

Whitewater River Watershed Steering Committee Meeting

Minutes of September 22nd, 2015



Whitewater River Watershed

Attendees: Heather Wirth, Chelsea Tooley, Ben Braeutigam, Jon Seymour, Mari Piekutowski, Debbie Blank, Helen Kremer, Beth Downs, Tim Hesselbrock, Mike Schwab, Brian Bohl, and Bruce Koehler

The meeting began at 6:00pm at the Harrison Library in Harrison, OH. After Heather Wirth, Technical Coordinator, called the meeting to order, attendees were asked to review the previous meeting minutes. With no immediate revisions, members of the committee were asked to see Chelsea or Heather if they had any additions or corrections.

Under new business, Heather updated the committee on the status of the implementation grant application. She submitted the grant application to IDEM at the end of August. Some of the goals stated in the grant application were: implement 5 prescribed grazing plans, implement 5 conservation cropping system plans, plant 1,500 acres of cover crops, convert 500 acres to no-till, and plant 5ac or 1,500' of buffers. If funded, the grant would start late 2016 or early 2017 and would last for 3 years and 3 months. The grant included \$200,000 for cost-share, but practices may only be installed in Indiana since the grant is ran through IDEM. The education and outreach efforts will still be watershed based. IDEM's technical review results should be known by Dec. 31st, 2015. In hopes of receiving additional funding for implementation, the current grant was extended to January 2017 so there won't be a lag time between the 2 grants.

Heather updated the committee on the planning of some upcoming events. Every year the Great Miami Watershed holds an annual clean-up in October. There was discussion about adding a new site for Whitewater during this event next year. Many different organizations and companies help sponsor the event. Heather has been talking to different partners about holding a Soil Health Workshop and trying to get Dave Brandt to be the main speaker. Franklin County Extension and CCSI are both interested in partnering for the workshop. Chelsea updated the committee on the status of the storm drain marking program. Currently, they project is awaiting approval from the Harrison Utilities to apply the vinyl markers to the storm drains. The project will likely take place before the next steering committee meeting, so Chelsea will send out information via email.

After calculating the correct nutrient and sediment loads, Heather realized a change is needed to be made to the project's percent reduction goal for nitrogen. The old goal of 10% for Nitrogen in 3 years is very lofty and may not be achievable based on the current load for Nitrogen being over 2 million pounds. Based on Heather's calculations combined with assumptions of feasibility for number of practices, Heather suggested that 2% decrease in Nitrogen would be a good target for the project in a 3 year timeframe. After a discussion, members from the committee wanted a goal that pushed a bit more, rather than just shooting for something that was easily

attainable. The committee agreed on a goal to a 10% reduction in Nitrogen over 20 years (2% in 3 years, 4% in 5 years, 6% in ten years and 10% in twenty years).

Next, Heather and Chelsea led the group in a discussion about updating the Tier rankings in the stakeholder concerns section of the management plan. When the section was completed by the committee the results of the windshield survey had not been obtained. Heather summarized the results of the survey on the board. Based on these results, some of the tier rankings needed to increase or decrease. The following changes were made:

- Moved “Excessive gully erosion in cropland and pastures” from Tier 3 to Tier 2
- Moved “Sedimentation from erosion caused by overgrazing” from Tier 3 to Tier 1
- Moved “Overgrazing Pastures” from Tier 3 to Tier 1
- Moved “Pollution from failing septic systems” from Tier 1 to Tier 2

The new figure in the plan is below:

- Separating concerns into tiers (1-3) based upon priority
 - Tier 3 = education components, outreach
 - Tier 2 = limited cost share, programs, partnering
 - Tier 1 = cost share, programs, partnering, etc.

The Whitewater River Watershed Project Steering Committee also grouped the concerns from the stakeholder concern survey into groups based upon similarity. In FIGURE NUMBER below groups are assigned a particular color. Concerns that were not assigned a group were also not identified as a priority or a focus for this project.

- Group 1: Cropland and Erosion Management – green
- Group 2: Livestock and Pasture Management – blue
- Group 3: Septic System Failures and Sewage Management – yellow
- Group 4: Stream Bank and Riparian Management – red
- Group 5: Pollution of Water – purple
- Group 6: Invasive Species Management – orange
- No Group: - grey

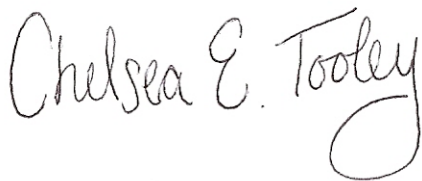
Figure NUMBER: Analysis of Stakeholder Concerns

Concern	Concern Supported by Data?	Evidence for Concern	Concern Quantifiable?	Concern Part of Project Scope?	Focusing on Concern?
Excessive gully erosion in cropland and pastures	Yes	68 points of windshield survey confirms sites with gully erosion Aerial photos / GIS	Yes	Yes	Tier 2
Too much conventional tillage of cropland	Yes	# of sites on windshield % of fields on transect	Yes	Yes	Tier 2
Need for soils	Yes	attendance at	No	Yes	Tier 3

education involving, compaction, cover crops and nitrogen fixation issues.		workshops # of participants in programs			
Need for more cover crops on cropland	Yes	Cover crop transect Windshield survey	Yes	Yes	Tier 1
Sedimentation from erosion caused by overgrazing	Yes	68 of points on windshield survey	Yes	Yes	Tier 1
Livestock with direct access to streams	Yes	Windshield	Yes	Yes	Tier 1
Fencing of livestock from sensitive areas	Yes	Windshield survey	yes	Yes	Tier 1
Overgrazing Pastures	Yes	68 of points on windshield survey	yes	Yes	Tier 1
E. coli within the streams	Yes	Project Data: # streams exceed state limit for 5 week Geometric Mean (125cfu/mL). Streams listed on the 303d list for E.coli	Yes	Yes	Tier 1
Pollution from failing septic systems	Yes	OKI hotspots Attendance at workshops Health Department Data	Yes	Yes	Tier 2
Stream bank erosion	Yes	# of points on windshield Photos/GIS IDEM QHEI	Yes	Yes	Tier 2
Lack of Riparian Buffers along Streams	Yes	Aerial photos Windshield surveys	Yes	Yes	Tier 1
Drinking Water Contamination	No	# of wells Aquifer service area, Anecdotal evidence	Conditional	Conditional	Tier 3
Pollution and Volume from Urban Runoff	No	Anecdotal evidence, % of	Conditional	Conditional	Tier 3

		impervious coverage Conductivity			
Trash/ Litter in streams	Yes	Windshield survey Bags picked up at cleanups, Anecdotal Evidence	Yes	Yes	Tier 2
Invasive species in watershed	No	Anecdotal evidence, Infrared honeysuckle survey? Notices of nuisance plants/species	No	Yes	Tier 3
Low quality plants in pastures	No	No points found on windshield survey?	Yes	No	No
Drift from Chemical Application	No	Possible complaints to state chemist	No	No	No
Need for education on wildlife	No	None found	No	No	No
Overpopulation of Wildlife in the watershed	No	None found	Yes	No	No
Unchecked Development	No	SWCD Rule 5 Information	No	No	No

The next draft of the WMP is due on December 8th. With no further business, discussion points, or concerns the meeting was adjourned. The next Steering Committee for the Whitewater River Watershed Project was set for November 16th at 6:00pm in the Harrison Public Library Meeting Room.



Chelsea E. Tooley, Outreach Coordinator