

Paw Paw River Watershed Planning Project
Steering Committee Meeting Summary
Jan. 25, 2006 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Present:

Del Sipes, Paw Paw Lake/MLSA

Dave Diget, Riparian

Mark Parrish, Pokagon Band

Linda Kerr, Texas Twp

Dave Foerster, Riparian

Gary Soper, Benton Twp

MaDonna Martin, Hartford Two

Sharon Schmuhl, MI Agri-Women

Chris Bauer, MDEQ-WB

John Lauck, VB Planning

Jeff Noel, Whirlpool

Pete DeBoer, SWMLC

Bob Harvey, Paw Paw Village

Tricia Bizoukas, Van Buren CD

Sue DeVries, TNC

Mark Kieser, Kieser & Assoc

Bonnie Schultz, MI Agri Women

Gary Stock, riparian

Rob Zbiciak, MDEQ-LWMD

Kelly Getman-Dissette, VB MSUE

Pete Vincent, MDEQ

Review status of grant contract and sub-contracts. Grant contract between MDEQ and SWMC has been signed and project has officially started. Sub contracts between SWMC and SWMLC, VBCD, BCCD, Kieser & Associates will be finalized. Grant information (timeline, work plan, etc. can be found on the SWMC website at www.swmc.org.

We will need project participants to keep track of their time spent on grant activities for reporting purposes. If you spend time outside of the steering committee or sub-committee meetings working on grant activities, we will ask you to fill out a time keeping sheet and return to SWMC for reporting to MDEQ. This will help to meet the local match requirements for the grant. If you have questions about what qualifies as a grant activity, ask Marcy at SWMC.

Project Overview – The main tasks in the grant will be to develop a watershed management plan, educational efforts for residents, municipal officials and targeted landowners.

The components of the Watershed Management Plan were reviewed. We are in the data collection stage right now. SWMC is collecting existing information and working with partners to collect more data through a watershed inventory effort.

For working with the municipalities, 5 will be selected and their master plans and zoning ordinances will be reviewed for water quality and natural features protection language. Criteria for selecting the municipalities may include the following: level of participation/commitment to the project, rate of development, critical area for protection, percent of land in the watershed, willingness to improve plans and ordinances, potentially one from each county, and willingness to accept constructive criticism.

Committees are being formed to assist with different aspects of the project. The first need is a Technical/GIS committee whose responsibility will be to coordinate GIS work and assist with

developing a watershed inventory strategy). The second need is an Education Committee to assist with planning and implementing workshops and the Watershed Management Short Course. The third committee is a Land Protection Committee that SWMLC will be coordinating to assist with identifying lands and contacting landowners that may be interested in protecting land in the watershed.

Harbor Shores Update – Jeff Noel, Whirlpool

Jeff Noel from Whirlpool was present to give an update on the Harbor Shore Development in Benton Harbor along the Paw Paw River. Harbor Shores Redevelopment Inc. is a non-profit group funded mostly by Whirlpool Foundation and Cornerstone Alliance. Whirlpool and Cornerstone have already financed millions of dollars of cleanup with MDEQ, EPA and the Department of Defense. Harbor Shores will be a 580 acre development with 936 residential units, 166,000 square feet of commercial space, 120 lodging rooms, 350 hotel rooms and an indoor water park. Harbor Shores is in the process of making changes to the permit that submitted to MDEQ to fill wetlands and floodplains along the Paw Paw River. The impact to the wetlands and floodplains are being reduced. Harbor Shores is now proposing to impact 7.1 acres of wetland (it was 13.8 in the original permit application) and 6.7 acres of floodplains and provide buffers along the river. Harbor Shores has hired Kemper Management for the golf course and is looking at the Audubon Golf Course program. There is \$1.5 million budgeted for the clean up of Ox Creek. The infrastructure (including the golf course and marinas) for Harbor Shores is expected to be completed in 2012. Harbor Shores has over 48 properties optioned.

Comments, Concerns, Ideas

LID News – SWMC is looking for good examples of developments that protect natural features by incorporating them into their site plans effectively. Please let Marcy know if you have any ideas.

Hartford CAFO – MDEQ has been taking samples and has results. Marcy spoke with MDEQ and was told that a study should be released soon.

SWMLC has protected 52 acres in the east branch with a conservation easement. 15-20 acres of the land is wetlands with numerous springs and the Eastern Box Turtle is present.

Next meeting to be decided once SWMC hires a watershed coordinator.

Thank you all for your time and input! This project will not succeed unless we have widespread support and participation!

Meeting Adjourned.