



**GALENA RIVER WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN
THIRD STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING**

Meeting Summary

Date: August 6, 2009

Time: 3:00 p.m. Central Time

Location: LaPorte County Library, 904 Indiana Avenue, LaPorte, IN

Meeting Attendees:

Name	Organization
Roberta Jannsen	Property owner
Peg Kohring	The Conservation Fund
June Kirchgatter	Property owner
Joe Exl	Indiana DNR
Deb Longworth	Property owner
Elizabeth McCloskey	USFWS
Steve West	Indiana DEM
Rick McVay	Property owner
Garry Traynham	National Park Service
Nicole Messacar	LaPorte Co. SWCD
Shannon Donley	Baetis Environmental Services

Summary:	Actions
<p>Meeting was called to order at 3:05. Peg Kohring told the committee about funding opportunities available through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative which has \$475 million in stimulus funds. Kohring asked if the committee would be interested in teaming with Michigan on a grant application. A meeting will be held to discuss on August 11 at the Stray Dog Restaurant in New Buffalo at 12:00 ET.</p> <p>Donley showed the committee the written resources used to guide the development of the watershed plan. These are: 1) Indiana Watershed Planning Guide, 2) 2003 Watershed Management Plan Checklist, and 3) Scope of Services for the Galena River Watershed Management Plan.</p> <p>Donley summarized IDEM's draft TMDL report and presented a series of maps showing the following: nitrogen and phosphorus export rates, land use, hydric soils, prime farmland and farmland of statewide importance, crop type, point sources, imperviousness, and publicly managed lands. Site 6 was the only site with E. coli levels that met water quality standards.</p>	<p>Nicole and Joe to attend meeting.</p>

The group discussed Site 1 which, according to the draft TMDL report, needs E. coli load reductions of nearly 80%. According to several committee members, during sampling La Lumiere school had a broken sewer pipe which might have contributed to the high E. coli levels. The pipe has since been fixed. It was decided that another water sample should be collected at Site 1 to evaluate E. coli levels now that the pipe has been fixed. West informed the committee that IDEM has no plans to do any resampling; resampling will need to be done by the committee.

Exl showed the committee the conversion rate of wetland and forest to other land use he calculated using NOAA's Coastal Change Analysis Program. Between 1996 and 2006 only 29 acres of wetlands and 60 acres of forest within the watershed were lost, mostly to agriculture.

Exl presented the results of the macroinvertebrate sampling and habitat assessment. Every sample site had issues with silt cover and embeddedness, riparian width and quality, and bank erosion. Site 6 had the lowest (poorest) QHEI score, well below the minimum score of 53 that IDEM sets for warm water communities. Cattle had access to this site 20 years ago. Today the stream at this site is a muck bottom with little habitat heterogeneity. Site 7 had the best QHEI score, however, the macroinvertebrate community collected at this site did not match the higher QHEI score. Site 4 was selected as a reference site based on the habitat and macroinvertebrate results. This site had the highest taxa richness, highest percent EPT¹, and the lowest (best) Hilsenhoff biotic index score.

Exl presented the results of a stream buffer analysis. A 100-foot buffer (on both sides of the stream) was used in the calculation. According to the results, 7.5 miles of stream in the watershed do not have sufficient buffer. Within this 7.5 miles, 6,138 acres of agricultural land and 165 acres of developed land exist within the 100-foot buffer.

Based on the information presented at the meeting the committee formed the following problem statements (rough cut):

- 1) E. coli levels exceed the State standard of 235 colonies/100 mL throughout the watershed because of human (septic), livestock, and wildlife influences.
- 2) The hydric soils map shows that historic acreages of wetlands were greater than exist today throughout the watershed. Over time many wetlands have been drained and converted to agriculture.
- 3) Most of the growth projected in the LaPorte County Land Development Plan will occur north of Interstate 80/90 where high quality wetlands and forests exist. Currently there is no policy or guidelines in place to protect these areas.
- 4) Approximately 7.5 miles of stream do not meet the recommended 100-foot riparian buffer because of adjacent land uses.
- 5) High sediment loads from streambank erosion and adjacent land uses

Committee members to make arrangements for additional sampling at Site 1.

¹ Percentage of taxa that are within the orders ephemeroptera, plecoptera, and tricoptera.

<p>throughout the watershed are negatively affecting the macroinvertebrate community.</p> <p>6) Historically, the river and tributaries have been hydraulically and hydrologically altered by culverts, small impoundments, and by other actions.</p> <p>A discussion ensued on the importance of the steering committee surveying the watershed to find specific problem areas. It was decided that volunteers from the committee would take sections of the watershed and perform windshield surveys. West agreed to send field forms that IDEM uses to complete windshield surveys. Messacar and Exl agreed to develop a standardized process for volunteers to survey the watershed and collect information. Donley agreed to create a map of field use.</p> <p>Lastly, Messacar informed the group about a phone call received from the MDEQ regarding high sediment loads entering Michigan from Indiana. The sediment problem originates from Spring Creek. Kohring expressed interest in taking on this area for the field survey to further investigate the issue.</p>	<p>Messacar and Exl to develop a standardized approach for the field survey. Donley to create map for field survey.</p>
<p><u>Next Meeting</u></p> <p>The next Steering Committee meeting will be held on September 3, 2009, at 3 pm (CST) at the LaPorte County Library, 904 Indiana Avenue.</p>	
<p>Meeting adjourned around 5:00 pm</p>	