

**Paw Paw River Watershed Planning Project
Steering Committee Meeting Summary
February 21, 2007 9:30 – 11:00 AM**

PRESENT:

NAME	REPRESENTING	NAME	RESPRESENTING
Charles Goodrich	<i>Hamilton Twp</i>	Carl Druskovich	<i>Hamilton Twp</i>
Mark Parrish	<i>Pokagon Band</i>	Chris Bauer	<i>MDEQ</i>
Laurence Picq	<i>Kieser & Associates</i>	Sue DeVries	<i>The Nature Conservancy</i>
Chuck Nelson	<i>Sarett Nature Center</i>	Julia Kirkwood	<i>MDEQ</i>
John Small	<i>Paw Paw Village</i>	Peter Vincent	<i>MDEQ</i>
Mindy Walker	<i>Sarett Nature Center</i>	Amy Lockhart	<i>VB Cons. District</i>
Joe Parman	<i>VB Co. Drain Comm.</i>	Doug Stiles	<i>Almena Twp</i>
Beth Clawson	<i>VB Co. MSUE</i>	Rob Zbiciak	<i>MDEQ – LWMD</i>
Don Main	<i>Landowner</i>	Marcy Colclough	<i>SWMPC</i>
Bob Harvey	<i>Paw Paw Village</i>	Matt Meersman	<i>SWMPC</i>
Pete Deboer	<i>SWMLC</i>	Kregg Smith	<i>MDNR</i>
Chad Fizzel	<i>MDEQ</i>		

Project Updates:

Land Protection Committee – An open house is scheduled for April 14 from 10-12 at Sarett Nature Center. This will be for landowners to learn about the PPRW and land protection options. A targeted mailing list of property owners will be generated by the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy using the draft conservation priority model map.

Information & Education – A series of workshops are being offered by the PPRW and Black River Watersheds. Feb 28 – Landscaping for Water Quality; March 12 – Filling the Gaps; March 14 – Wetlands 101; April 11 – Low Impact Development. Don't miss these great opportunities! In addition, the I&E committee is gearing up to do storm drain marking. Soon a letter will be sent to all municipalities in the watershed with information on storm drain marking and master plan/zoning ordinance review assistance.

MDEQ Wetland Functional Assessment – Rob Zbiciak and Chad Fizzel

Chad gave a presentation on MDEQ's enhancement of the National Wetland Inventory (NWI) for landscape-level wetland functional assessment. The PPRW is one of two watersheds selected to have NWI data enhanced for functional assessment. The other is the River Raisin Watershed. The PPRW was selected to represent a watershed with relatively little wetland loss. However, within the PPRW over 50% of wetland acreage has already been lost, average wetland size has decreased by more than half and the total number of wetlands have increased due to fragmentation.

	Presettlement	1978	Difference
Acres of wetlands	82,503	44,270	38,233
Number of wetland polygons	5,824	7,581	-1757
Average size (acres)	14.17	5.84	8.33

Wetland Functional Assessment-continued

Chad has been looking at each individual wetland polygon and enhancing the NWI data with information including: landscape position, land form, water flow direction and water body type (pond, stream, lake, river) associated with the wetland. This information will help determine the various functions performed by individual wetlands including:

1. surface water detention
2. stream flow maintenance
3. nutrient transformation
4. retention of sediment/particulates
5. shoreline stabilization
6. provision of fish habitat
7. provision of waterfowl habitat
8. provision of other wildlife habitat
9. conservation of biodiversity

When completed, the wetland functional assessment will identify headwater wetlands and areas with historic wetland loss. It will help locate ideal wetland areas for conservation and mitigation based on functionality. It will also help determine critical wetland areas for preservation and restoration in the watershed management plan.

Watershed Management Plan Draft Review – Draft components of the management plan are available on-line at www.swmpc.org/pprw.asp. Matt Meersman encouraged stakeholders to review the plan and give feedback via the website. The management plan is a work in progress and will become a great plan with input from the stakeholders.

Drafts of the following sections were presented to the committee for review and comment:

Designated and Desired Uses

Stakeholder Concerns

Goals and Objectives

Some great comments were received on the drafts at the meeting. The drafts have been updated and added to the on-line plan which can be viewed on the SWMPC website at www.swmpc.org/pprw.asp. Click on Watershed Management Plan and in the table of contents click on “Water Quality Summary” for the Designated and Desired Uses, as well as Stakeholder Concerns. Then Click on “Implementation Strategies” to view the goals and objectives. Please feel free to comment on these and any other section of the plan using the online forum or by emailing Matt directly at MeersmanM@swmpc.org.

Other Comments, Concerns, Ideas, etc....

Harbor Shores -The MDEQ hearing in Jan was well attended and MDEQ received several written comments about the Harbor Shores Project and its impacts. MDEQ has just written a letter to Harbor Shores requesting information before a permit can be

issued. It looks like the permit will be issued as long as the information is supplied. Matt and Marcy will be speaking with MDEQ about stream mitigation requirements for Harbor Shores.

Paw Paw Wal-Mart – Wal-Mart has submitted another plan to MDEQ (Feb 16) that reduces the impacts to wetlands. The plan is currently being reviewed by MDEQ.

Next Steering Committee Meeting – April 18, 2007 at 9:30am at the Van Buren Conference Center in Lawrence.