

**Paw Paw River Watershed Planning Project
Steering Committee Meeting Summary
June 21, 2006 9:30 am – 11:30 am**

Present:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>
MATT MEERSMAN	SWMC	MARCY COLCLOUGH	SWMC
JOE PARMAN	Van Buren Drain Commissioner	PETE DEBOER	SWMLC
GARY SOPER	Benton Township	DAVE FOERSTER	Landowner
WILLIAM L. LAWSON JR.	Hamilton Twp. Planning	AMY LOCKHART	Van Buren Conservation District
GARY STOCK	Landowner	ERIN FULLER	Black River Watershed (VBCD)
ROB ZBICIAK	DEQ – LWMD	GAYE BLIND	Berrien Co Conservation District
CHRIS BAUER	DEQ – WB – Kalamazoo	CHUCK NELSON	Sarett Nature Center
MINDY WALKER	Sarett Nature Center	JEFF SPOELSTRA	Kieser & Associates
DEL SIPES	MLSA; Wvlt Twp Plan Comm	PETER VINCENT	MDEQ
TED THAR	Van Buren County	SUE DEVRIES	TNC
STEVE PETERSON	Hamilton Twp. Planning Comm.	KELLY GETMAN-DISSETTE	MSUE/Van Buren
BETH CLAWSON	MSUE Van Buren	LAURENCE PICQ	Kieser & Associates
DOUG STILES	Almena Twp.	CHUCK ECKENSTAHLER	

Watershed Management Plan Process Overview

Develop grant proposal with work plan	Expand stakeholders; Collect data; Run models; Refine planning process	Analyze data; Prioritize pollutants, sources, causes and sites; Develop goals and objectives; Determine critical areas for preservation and restoration	Determine and prioritize action steps (for each action determine timeline, budget, person/agency/organization responsible for implementation and funding sources)	Determine who will monitor/ implement plan; Develop evaluation or performance measures; Assemble final management plan
Educate landowners and elected officials throughout the process				
Get public input and build support for the efforts throughout the process				

Project Updates

Watershed Inventory – The inventory will be used to assess stream bank erosion potential, quantify soil erosion at problem sites, characterize riparian vegetation, and monitor stream flow at various locations throughout the Paw Paw River Watershed. SWMC, BCCD, K&A and MDEQ have developed a volunteer watershed inventory program to gain information for the plan and to establish a baseline of information. We will need volunteers to attend a training session on July 6 in Lawrence. Volunteers will be asked to survey about 10 sites (near their home if possible). Over 200 sites will be surveyed. SWMC has developed a volunteer inventory form and a QAPP (Quality Assurance Project Plan – required by MDEQ) for the volunteer inventory work.

In addition, MDEQ installed two stage monitors (one on Brandywine Creek and the other on the East Branch in Paw Paw) and a rain gauge in Paw Paw to monitor stream flow from May to October. K&A have been contracted to take measurements at these stage monitors during a high flow event. MDEQ will take measurements at a low flow.

GIS Data – The FTP site is up and running thanks to TNC, Steve Sobaski. Please let Matt know data needs and he will coordinate the FTP site use with Steve. We have data sharing agreements with both Berrien and Van Buren Counties. This data will be very useful in developing our watershed plan.

SWAT Modeling – K&A is continuing to collect data and information to run the SWAT model for the Paw Paw River Watershed. A telephone conference call was held with TNC, K&A, SWMC, NRCS, MSUE and Conservation District staff to facilitate getting agricultural practices information for input into the model.

Water/Wastewater Treatment Plants – SWMC needs a volunteer from each village/city that has a water or wastewater treatment plant to collect information about these facilities. It will take about 20 minutes to fill out the forms. Please talk with Matt if you are interested.

Land Protection – TNC has sent letters out to 20 landowners in the East Branch based on a GIS inventory and has received 2 responses so far. SWMLC hosted the second Land Protection Committee meeting on May 17. The committee is assisting in identifying areas for protection for the watershed management plan, providing input for a GIS analysis and providing advice for outreach efforts. The committee's next meeting is July 12 in Lawrence.

Education Committee - The PPRW will be partnering with the Black River Watershed (BRW) on several educational efforts over the next two years. I have a list of those wanting to serve on the committee. This will be a joint committee with the BRW Project. We will meet in July.

Grant Administration – SWMC completed and submitted the first quarter report to MDEQ.

Harbor Shores Update – The Army Corps of Engineers will not be holding a public hearing on Harbor Shores permit application since MDEQ held one last year. The biggest concern continues to be a ravine (along Golf Road) that is proposed to be filled with a relocation of the stream and parts buried under ground. MDEQ is holding off on granting a permit until EPA's concerns are dealt with. Abonmarche contacted Marcy about Low Impact Development and Stormwater Management Best Practices. Marcy gave them information and requested that they also talk to the Drain Commissioner.

Southwest Michigan Regional Airport Expansion Mitigation – The SWMRA will be required to do wetland mitigation and also 500 feet of stream mitigation for impacts from their proposed expansion. For the wetland mitigation, they are considering a site at the VBISD in Lawrence (re-flooding a field and using it for educational purposes). SWMC will bring any suggestions for wetland or stream mitigation to the consultants' attention. Unfortunately, since we are in the beginning stages of the project no prioritization of sites needing restoration exists. We will have this type of information when the Watershed Management Plan is completed.

Wal-Mart Mitigation – The consultants for the proposed Wal-Mart project in Paw Paw Village have contacted SWMC about potential wetland mitigation site. Wal-Mart is proposing to mitigate 12 acres across M-40 and also on an area referred to as the Deeder Muck Farms. Gary Stock did a drive by of the Deeder Muck Farm area and comments have been passed along to Wal-Mart. Marcy also suggested to the consultants that there are options to limit the impacts on site (such as relocating the store out of the wetland areas and using best management practices to deal with stormwater). Joe Parman, Drain Commissioner, has spoken with the consultants about stormwater management and is not in favor of releasing stormwater into existing or created wetland areas. Marcy will gather information on stormwater best management practices for Joe to share with consultants/developers.

St. Joseph River Watershed Workshops – A group of stakeholders are organizing workshops and a forum to explore the creation of a watershed group to oversee the implementation of the St. Joseph River Watershed Management Plan. Contact Marcy if you are interested in attending.

MEANDRS workshop – An Engineering Review for the River Restoration Project on the Dowagiac River will be held June 29.

Other comments:

Beth Clawson- MSUE is establishing a permanent household hazardous waste collection center at their offices in Paw Paw on Hazen Street.

Next meeting:

The next meeting will be August 16 at 9:30 am at the Van Buren Conference Center in Lawrence.
(Every other month on the 3rd Wednesday at 9:30 am)