreach events on Public Lands Day. Another

recommendation was to offer watershed tours of community member homes, farms, etc. that demonstrate BMPs. The presentation can be downloaded at <http://foxriverecosystem.org/silver-sleepy.htm> under “Presentations”.

7. Announcements, Next Meeting

We will be taking a break in September from our regular planning meeting facilitated by CMAP. The next regular meeting will be on Wednesday, October 19, 1:30p.m.- 3:30 p.m. at Algonquin Township, 3702 U.S. Highway 14, Crystal Lake. Draft plan chapters will be presented at this meeting and provided for participant review one week prior to the meeting. We will also discuss monitoring and assessment and the implementation schedule.

Nancy Schietzelt announced that some planning participants have expressed interest in holding a meeting to discuss how to move forward with developing an ongoing community participation group that will help to support plan implementation and continue planning efforts after December. An initial meeting of the Silver & Sleepy Hollow Creeks Watershed Coalition will be held on Wednesday, September 21, 1:30p.m. at Prairieview Education Center, 2112 Behan Rd. in Crystal Lake. All are encouraged to attend and participate.

33 people attended the August 17 Fox Noon Network “Restoring Natural Resources in the Silver Creek Watershed”. Thanks to Kerry Leigh of Oakwood Hills and Steve Byers of the Illinois Nature Preserve Commission for providing a very informative presentation and tour of Oakwood Hills Park and Oakwood Hills Fen Nature Preserve.

EDMC will host a weekend tour of two Illinois Nature Preserves at [Crystal Lake Park District](#). Steve Byers and site steward Jim Wigman will lead tours of Sterne’s Fen and Wingate Prairie on Sunday, August 28 beginning at 12:30p.m. Sterne’s Fen is a rare, groundwater-dependent wetland that supports threatened and endangered species. Wingate Prairie is an extremely rare gravel hill prairie.

Several planning participants joined a post-meeting tour of the [Silver Creek Conservation Area](#) with Jeff Murray of MCCD.