

**Marengo River Watershed Partnership (MRWP) Project
Citizen Involvement Team Meeting**

Wednesday, May 18, 2010, 10:00am-12:00pm

Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center, Ashland

Meeting Notes

Attendees:

Valerie Olinik-Damstra, Ruth Oppedahl, Pam Roberts, Matt Hudson

Valerie welcomed the attendees and started the meeting with a recap of what was discussed the last time the Citizen Involvement Team gathered on January 20, 2010. At that meeting, a communications strategy was discussed which included identifying target audiences and messages specific to those audiences in the watershed. Potential outreach events that would allow citizens to participate in the MRWP project and provide input for the Watershed Action Plan (WAP) were also identified. The CI Team also created an outline for the watershed-wide newsletter mailing ("Marengo Riffles") that was eventually created and distributed to 1,100 watershed landowners at the end of February.

June 3rd MRWP Project Partners Meeting:

The CI Team talked about the upcoming project partners meeting on June 3rd at the Grand View Town Hall. The theme of the meeting is about the citizens and their stories from the watershed. A local foods picnic will precede the meeting to allow people to meet and greet. The bulk of the meeting will be dedicated to a Citizen Panel Discussion, where a farmer, logger, large woodland landowner, and town leader will discuss how in their positions they work to protect land and water in the watershed, and what the needs might be for the community that can be addressed in the WAP. Ruth will be facilitating the panel discussion. It is hoped that the panel will inspire discussion of additional needs that can be identified and turned into action items BRWA can include in the WAP.

Local Citizen Survey Summary:

Valerie shared with the team a draft of a summary of local citizen surveys recently conducted in the area. Valerie drafted a summary of the surveys to identify additional interests and concerns of local citizens related to land and water resources. The surveys are also being used as a tool to identify needs for the watershed community to help improve citizen resources for protecting land and water in the Marengo River Watershed. The CI Team began discussing the survey summary and identifying needs in the watershed according to specific target audiences that had been previously identified by the CI Team. These needs will eventually be translated into action items that will be included in the WAP.

Identification of Needs for the Watershed Community:

Keeping the target audiences in mind, needs for the watershed community to improve protection of land and water resources in the watershed were begun to be identified based on local citizen surveys and input from one-on-one interviews with watershed citizens. This discussion will continue at the June 3rd MRWP Project Partner meeting with the Citizen Panel Discussion and audience participation.

General watershed residents and all audiences:

- Drinking water programs and well-testing: talk to Tom Fratt, he has been working on getting a program like this started in Ashland County
- Improved outreach from organizations like UWEX, LWCD- work in better partnership among groups to spread message and have greater visibility in the community
- More opportunities like river clean-ups (many landowners see trash as a problem and would like to do something about it)

Private woodland landowners:

- More one-on-one visits with woodland landowners- desire by landowners to just have someone come out and take a look at their property, help with some recommendations of what to do with their land
- More information for landowners on tree planting
- Increased awareness of water quality and pollutants
- Time and money always an issue and the lack of both- how to get more people to sign-up for conservation programs (money available); better communication between implementers of programs (NRCS, LWCD) and landowners- keep the jargon to a minimum to make the programs less intimidating for landowners. Implementers simplify their message to keep it simple for the landowner (saves the landowner time)

Farmers:

- More outreach with the Lake Superior CREP Program- get more landowners to participate and take advantage of financial incentives
- How to deal with aging farmers and farms potentially going out of business- what is the future of farming in the Marengo River Watershed?

Foresters/ Loggers/ Mill owners:

- Community needs to better value small loggers- how can this be achieved?
- Improved linking of small loggers and foresters- potential to work on small-scale tree cuttings from private lands to meet forest management plan goals
- Ideas of folks to invite to June 3rd meeting to discuss this:
 - o Tom Salzmann- forester
 - o Bob Hammond- logger
 - o Bob Brevak- logger

Outdoor recreationists:

- More horse trails- used to be one at the base of the Penokees, ski trails in winter and horse trails in summer
- More information available about recreational resources in the Marengo River Watershed- i.e. canoeing fact sheets, locations of access points
- Improved access points to river or trails, addressing barriers to access

- Improved partnerships with private landowners and towns, potentially land trusts, to develop more foot paths and improve access to river and streams

Other Comments:

Ruth talked a bit about looking into small grants from the Wisconsin Humanities Council to get assistance with documenting community conversations with folks from the Marengo River Watershed. Could be a great way to better document citizen involvement for the project. Could also be a potential funding source for implementation projects of the WAP related to citizen involvement and a neat way to document the stories of what is happening in the watershed. Valerie will look into this more and report back to the CI Team and BRWA staff about this possibility.

Action Items:

Ruth- review UWEX woodland landowner survey to identify more potential needs; will facilitate the citizen panel discussion at the June 3rd meeting

Pam- think about needs related to Tribal members and what else we might be able to address in the WAP

Matt- coordinating the logistics of the June 3rd MRWP meeting, will keep working with Valerie on integrating the Technical Team and CI Team work into the WAP

Valerie- will check into the Wisconsin Humanities Council grants; will continue work on the Local Citizen Survey Summary and will distribute to the CI Team again once the draft is more complete; will compile ideas from this meeting and present CI Team work at the June 3rd MRWP Meeting

CI Team will communicate about this more via email exchange. Members of the CI Team will be in attendance at the June 3rd MRWP Project Partner meeting. A future CI Team meeting was not set at this time and will be convened as needed. Meeting concluded at 12:00pm.