

**BLANCHARD RIVER WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP
MEETING MINUTES
4/21/10**

Present: Martin, Kozlowski, Allen, Benroth, Brugeman, Connour, Loerhke and Greeno
7:43 pm Cresswell
Guests: Robert McCall, Travis Jerwers (Putnam County Commissioner), and Jeff Giesige (Putnam
County Soil & Water Conservation)

There were no additions to the agenda.

Allen made a motion: seconded by Brugeman to approve the minutes from the 3/24/10 meeting. Motion passed.

Coordinator Comments – Phil Martin

See report.

A. The Outlet/Lye Creek Watershed Action Plan

He had a meeting with Matt Atkins, from Coastal Management and Katie McKibben from OEPA, Clark Hudson from ODNR, and Jocelyn Henderson from ODNR to review the WAP comments.

He had a meeting with Karen Chapman, Denny Tressel, Dave Reece and Joe Draper to go over BMP's for the WAP. With their help and expertise Martin should be able to finish the WAP. The goal is to re-submit the WAP by September 30, 2010. There will be 6 problem areas with problem statements, objectives, goals and actions.

The previous criteria was to submit the data at the 11 digit HUC but has now been expanded to the 14 digit HUC. This will require a more specific site plan than a general overall plan.

OSU would like to experiment with a biofilter to remove nitrates in muck ground. It will be patterned off of Iowa's plan. We have 2 areas if OSU is looking for sites. McKibben says the EPA is taking a new look at muck grounds naturally occurring process. It would be great to remove the nitrates before the intake at Findlay.

B. Riley Creek Watershed

A stream walk needs to be done. Pictures should be taken at the beginning and throughout to the end. GPS coordinates will be recorded when the substrate changes, if there are any trees in the waterway, erosion, and or any other problems. GPS coordinates will help to go back and correct problems. We will be able to pinpoint exact sites.

Seven to eight volunteers are needed to help with the walk. Stream bank observations will be done and pictures of drainage tiles will be photographed. We will need to expand the macro study. Currently we only have 7 sites.

We will be doing the DO, pH, temperature, dissolved solids and water quality study in June.

There is not much data for the Riley concerning the TMDL. We will have to gather it because grant applications require very detailed technical information.

Once WAPs are completed and BMP's installed, EPA will do grab samples to check and see if nitrates decrease. This will evaluate our plan and tell us if it works or if some other BMP should be used.

- C. Wilderness Club Cleanup
Clean up was done between Broad Street and the Liberty Dam. About \$50 worth of wire was collected, 340 cubic feet of trash, and over 70 tires were removed from the river.
- D. Freshwater Futures Grant
This grant will be used to hire technical assistance to write the Action Plan.
- E. Maumee RC & D Grant
Seven to eight grants will be awarded. The maximum allowable is for \$35,000. Part of the grant would be used to purchase another laptop to assist on data input from different sublevels. An example would be Riley Creek- Sarah Lehman could help with the data.
- F. The Outlet/Lye Creek and Riley Creek Water Quality Monitoring
Volunteers are desperately needed. Monitoring will be done the first two weeks in June. Landowners along Riley Creek have expressed interest in volunteering and more volunteers for future projects in the fall may be acquired from Bluffton University.

Finance

Outstanding invoices from Findlay Publishing were discussed. They were being held while the new website was being implemented. It was not exact when the new company would take over. We have switched our host to Neodox as of April 1st. The February and March hosting fees should be paid. We also were charged to renew our domain names, (.com and .org). They don't need to be paid because Neodox has taken care of it for 2010.

Brugeman made a motion: seconded by Allen to approve the list of bills for payment. Motion passed.

Financial reports were reviewed. Balances for Outreach, Travel/Training and Monitoring were presented from all grant funds.

We received an Environmental Defense Fund check for \$5,000.

After all transfers to cover the coordinator fee for 2010, we are still shy \$430. A motion was made by Brugeman; seconded by Connour to transfer \$430 from the 2009 Grant Travel/Training Funds to cover the remaining coordinator fee. Motion passed.

Coordinator grants have not yet been addressed through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative or Coastal Management. We need to be diligent on staying abreast of these to apply for Coordinator funding.

Other

A toad and frog study is being done through ODNR by the Hancock Park District.

The City of Findlay and the Hancock County Health Dept. held their annual unwanted prescription drug collection. Over \$100,000 worth of drugs were collected. They will be counted and cataloged.

Old Business

A. Website Updates

Nick Powell will be hosting a teaching clinic for the Website Committee to learn how to make updates and changes.

The links all are working as well as the Spam Blocker and email.

Pictures can be put on a slide show if desired.

Facebook is setup. Pictures can up-loaded on Facebook and the website.

McCall will setup Google.dox and provide a training session. This will allow the board members to have access to BRWP documents but not the public.

B. Other

On Friday, April 23rd the Environmental Group will be hosting their quarterly meeting at Riverbend at 1:00 pm. Lunch will be available.

C. Cleanups

We will host a fall cleanup effort with the freshmen from Findlay University to assist them in completing their community service requirement. They should be on campus Aug. 21, 2010.

Nothing has been definitely set for a cleanup in the Ottawa area as of yet. Schroeder is working on it.

Benroth will look into a cleanup on the Rileys. She has perused the big Riley and could not find a suitable site. Next she'll walk the Little Riley and make an assessment. If no site in town fits the bill, she'll try out in the country.

D. Leadership Handbook

Brugeman presented the Leadership Handbook. Everyone was pleased with it. It was great, awesome and organized. Policies to be adopted included job descriptions and responsibilities of the Steering Committee. Other areas covered included Finances like budgeting, spending and accounting practices recommended by ODNR. A stipend range was set as well as mileage. It will be a living document and can be amended and updated as needed. A motion was made by Connour; seconded by Benroth to accept the policy book and thank Brugeman for his work. Motion passed.

New Business

A. Watershed Coordinator

We'll be applying for grants to help pay the coordinator fee from Fresh Waters, Ohio Great Lakes Initiative and Costal Management.

ODNR is assisting in a national grant for 3 coordinators for Ohio. It would be for a 3 year period of \$40,000. Applications are due in May and will be awarded in July.

B. Coordinator Contract
Martin's contract needs to be renewed and retroactive until Jan. 1, 2010. It will be made on-going until terminated by either party. There will be an annual review and a list of services to provide each year. The 2010 list is attached. The contract has been reviewed by the same lawyer who provided expertise with our by-laws and tax exempt status filing. A motion was made by Allen; seconded by Connour to authorize a contract for coordinator services with Phil Martin.

C. Grant Proposals
Martin and Kozlowski have been working on grants. They will be used for the WAP's and the web page. They have been applying for grants that they deem usable for BRWP. It is being done this way to keep things moving along. Just because we apply and may be awarded the grant, it doesn't mean we have to accept it. All the parameters will be forwarded to the Steering Committee members for review and then up for a vote for authorization. If authorization is approved, the grant agreement will be signed. If deadlines must be met, votes can be gathered by email. Martin's emails will have an auto response to make sure everyone receives the vote requests. If no response is provided within 48 hours, approval will be assumed. Martin will keep a hard copy of all email votes. A motion was made by Loerhke; seconded by Connour to authorize Kozlowski to sign grant agreements once approved by the Steering Committee.

There are 319 grants available with RFP's for stream sedimentation removal demonstrations. This may be a grant we are interested in applying for.

D. Dual Signers for Checks
ODNR recommends that 2 signatures be required for all checks. Benroth has ordered dual signature line checks. Signers should be board members and one should live in the Bluffton area to co-sign with Benroth and the other in the Findlay area to co-sign with Kozlowski. Lehman and Brugeman were selected. Brugeman made a motion; seconded by Loerhke to mandate that all checks have a dual signature and the additional signers would be Lehman and Brugeman. Motion passed. Benroth will line up getting their signatures on the signature card.

D. OEC Meeting
OEC will be having their quarterly meeting at Riverbend on April 27th. All are invited to attend. It will be from noon to 3 pm.

E. Benroth submitted 5 project proposals. The first was for (2) easels. It was not needed because Kozlowski already has easels. The second is for promotional supplies for the fairs and other events. It would be for pens, pencils and stickers. The third is for a new display board. The old one broke in half. The fourth proposal is for acrylic holders to retain all the information sheets so they don't blow away. The last is to pay the fees for all the fair booths. Loerhke made a motion; seconded by Allen to accept all the project proposals. Motion passed.

F. Hardin County Business Alliance
Our Harding County Business Alliance membership has expired. It was discussed if we would like to renew it. It is \$110/ year. Kozlowski has attended 2 of their meetings. We thought it would be good for networking but they don't have regular monthly or quarterly meetings. It has not benefitted us much. Maybe it would be better to join some Soil & Water Conservation

Districts. Brugeman made a motion; seconded by Allen not renew our membership. Motion passed.

G. Eco-Track

Martin informed the group that Matt Adkins with ODNR will accept videos or watershed presentations for Eco-Track on channel 11, WTOL.

H. Riverbend Volunteer Opportunity

ODOT has provided funding to plant 10 trees for streamside restoration beside the Blanchard River next to the new covered bridge that goes out to the Lodge at Riverbend. Plantings will ensue on Friday, April 30th with the assistance of Owens students. Trees were donated by contractors and ODNR. Stephanie Miller, ODNR will be on hand to assist with the plantings. We will try to video the event with a camera from Owens or Marathon.

I. OEC Lobby Day

Allen informed BRWP that OEC will be having their annual Lobby Day and asked if anyone would like to attend. She attends with her PEARLS group. Matters being discussed will be environmental jobs. The state is proposing an initiative to increase the sales tax by ¼% to provide funding in this area for ODNR, local governments, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, 4-H clubs, and sheriff's offices. It would be a collaborative effort by these parties to get it passed.

J. Flood Mitigation

Loerhke stated that a long-term entity is needed to oversee a Flood Mitigation Plan. On a short-term basis, Hancock County Commissioners are doing it. A general investment study is being done. Some entities are petitioning for a conservation district. There will be another meeting to discuss it in 2 weeks.

Our next meeting will be held in Bluffton. We need to gear-up for Riley Creek monitoring and stream assessment. It is being held in Bluffton to drum up interest and attract volunteers.

Lying on the tables was a fact sheet of "Natural Solutions to Flooding Issues" and a brochure on "Urban Conservation".

The guest did not have any questions so the meeting was adjourned.