

**BLANCHARD RIVER WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP  
MEETING MINUTES  
1/6/10**

Present: Martin, Kozlowski, Benroth, Brugeman, Connour, Hess, Schroeder, Betts, Greeno, and Switzer.  
Guests: Robert McCall

No changes to the agenda were made.

There is an opening on the Board for a representative from The Outlet/Lye Creek. Brugeman made a motion; seconded by Benroth to appoint Kozlowski to the position. Motion passed.

Being the first meeting of the year, it is time for election of officers. All incumbent officers agreed to run for another term. Kozlowski= president, Brugeman= vice president and Benroth as Secretary/Treasurer. All present voted in favor of proposed officer positions.

Four major projects were listed to be worked on for 2010.

1. Revision of The Outlet/Lye Creek WAP.
2. Restoration Projects
  - a. Riverside Sediment Removal, etc.
  - b. Blanchard River bank restoration- Riverbend Park
  - c. Lake Erie Crep, EQUIP and other BMPs.
3. Riley Creek WAP
4. Redesign and update web site.

1. Revision of The Outlet/Lye Creek

The WAP has been sent in on December 29, 2009. ODNR/OEPA have 60 days to evaluate it and then 30 days to insert revisions and return. The total turn-around time is 90 days. Once this is completed we will receive a "Conditional Endorsement" from OEPA. During the revision phase, we need to present this to all the Township Trustees in the water shed. This could take 6-8 months. This initial WAP should be pretty well cover everything needed for approval from EPA. A template of one that was already endorsed had been used.

It was very impressive to meet our goal of submitting this WAP by Dec. 31, 2009. Martin gets kudos for a job well done.

2. Restoration Projects

The projects were identified in our Action Plan. Grant writing will need to be done to apply for funds to implement any of them.

Our job as the Watershed Partnership is not to write the grants and implement projects, but get sponsors, people and companies with the skills to solve the problems together. We'll assist in any way we can, but we do not have the resources to write complex and in-depth grants or oversee their implementation.

- a. Riverside Sedimentation Removal could cost over \$600,000. Currently silt testing is underway and hopefully the City of Findlay will be the sponsor or fiscal agent if this

project is awarded a grant. Findlay will likely take ownership of this project since the area is in their Park District. Some of the possible grants may require matching funds, which could entail in-kind services. We can assist with that portion.

(Side Bar: The Outlet/Lye Creek has 18 inches of sediment that needs removed.)

- b. Blanchard River bank restoration- Riverbend Park. Currently the Park District is gathering ideas and estimates on what should and could be done. This is Park District property so they'll become the sponsor. When completed, it will be a great model site for demonstrations and will assist with Hancock Soil & Water Department with other like projects that will entail homeowners to implement. Visualization of how it looks and what it does is a good selling point to get homeowners to invest their money for these restorations on their property. There may be grants available to off-set homeowner costs.
- c. Lake Erie CREP, EQUIP and other BMPs. We can help with implementation. Other agencies through the state are in charge of contacting landowners and educating them on these programs. Areas of concern are wetlands and 568/County Road 7. Flood monies may be available to implement some of these programs because the Army Corp of Engineers endorses water quality restoration and environmental concerns in flood mitigation planning.

Brugeman made a motion; seconded by Schroeder to endorse the three proposed restoration projects and authorize the president to endorse documents that are needed.

### 3. Riley Creek WAP

Currently Sarah Lehman is looking up landowners and gathering permission slips to traverse their land. This is fairly intense, since in Putnam County it is not on-line and must be looked up at the court house. Once the permission slips are in hand, Sarah will devise a plan on doing the habitat inventory and monitoring. That's when she'll need more bodies. At that time we will get in touch with Bluffton University, Ohio Northern University and the Bluffton High School for volunteers.

The goal is to have the habitat inventory completed by the end of spring 2011. The goal is to have the whole WAP completed and submitted by Mar. 31, 2011.

Some landowners are already on board and we have already done some monitoring.

### 4. Redesign and update Web Site

The website needs to be easier to use and manage. A team had interviewed (3) potential contractors and is recommending Neodox Corp. They seem to be cost effective and skillful. The contract is for \$1500. The agreement needs to be signed and the transformation started. The website will be our biggest communication link. The Partnership wishes to have better access to manipulate the site.

Kozlowski applied for a grant from "Freshwater Future" to assist in paying for the redesign. A motion was made by Connour; seconded by Hess to authorize Kozlowski to accept a grant in the amount of \$1500 for website renovation from Freshwater Future. Motion passed. Kozlowski is thanked for finding this obscure grant and being awarded it.

Schroeder made a motion; seconded by Hess to authorize Kozlowski to sign the agreement with Neodox Corp for website redesign. Motion passed. Worden will work with Neodox and be the contact person.

#### Watershed Coordinator 2010 Contract

Our finances are low and there is not enough money to fund a Coordinator for a year. Our current sources of income are the carry-over from the EDF Grant, donations by the area municipalities and the Community Foundation Grant. The part-time salary is set for \$23,000. The Board has no idea if there will be any grants for watershed coordinators or other grants to offset our Coordinator's salary.

There are several options we can take:

1. Move forward and hope to get the funding.
2. Vacate the Coordinator position .
3. Reduce the hours and make it quarter-time instead of part-time.

Much discussion ensued. We have so much going on right now that we need to keep pushing forward. Objectives for the Coordinator to work on would be the (4) major projects for 2010 listed above.

Benroth made a motion; seconded by Schroeder to continue to pay Martin, the Watershed Coordinator, at the same rate as last year and to proceed forward on a part-time basis. If additional funding does not become available, he will be laid off until that time. Motion passed.

#### Strategic Plan

##### A. Goal #1

Create a professional staff position to implement the 2007 strategic plan and improve the effectiveness of the volunteer leadership through planned education.

1. Objective #1- Hire coordinator
  - done and continue to have one
  - a. Action- Identify partners to provide office space , benefits & local matching funds.
    - done and may utilize the assistance of the partners more in the future
  - b. Action- Seek and submit appropriate grant proposals
    - done and will continue to do so as new ones develop or old ones continue
2. Objective #2- Improve volunteer leadership.
  - a. Action- Develop new organization chart
    - done and utilize chart to plan tactics for 2010
  - b. Action- Fund professional development
    - done and continue to do so as new training becomes available
  - c. Action- Recruit specialist volunteers
    - done and will continue to find new volunteers with needed skills
3. Objective#3-Database library
  - much discussion on this topic, but no definite plans set
4. Objective #4-Develop western drainage group
  - a. Action-meet regularly with Putnam & Allen County allied interest organizations
    - continue and implement more meetings
  - b. Action- Identify local interest projects & recruit
    - after WAPs approved
    - BOD needs to form objectives

- B. Goal #2  
 Insure that the BRWP becomes a financially sustainable entity
1. Objective#1- Develop a budget  
 -one year, three year and five year
    - a. Action- Empower BOD to create finance committee  
 -done
    - b. Action- Using strategic plan write 1, 3, and 5 year budgets  
 -must be done after operating plan is complete
  2. Objective #2-Stable funding base
    - a. Action- Marketing Plan approach- stakeholders & others  
 -have acquired some government funding, but are there any other sources?
    - b. Action- Implement marketing plan for each group  
 -no action
  3. Objective #3-Increase membership & sponsorship  
 -continuing  
 -each BOD member and Steering Committee chair recruit one additional member
    - a. Action- Formalize membership drive procedures  
 - no action but needs to be done
  4. Objective #4-Ohio Coastal Mgmt. Grant application  
 -done
    - a. Action-Partner to house coordinator  
 -have a commitment from the City of Findlay when needed
    - b. Action-Solicit local matching funds  
 -done and will continue to do so with Findlay, Ottawa, Bluffton, and Putnam County Soil & Water Conservation
    - c. Action-Form a grant writing team  
 -done
  5. Objective #5- Develop fundraising event  
 -beyond 2010
    - a. Action- Seek a partner with an existing event  
 -not done
    - b. Action- Recruit a champion for event  
 -not done
- C. Goal #3- Develop BRWP's image  
 -developed new logo and tag line  
 -continuing
1. Objective #1- BRWP's image in all publications, etc.  
 -update all printed matter
    - a. Action- Develop key message & theme  
 -review and rewrite documents as needed  
 -drinking water, save Lake Erie, and manage storm water
    - b. Action-synergy with Universities  
 -cleanups and monitoring is being done with University assistance  
 -utilize students more for manual labor and find ways to use their expertise
    - c. Action- Develop BRWP communication kit  
 -needs updated and refined
    - d. Action-Hire agency to create new image  
 -done

2. Objective #2-Communicate effectively with diversified audiences
    - a. Action- create unified database
      - improve & expand
    - b. Action- Create newsletter
      - done & continue (coordinator)
    - c. Action-Fact Sheets
      - improve & expand
      - new logo
      - new information
  3. Objective #3- Improve usefulness of web sit
    - a. Action- recruit or hire a web site manager
      - hire contractor to update web site
      - BOD access to add and delete items
- D. Goal #4- Education & Outreach
1. Objective #1- First call watershed education activities
    - not in 2010, need more manpower
    - a. Action- create educational documents
      - postpone- future years project
    - b. Action- Establish network with affiliated organizations
      - continuing
      - champion- steering committee volunteer
  2. Objective#2- First call government agencies
    - need a better presentation of materials
    - a. Action- Develop contact lists
      - add trustees
    - b. Action- Seek participation with government
      - need to improve in this area
  3. Objective #3-First call for citizen education
    - continue but need to update documents with new logo & info
    - need to increase library materials
    - not a major objective for 2010
    - a. Action- Watershed advocacy program template
      - continue creating
    - b. Action-Series of documents
      - continuing
      - update and create packets
- E. Goal #5- Watershed Action Plans
1. Objective #1- WAP for the Outlet/Lye Creek
    - done and is being reviewed-once reviewed, recommendations will be incorporated and finalized
  2. Objective #2- WAP for Riley Creek
    - a. Action- stream observation
      - complete habitat assessment
    - b. Action-monitoring
      - have started and will continue
    - c. Action-write WAP & submit
      - main project for 2010
  3. Objective #3- Cranberry Creek

- a. Action-lead person  
-must find

Committee Chairs

Administrative- Brugeman  
Drinking Water/ Water Pollution Control- Greeno  
Habitat/Stream Restoration- Betts /Connour  
Communications- Switzer/Allen  
Outreach-Benroth/McCall  
Funding- Kozlowski

Other

- A. Membership & Sponsorship Drive  
Jan-June=memberships  
July-Dec= sponsorships
- B. Membership request letter from previous members  
Brugeman will compose a letter to be sent by Benroth to all those who have been members since inception.
- C. Septic Tank Grant  
Sponsored by the Great Lakes Initiative for repair and replace septic tanks or to have them tap into a sewer system. ODH would like us and several other agencies to partner with them in applying for a Septic Tank Grant. The question was asked who will manage this grant if ODH doesn't join in the application? BRWP does not have the means to. We will support the program and provide data for implementation but cannot provide any significant amount of time for the coordinator to assist.
- D. Storm Water Advisory Committee  
They have asked us to support their activities by providing data collected, in-kind donations and letters of support. A motion was made by Brugeman; seconded by Hess to sign a Memo of Understanding. Motion passed.
- E. Meeting Dates, Times & Locations for 2010  
Third Wed of the Month at 7:00 pm. Feb. & Mar. will be held at Owens  
The third Wed. in Feb. is a holy day so it will be moved to the 4<sup>th</sup> Wed. Feb. 24<sup>th</sup>.
- F. RSVPs  
Martin asked that everyone RSVP for meeting attendance and river cleanups. Meetings require a quorum to proceed and cleanups need leaders.

Meeting adjourned