

**Paw Paw River Watershed Planning Project
Steering Committee Meeting Summary
August 16, 2006 9:30 – 11:00 AM**

PRESENT:

NAME	REPRESENTING	NAME	RESPRESENTING
Charles Goodrich	Hamilton Twp	Dave Foerster	Landowner
Pete DeBoer	Southwest MI Land Conservancy	Kelly Getman-Dissette	VB MSUE
Gaye Blind	Berrien County Conservation District	Sue DeVries	The Nature Conservancy
Chuck Nelson	Sarett Nature Center	Chuck Eckenstahler	
Joe Parman	Van Buren Drain Commissioner	Beth Clawson	VB MSUE
Kregg Smith	MDNR	Steven Rigoni	Michigan Avenue Academy
Lawrence Piq	Kieser & Assoc	Amy Lockhart	VB Conservation District
Gary Stock	Landowner	Doug Stiles	Almena Twp
Steve Petersen	Hamilton Twp	Rob Zbiciak	MDEQ – LWMD
Nancy Edwards	Landowner	Darrin Schaer	Landowner
Daniel Ruzick	Antwerp Twp	Jeff Spoelstra	Kieser & Assoc
Peter Vincent	MDEQ	Del Sipes	Watervliet Twp/MLSA
Mark Parrish	Pokagon Band	Marcy Colclough	SWMC
Matt Meersman	SWMC		

1. Introductions

2. Project Update:

- a. **Watershed Inventory** – Gaye Blind reported that the volunteers are completing the inventory work. A few problems are cropping up. In some places the vegetation is so thick and dense that it is difficult to characterize and sometimes see what is going on. There have been a few access problems because of dense vegetation. Also the pictures are hard to determine what site they belong to. Also the frame of reference for the picture has been difficult to document. Darrin Schaer (volunteer) had a good idea. He used a box that displayed the site # and an arrow pointing up or down to designate up or down stream in each picture.
- b. **SWAT Modeling** – Lawrence passed around a handout that explained the inputs into the model. This model will predict the amount of sediment and nutrient loadings in the Paw Paw River Watershed. Kieser has all of the inputs except for some agricultural data. Lawrence was meeting with MSUE after the meeting today to gather some of that information.
- c. **Waster Water Treatment Plant Inventory** – All inventory forms have been completed except for Mattawan. Dan Ruzic recommended contacting Tom Anthony at 269-668-2128.

- d. **Land Protection Committee** – Pete DeBoer reported that the next meeting is August 30 in Lawrence. Maps are being used to look at areas of importance in the watershed. These maps are available today for you all to see. The protected lands layer is currently being updated from the information received from the committee members. A GIS analysis will be conducted with committee input to assist in determining important areas for land protection efforts either through land conservancies (TNC or SWMLC) or through local efforts such as planning and zoning. In addition, the committee is assisting with landowner outreach efforts. An open house is planned for October 28 at Dave Foerster's property located at 40239 40th Avenue, Paw Paw. This open house will be held in conjunction with the bus tour of the Watershed Short Course.

In addition, Dave Foerster invited all steering committee members to his annual get together on his property held on October 7 at 1 pm. Everyone is asked to bring a dish to pass. There are games for the kids and drinks are provided. Dave encouraged people to come and see his property.

- e. **Education Committee** – Marcy reported that the educational committee is a joint committee with the Black River Watershed Project.
 - i. The committee has been extremely busy planning the **Watershed Management Short Course** for October 3-31 (every Tuesday night with a tour on Saturday, Oct, 28 from 5:30-9:00 pm). Some discussion took place about Tuesday night not being a good night because of municipal meetings; especially bad is the 2nd Tuesday night. However, we are constrained by the availability of the conference center and the difficulty of conflicts with other meetings such as planning commissions that often meet on Wed and Thursdays.
 - ii. **LID NEWS** was printed and will be distributed to municipalities in the Paw Paw, Galien, Black and Gun River Watersheds. This is a newsletter about Low Impact Development (developing land in a manner that respects natural and water resources better than conventional development.) Marcy will send a link to everyone so that they can view or print the PDF file.
 - iii. Amy Lockhart reported that an **Agricultural Workshop** will be held on August 29 from 1-4 pm on Agricultural Containment Facilities at the Van Buren Conference Center.
- f. Matt Meersman reported that SWMC is still trying to secure **liaisons for each municipality in the watershed**. These liaisons will help keep the municipal officials aware of project progress, any educational opportunities, etc. The following municipalities do not have a designated liaison yet:
Dan Ruzic recommended Heath Kaplan for Mattawan Village.
- g. Marcy introduced a schedule for completing the **Watershed Management Plan** that will require the steering committee to review different parts of

the plan and to plan for public input opportunities. We are still in the background information-collecting phase of the project mostly. We will need to work on goals and objectives for the plan at the beginning of next year.

- h. MDEQ completed the **2006 biosurvey for the Paw Paw River Watershed**. MDEQ staff visited 30 sites in the watershed. Sediment impacts seemed to be apparent throughout the watershed. There was a bad culvert on Blue Creek in the Milburg area. There were good macro invertebrates found near Hartford and on the East Branch. There was recent dredging and clearing on the South and West Branches. Road crossings were for the most part well maintained. There were some signs of flashiness in the watershed. There was little to no vegetation observed in the river and leaves, root wads and fallen debris provided habitat (although some of this was being covered by sediment in some areas).
- i. SWMC completed and submitted the **2nd quarter grant report to MDEQ** (covering April – June).
- j. **Other Comments/Concerns**
 - i. **Harbor Shores** – Stream mitigation is likely to be required. Public hearings about impacts to Jean Klock Park are to be held in August.
 - ii. **Airport Expansion** – stream mitigation is required for this project.
 - iii. **Wal-Mart** – a public hearing is scheduled for Sept. 13 in Paw Paw.
 - iv. Darrin Schaer asked if the **groundwater contamination** issue in Coloma fits in with this project. It will be included in the plan as a known issue in the watershed.
 - v. Gary Stock mentioned some recent articles on **CAFO's**. Gary will send links to Marcy to forward to everyone.
 - vi. MDEQ reported that NRCS is working on **digital soils for Van Buren County**. They should be completed by December 2006. The MDEQ wetland function assessment is scheduled for completion by Oct. 31, 2006. Rob Zbiciak will check to see if it is critical to wait for the new soil layer before completing the wetland function assessment.

NEXT MEETING: October 18, 2006 at 9:30 am at the Van Buren Conference Center in Lawrence