

**Marengo River Watershed Partnership**  
**Project Partners Community Meeting and Potluck**  
**October 7, 2010 at the Marengo Valley Elementary School, Marengo, WI**  
*Meeting Notes*

**Attendees, From /Affiliation**

Matt Hudson, BRWA	Alfred Lundgren, Town of Ashland
Valerie Olinik-Damstra, BRWA	Jerry Jossart, Town of Gordon
Ruth Oppedahl, UW-Extension	Linda Carroll, Town of Lincoln
Kevin Brewster, BRWA	Jim Jensen, Town of Lincoln
Pam Roberts, Bad River Natural Resources	Bill Heart, BRWA
Chris Graff, Co-Principal, Mar. Valley School	Jerome Hager, Town of Lincoln
John Esposito, Co-Principal, Mar. Valley School	Arthur Hager, Town of Lincoln
Elmer Lippo, Town of Marengo	Jean Barron, Town of Lincoln
Michele Wheeler, BRWA	Grant Herman, Northland College
Dan Vaillancourt, Town of Lincoln	Mary Wichita, Town of Lincoln
Mike Mattson, Town of Marengo	Jack Wichita, Town of Lincoln

**Potluck!**

Meeting participants provided a dish to pass, which resulted in a delicious assortment of dinner options that was enjoyed to start the meeting.

**MRWP Project Update and Presentation of Draft Watershed Action Plan**

Matt presented and re-acquainted meeting participants with progress that has been made in developing a watershed action plan for the Marengo, why the project is taking place, and where we are in the process to complete the plan. He talked briefly about the MRWP Technical Team Workshop on August 31 and how technical input was considered and used to set priorities for the watershed challenges, objectives, and actions. BRWA is working with EPA to complete approval of the Marengo watershed action plan as an EPA nine-element watershed management plan, which will increase the credibility and fundability of the plan. This approval is likely to go beyond the end of the current grant period and BRWA is looking into options to fund the completion of the approval process and continuation of MRWP.

He described the challenges facing the Marengo watershed and what we mean by things like “unstable hydrology” and why it’s important in the Marengo watershed. He described how the region’s geology and its land use history have shaped the watershed we see today and lead to many of the challenges faced to improve the health of the watershed.

He described the watershed vision and goals and showed the Technical Team ranking of watershed challenges. He described how the draft plan is divided into two “critical management areas:” the northern, soil transition zone and clay plain and the upper watershed. He then passed out draft copies of the watershed action plan and walked the audience through the action plan table. This provided a lead-in to the next component of the evening.

### **How Can the Plan Work for You?**

Valerie introduced the comment form available at the meeting in paper form and electronically at BRWA's website. People are encouraged to submit comments on the draft watershed action plan. The public comment period will be open until November 12<sup>th</sup>.

She then pulled a couple of examples from the plan and talked about how the plan and the MRWP can inspire people to "learn more, do more, and teach and inspire your neighbors." The plan is the vehicle for which we will achieve a healthy Marengo watershed.

As one example, BRWA learned from talking with landowners in the watershed that private landowners would like to do more forest management on their land, but they're not sure what to do or how to pay for it. So, the action in the plan to address this is stated as: "Increase direct outreach to woodland landowners to match land and forest management objectives with watershed considerations." This could then be implemented as a workshop or other educational opportunity for landowners to learn more about forest management practices on private lands. Then, the plan can be used as a mechanism to help obtain funding for a cost-share program to help landowners implement some practices, such as a tree-planting project. Finally, this project could then be shared with neighbors to teach them about the landowners experience and how it worked for them. The end result being more people participating in such a program, and therefore working together to protect the watershed's health.

### **Round Robin – How is the Plan Already Being Implemented?**

Matt explained how the final portion of the meeting was being devoted to a round robin discussion of what types of projects and activities are already going on to implement the watershed plan as a way for people to share projects and project ideas. The round robin was intended to be an example of the type of interactive forum that the Marengo River Watershed Partnership could be if there is interest in continuing the group beyond the planning and into implementation.

Matt began by describing two culvert replacements on Hager Rd. in the Town of Lincoln as examples of projects already implementing the plan. The Town of Lincoln representatives and residents at the meeting gave additional information on how the project was completed. BRWA's Culvert Program is one example of how, collaboratively, local governments and citizens can connect with natural resource professionals to identify solutions to issues and concerns and identify resources to implement the solutions. Jerry Jossart mentioned the availability of funding from the Forest Service through the local Resource Advisory Council (of which he is a member) for road projects and other projects that benefit rivers in the national forest. Participants felt that continuing the MRWP (and potlucks!) would be a beneficial forum for continuing these kinds of discussions as a way to network and identify new projects and opportunities.

The next MRWP meeting will be on Thursday, December 16<sup>th</sup>, where a final draft plan will be celebrated released for public comment. Time and meeting location TBD. The final plan is due to be completed by the end of December, 2010.