

Marengo River Watershed Partnership (MRWP) Technical Team Minutes 2/17/2010
Bad River Watershed Association Office: 101 Main St. W, Suite 353

Present: Tom Fratt (Ashland Co. LWCD), Mike Gardner (SOEI Northland College), Tom Hollenhorst (US EPA ORD), Matt Hudson (BRWA), Michele Wheeler (BRWA), Valerie Olinik-Damstra (BRWA)

Matt provided an update for the group on where we are in developing an EPA nine-element watershed action plan for the Marengo River watershed. He discussed the status of the approval process for the watershed action plan. Typically states approve these plans as part of the process to tap into Clean Water Act Section 319 funds for cleaning up impaired waters, but it is not clear how approval will work for this particular project. Matt will continue to work on this and follow up as needed.

The group discussed the challenges/causes and goals/objectives document that several Technical Team members have provided comments on. The job of the Technical Team has been to take the issues and concerns expressed at the MRWP meeting on 12/16/09 and draft an initial set of what are being called “challenges and causes” and then develop preliminary “goals and objectives” that will be presented to the full MRWP at its next meeting on 3/9/10. These will form the basis for the specific work outlined in the watershed action plan.

Main comments from the group focused on the need to make the challenges/causes and goals/objectives reflect the values and desires of the people who live, work, and play in the watershed and be able to communicate this clearly. Matt described how the jobs of the Citizen Involvement Team (CIT) and Coordinator of this project are designed to gather more input from watershed residents and the process of updating the challenges/causes and goals/objectives will be ongoing as we gather more input and develop the watershed action plan. Matt will be working with the CI Coordinator and a CIT member (Ruth Oppedahl, UW-Ext.) to incorporate the draft Vision Statement (also from the 12/16 meeting), add some introductory and overarching information about the project and the values and goals expressed thus far, and develop a way to communicate the challenges/causes and goals/objectives to the MRWP on 3/9. An updated version of the challenges/causes and goals/objectives will be sent to the Technical Team prior to the MRWP meeting on 3/9.

Matt also began a discussion about how to turn the challenges/causes and goals/objectives into the “actions” that will be described in the watershed action plan. This is the effort of compiling existing information, conducting relevant analyses, identifying projects, prioritizing them, and developing a monitoring strategy to ensure the success of action plan implementation. This is a big job and although the challenges/causes and goals/objectives are not yet finalized, it is necessary to move forward with some of the technical mapping and analysis discussion and work that should and can be accomplished in the next six months (the targeted date for a draft watershed action plan is 9/30/10). Some of the challenges (such as hydrologic function, sedimentation, and implementing best management practices (BMPs) for forestry and farming) are either directly or indirectly related to the conclusions in the Marengo Test Case project and are certain to be included in the watershed action plan. Work should begin on these now.

Matt will set up a meeting with a subgroup of Technical Team folks that will focus on hydrologic function and sedimentation work. Preliminary contacts will be: Faith Fitzpatrick (USGS), Tom Hollenhorst (USEPA), Dale Higgins (USFS), John Hoopes (UW-Madison), and Mike Gardner (NC/SOEL). Others interested?

Matt will also begin developing a list of potential GIS maps and analysis that could be conducted to support needs related to targeting areas for BMPs and other management activities in the watershed. He will share this with an initial group of area BMP implementers including: Tom Fratt (Ashland Co LWCD), Gary Haughn (NRCS), Ted Koehler (USFWS), Butch Lobermeier (Bayfield Co LWCD), and Jason Fischbach (UW-Ext), others?, and generate a discussion about which work to move forward with as part of this project.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 4pm.

Submitted by Matt Hudson, Watershed Action Director, BRWA