

Silver Creek / Sleepy Hollow Creek Watershed Action Planning

Meeting Notes

Wednesday, October 19, 2011 • 1:30 – 3:30 PM

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

1. **Welcome & Introductions**

Lynn Rotunno welcomed everyone and thanked Algonquin Township for hosting the meeting. The attendance list can be downloaded at <http://foxriverecosystem.org/silver-sleepy.htm> .

2. **Watershed Planning Timeline Update**

Dawn Thompson discussed a schedule for upcoming drafts of the watershed plan. Each draft will include additional content and reflect recent input from planning participants. Draft 1 was reviewed at the meeting. Draft 2 will be sent to the IEPA for review and be made available to planning participants on the FREP website around November 1. Draft 3 will be available on November 23 and reviewed at the November 30 meeting. An e-mail will be sent when this draft is available. Draft 4 will include the last additions to the plan content and will be available prior to the December meeting. Final comments will be taken at the December meeting. The plan must be completed by December 31. Please send comments on each draft to watershedinfo@mcdefenders.net or call 630-674-5900.

Stream Assessment: Participants were thanked for their help to assess watershed streams for the planning effort. Holly Hudson provided an overview of the information from this assessment that will be integrated into the plan. CMAP will develop a map that describes areas of low, medium, and high stream bank erosion to help identify opportunities for additional priority projects in the future. The map will be provided for stakeholder review by November 23. A more detailed report that includes other data collected by CMAP and volunteers will be provided to the Silver & Sleepy Hollow Creeks Watershed Coalition to support future watershed planning efforts. Lake assessment including some data collected on aquatic plants and lake management recommendations will also be integrated this draft. Holly noted that existing biological data will be referenced in the plan including data from the McHenry County Conservation District and other sources. Some stakeholders had questions about the IEPA plan approval process, what happens if the IEPA does not approve the initial draft plan, and timing related to 319 grant applications for next year. CMAP will make revisions to the plan based on comments from IEPA. Holly noted that applicants do not need to wait for final IEPA plan approval in order to apply for 319 or IGIG grants. She recommended that the draft plan be referenced in the application.

Project Recommendations: Dawn discussed the watershed plan project implementation schedule designed to help guide local plan implementation. Project recommendations will be divided into two time periods as requested by IEPA. The goal is to implement projects listed on the short-term schedule within 5 years of plan adoption and implement projects listed on the long-term schedule within 5-10 years of plan adoption. There are approximately 20 projects currently identified in the 5 year schedule. These recommendations include projects previously submitted by planning participants and identified on a handout distributed at the August meeting titled “Watershed-wide Summary of Best Management Practices Recommended for Implementation within 5 Years of Plan Adoption.” Some additional projects identified by participants after August will be included on this list as well. Projects will not be prioritized within this list. Information provided by potential project leads is being used to help estimate pollutant load reductions and costs associated with each project recommendation as required by IEPA. Hey and Associates has been retained to develop these estimates. Other proposed project recommendations will be included in the long-term schedule and will include projects listed

on a handout provided at the August meeting titled “Watershed-wide Summary of General Plan Recommendations”. The watershed action plan will be a living document and should be updated to include other projects in the future. A participant suggested the plan should state that project recommendations will be implemented based on ability, access to funding, and other considerations. It was recommended that foundations be referenced as a possible source of matching grant funding. A list of potential funding resources will be included in the plan.

Draft Chapter Review and Comment

Dawn reviewed the 9 minimum elements required for IEPA approved watershed action plans and how they will be integrated into the plan (See p. 5 of the Sleepy Hollow Project Charter at <http://foxriverecosystem.org/silver-sleepy.htm>). Dawn reviewed some of the new information provided in the current draft plan.

General comments

Several attendees noted that the maps were a very important part of the plan but they are currently too small to read easily. Suggested solutions included using a landscape 8.5 x 11 format for the plan, maps currently including the entire county should be cropped in and identify watershed boundaries (e.g. 1872 plat map, oak stands, etc.), and legend text could be displayed below the maps to maximize horizontal space. A participant also suggested making the title and position above maps consistent throughout the plan.

Watershed Resource Inventory and Assessment Chapter

Forest Management Plan: It was recommended that local planning information from McHenry County Conservation District be integrated into this section. Dawn will review available information to include in the plan. Cropland Management: CMAP noted that the cropland management information will be characterized based on county-wide data because there is limited local information available. Hydrologic Structures: Esther noted that information on the location of dams will be taken from the National Inventory of Dams.

Groundwater Quality Data: There was a comment that point source groundwater contamination concerns were currently absent from this section. Wastewater Treatment Plants: A City of Crystal Lake representative had questions and concerns about the noncompliance information noted in the wastewater treatment section of the plan. He will look into this further and provide additional comments. Septic Systems: Dawn noted there is limited data available on septic systems in the watersheds. Therefore, CMAP is developing estimates of the current number of private septic systems based on septic system data from the 1990 U.S. Census and population change between 1990 and 2010. An estimated 5% uniform failure rate was assumed for septic systems. Several comments by planning participants emphasized the importance integrating local data to more accurately estimate the number of private septic systems. Ders Anderson noted that the Nunda Township Planning Commission could possibly volunteer to count private septic systems in the watersheds. Jeannine Smith also noted that numbers are available for Prairie Grove. Sara Berg noted that Jeff Levato of the McHenry County Department of Health may also have additional resources. Participants emphasized the importance of public education related to private septic systems including recommendations to have septic systems inspected annually and pump out the tank as needed. There was a comment to provide residential water softener recommendations including possible alternatives. A participant recommended targeted outreach to residents receiving public water supply where water softeners are in place. Residents should be asked to disconnect private water softeners. There was a suggestion to identify ways to help ensure water softener discharge lines are properly installed. It is possible that permits for the installation of new water softeners may be needed to accomplish this. Groundwater Quantity: A participant commented that the Illinois State Water Survey is currently working with McHenry County to update a 1998 study measuring water levels in hundreds of McHenry County wells. This study will provide data for modeling groundwater flow in McHenry County's shallow aquifers.

Water Quality and Modeling Results Chapter

Assessments and Designated Uses: A participant commented that the emphasis in this section on Fox River impairments seems to imply that IEPA is directly assigning all causes of impairments in segment DT-22 of the Fox River to pollution coming from these watersheds. Holly noted that was not the case, but it is important to address known impairments in the segment of the Fox River that these streams drain to. Addressing these impairments will be important to consider when seeking future IEPA grant funding for project implementation. It was suggested that this information be included at the beginning of the section to provide clarification.

Sources of Fecal Coliform Impairment: There was a recommendation to change the phrase “Leakage from failing septic tanks” to “failing septic systems”. Groundwater Quality Data: A participant suggested that the plan should include data on residential wells.

Current and Projected Imperviousness: There were questions regarding this section of the plan and additional explanation was provided. Computer models were used to develop estimates of projected impervious areas and should be considered one of several tools for watershed planning. Additional qualifying text will be added in future drafts. A planning participant asked if the Chesapeake Stormwater Network Impervious Cover Model had been used in other watershed plans. It was noted that more current ones do.

A participant noted that while technical information explaining how the map was developed is important, it is also important to provide non-technical language describing the purpose of this information in the context of watershed planning recommendations. An explanation of the connections between land use, projected future impervious areas, and downstream water quality impacts would be helpful to provide in this section. This will be particularly important for future plan implementers that were not part of the initial planning effort and do not have a technical background in this area.

Lynn asked participants to submit additional comments on the draft plan to watershedinfo@mcdefenders.net by early next week so CMAP can consider them for the next draft.

3. **Announcements, Next Meeting**

The next regular meeting will be on Wednesday, November 30, 1:30p.m. – 3:30p.m. at Prairieview Education Center, 2112 Behan Rd., Crystal Lake. Participants will have an opportunity to review and comment on draft 3. This draft will be posted on the FREP website on November 23. Dawn noted that plan implementation and monitoring will also be discussed at the meeting.

Nancy announced that the McHenry County Watershed Resources Action Plan was approved by the McHenry County Board on October 18.

The first Silver & Sleepy Hollow Creek Watershed Coalition meeting was in September. Lynn thanked meeting coordinators Nancy Schietzelt of The Environmental Defenders of McHenry County (EDMC) and Kerry Leigh of Oakwood Hills as well as others who participated. This new group has formed to help support plan implementation and continue watershed planning efforts after December. 13 representatives of local governments, organizations, and residents participated. Nancy provided a report from the meeting. Participants determined that coalition priorities will include working to build partnerships among local groups and individuals, supporting watershed protection education and outreach efforts, and indentifying additional future projects and other opportunities to protect water quality and watershed health. The next coalition meeting will be on Nov. 18, 1:30p.m. at Prairieview Education Center. Topics will include governance and continued discussion on priorities for 2012. For more information, contact The Environmental Defenders of McHenry

County (EDMC) at mcddef@owc.net or 815-338-0393.

One priority recommendation identified by planning participants is to support future stream and lake monitoring and study within the watersheds. The Fox River Study Group (FRSG) has offered to analyze one water sample from each watershed every month to help collect water quality data. Thank you to Cindy Skrukud and the FRSG for providing this resource. 3-4 volunteers will need to be recruited to collect water samples near the mouth of the Silver Creek and Sleepy Hollow Creek on the 3rd Tuesday of each month and deliver it to a site in Island Lake. Cindy will train the volunteers to collect samples and provide most of the equipment. The water collection process and training is not difficult but she requests a one year commitment from volunteers. Participants expressed strong support for the monitoring effort. We currently have one volunteer but need 2 or 3 more. Lynn asked for additional volunteers to assist in collecting monthly water samples. One planning participant volunteered at the meeting.

EDMC sponsored a tour of Sterne's Fen and Wingate Prairie on August 28. Almost 50 people attended the walks at these Crystal Lake Park District natural areas lead by Steve Byers of the Illinois Nature Preserve Commission and site steward Jim Wigman. Thank you to Steve and Jim for supporting this outreach program!

Lynn noted that a second outreach brochure will be produced as part of the planning effort by the end of this year. It will include an overview of project and planning recommendation. Examples of existing BMPs in the watersheds will also be included in the brochure so please send any information on local examples and other brochure suggestions to watershedinfo@mcddefenders.net.

The final outreach event this year will be at the Green Living Expo on Saturday, November 5 at the McHenry County College gymnasium. A brief overview and of the planning effort and preliminary plan recommendations will be presented at this free, public weekend event.

Holly distributed the Water Environment Research Foundation's "High Performance Green Infrastructure: Test Site Opportunities" fact sheet. To learn more or express interest in participating, contact the Senior Program Director Jeff Moeller at jmoeller@werf.org or 571-384-2104 by October 31, 2011.

The Fox River Ecosystem Partnership will sponsor a grant writing 101 program on January 18, 2012, 1:00p.m. at Algonquin Village Hall in Algonquin. The program is presented by Nancy Schumm of Schumm Consulting. FREP will also sponsor an IEPA 319 grant workshop on February 15, 2012, Noon - 1:30p.m. at James "Pate" Philip State Park Auditorium in Bartlett. The workshop will be presented by Holly Hudson of CMAP and Deanna Doohalk of Hey and Associates. For more information, visit the FREP website at <http://foxriverecosystem.org/news.htm>.