

**Marengo River Watershed Partnership
Project Partners Meeting
December 16, 2009
Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center, Ashland
*Meeting Notes***

Meeting Attendees

Matt Hudson	Bad River Watershed Association
Valerie Olinik-Damstra	Bad River Watershed Association
Ruth Oppedahl	University of Wisconsin Extension
Kevin Brewster	Bad River Watershed Association
Jerome Hager	private landowner
Elmer Lippo	Town of Marengo
Bill Heart	Bad River Watershed Association
Mike Mattson	Town of Marengo
Pam Roberts	Bad River Tribe
Jean Barron	Town of Lincoln
Arthur Hager	private landowner
Mike Gardner	Sigurd Olsen Environmental Institute
Kristen Tomaszewski	WDNR
Dale Higgins	US Forest Service
Darienne McNamara	NCWMA/ Bad River Watershed Association
Mark Dryer	private landowner/ Bad River Watershed Association
George Einar Bussey	Town of White River
Jo Bailey	Bad River Watershed Association
Pam Dryer	private landowner
Nancy Larson	WDNR/ private landowner
Jason Sutter	Bayfield Regional Conservancy
Dane Bonk	Town of Grand View/ Bad River Watershed Association
Sharon Anthony	Northland College
Michele Wheeler	Bad River Watershed Association
<u>Joined by phone</u>	
Faith Fitzpatrick	US Geological Survey
Tom Hollenhorst	US EPA
Jane Anklam	West Wisconsin Land Trust

Introduction

The meeting started at 4:10pm with a welcome by Matt Hudson of the Bad River Watershed Association (BRWA). Meeting attendees went around the room and introduced themselves and stated why they decided to attend the meeting.

Matt gave a presentation to orient people to the Marengo River Watershed, its features, and some of the problems. Matt also explained how this project is picking up where the Lake Superior Basin Partner Team left off with the Marengo River Watershed Test Case project. Information from this project, along with other local land use plans and projects, will be combined into a Watershed Action Plan for the Marengo River Watershed, where planning will be turned into “actions” that will improve the health of the Marengo River Watershed. He also covered why BRWA is coordinating this project, and what the Marengo River Watershed Partnership is (herein referred to as “the partnership”), which is “Local governments, agencies, and citizens working together to identify specific projects and activities that will improve the health of the Marengo River Watershed.”

Valerie Olinik-Damstra of BRWA gave a presentation on the process of developing a Watershed Action Plan. Valerie discussed the US EPA watershed planning process and that the resulting Marengo River Watershed Action Plan will include the EPA’S Nine Minimum Elements for Watershed Plans. This will ensure that the actions in the plan will result in water quality improvements, improve our ability to implement the plan and give the plan more credibility with funders. Valerie also covered the team structure that will be used to develop the plan. Members of the partnership will participate in working teams, including a Citizen Involvement Team, Technical Team, and Steering Team. Each team will be led and coordinated by Matt and/or Valerie. These teams will complete specific tasks, which will be included in the Watershed Action Plan. The Watershed Action Plan which will be completed in one year-December 2010.

Visioning Exercise

Ruth Oppedahl of University of Wisconsin Extension led the group in a visioning exercise, and asked the question “We want to see a Marengo River Watershed that looks like...” Attendees listed various words/phrases that described what they would like the Marengo River Watershed to look like into the future (See **Appendix A**).

Outcome: These words will be arranged into a vision statement that will be included as an introduction to the Watershed Action Plan. A draft of the vision statement is in **Appendix A**. We will discuss this more at the next partnership meeting in March 2010.

Issues of Concern

Matt led the group in a discussion listing the issues of concern in the watershed (See **Appendix B**). Some issues of concern related to the hydrology of the river and the flow of water off the landscape were listed as a result of the Marengo River Test Case project. However, additional issues of concern were not identified as part of this study and need to be identified to address in the Watershed Action Plan.

Outcome: Watershed issues of concern were identified and will be used by the Technical Team to draft some preliminary goals for the watershed action plan.

Team Breakout

Technical Team: Matt led the Technical Team, discussing the goals of this team and the role this team will play in contributing to the watershed action plan. Additional discussion was had on watershed issues and concerns while trying to organize into common themes (See **Appendix C**).

Outcome: Matt will take the feedback from the Technical Team and develop a more refined list of issues and concerns and some preliminary goals. He will then solicit input from the Technical Team. Once the Technical Team is comfortable with issues, concerns, and preliminary goals, they will be presented to the rest of the MRWP. They will form the basis for the action plan. Matt will also begin work on gathering available data from the Marengo watershed, which will give the Technical Team a better feel for the types of models that could be used to develop load estimates related to the issues and concerns.

Citizen Involvement Team: Valerie led the Citizen Involvement Team (CIT), discussing the goals of this team and the role this team will play in contributing to the watershed action plan. Ideas about target audiences and opportunities for citizens to participate were also discussed. (See **Appendix D**).

Outcome: It was decided by the CIT that the first priority will be developing and sending a mailing to the watershed residents as a whole to introduce the project, and gauge people's interest and gather ideas of what types of opportunities they would like to participate in. Valerie will begin pulling together information to include in the first mailing and will share with the team. The CIT will meet again in mid-January to discuss with a target of getting the mailing out by February 1.

Conclusion

Matt thanked everyone for attending and for providing such valuable input. The next meeting of the partnership will be held in March 2010, date and location TBD. The meeting concluded at 6:30pm.

Note: *The next meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday, March 9, 2010 at the Town of Ashland town hall from 4-6:30pm. Matt and Valerie will send a few reminders and an agenda prior to the meeting.*

Appendix A. Visioning exercise words/phrases and draft vision statement

Word List (in no particular order):

- Clean
- Trout
- Connected (no blockages for fish)
- Diversity of plants and animals
- Uncut (natural forest)
- Accessible (river access)
- Resilient to changes
- Destination for visitors
- Productive for livelihood (making a living)
- Native plants and animals
- Agriculture present
- Watershed stewards
- Proud and involved citizens
- Being a model to others (inspiring)
- Retains rural character

Draft vision statement:

We would like to see a Marengo River watershed that is:

- A community of people who are proud of where they live, care about the river, and are involved in taking actions to benefit the watershed.
- A clean, flowing river that is well-connected for fish passage and supports a healthy population of trout.
- A watershed that is resilient to changes because of its diversity of native plants and animals.
- A destination for visitors because of its natural beauty, river access and mix of forested landscape and farmland that define its rural character.
- A vital, productive community where people can live, and make a living.

Appendix B. Watershed issues of concern

- Hydrology of the river, “slow the flow” off the landscape, high flows contribute to bank erosion and sedimentation in the river- *From the Marengo River Watershed Test Case:*
 - o Areas with more than 50 or 60% open land or young forest
 - o Sand deposition in the lower reaches of the watershed
 - o Cropland tillage, rotation and surface drainage
 - o Water channeled by road and ditch systems
 - o Drained wetlands
 - o Key areas of concern: soil transition zone, LS clay plain
- Flooding (reference to 100 year flood that occurred, causing entire farm to fall into the river; flood of 1946 that changed the course of the river)
- Sand/ sediment deposits filling in trout holes
- Beaver dams
- Channelization/ banks cut down
- Springs drying up
- Adequate groundwater recharge
- Man-made barriers in streams (culverts, dams)
- Residential waste management (septics, storm sewers)
- Invasive species (aquatic and terrestrial)
- Agricultural issues (cattle in the stream, grazing, runoff from farm lots)
- Sea lamprey issues
- Development and land use
- Dairy farms to woods- conversion of land uses
- Concentrated animal facilities (CAFO’s)
- Water quality- keeping it good where it’s good, improving in problem areas
- Elevated water temperatures
- Parcelization of land (dividing large parcels into smaller and smaller pieces)
- Climate change (more storms contribute to more intense flooding events; droughts making it harder to farm)
- Marengo Lake and other lakes in the watershed- increased shoreline development, parcelization, development pressure, septics, etc.
- Monitoring needs
- Zoning ordinances- are they adequate to protect water quality? Septics, driveways, etc.
- Salt on roads
- Lack of public trails that are accessible
- Dust from roads at road crossings

(Note: These were added after the group discussion)

- Gravel pits and mining
- Designation of a section as a Wild and Scenic River- (Town of Namekagon to Four Corners)

Appendix C. Technical Team discussion

The specific tasks the Technical Team will need to accomplish can be broken up into two types of expertise needed to complete them:

1. Modelers and monitoring:
 - a. Estimate of current loadings of pollutants related to identified impairments.
 - b. What load reductions are needed to meet goals set in plan.
 - c. Criteria to determine if load reductions are being achieved.
 - d. Monitoring component to evaluate effectiveness of implementation (indicators).
2. Implementers:
 - a. Types of NPS management measures that will need to be implemented to achieve load reductions and where.
 - b. How much will it cost, where will funding come from, and who is responsible for implementing.
 - c. Schedule for implementation.
 - d. Milestones to determine if control actions are being implemented.

Matt led the group in a discussion of the issues and concerns that were identified by the whole group in an effort to identify any issues that were missed and to refine them into common themes. The MRWP will need to agree on the issues and concerns it will focus on in the action plan and develop preliminary goals. The Technical Team can play a role in refining the broad issues and concerns raised into more specific issues that will be the focus of the nine element plan.

It is anticipated that much of the work of the Technical Team will be conducted via email and phone. Specific tasks for the Team will become clearer once the issues, concerns, and goals are fleshed out.

Appendix D. Citizen Involvement Team discussion

The goals of the Citizen Involvement Team (CIT) are to 1) gain input from watershed citizens in developing the watershed action plan, 2) use outreach and involvement activities to raise awareness of citizens on watershed issues, 3) encourage citizens and local officials to support and participate in implementation of the plan, and 4) to get new people engaged and involved. The CIT is charged with providing opportunities for watershed citizens to provide input into the Watershed Action Plan, and to develop a long-term strategy for citizen outreach and involvement as part of the implementation actions of the Watershed Action Plan.

The CIT discussed the key audiences in the watershed, to ensure that the communicated message is tailored to these audiences.

Audiences identified were:

- Local government officials
- Riparian landowners
- Farmers
- Private forested landowners
- Large forestry operations (i.e. Plum Creek, National Forest)
- Absentee landowners
- Outdoor recreationists- “silent” sports (i.e. hikers, cross-country skiers, trout fishermen, hunters, etc.) vs. “loud” sports (i.e. ATVs, snowmobilers, etc.)
- Lake residents (are there any lake associations?)

The group also discussed what types of opportunities we should provide to allow citizens to learn more about the project, and provide input into the Watershed Action Plan.

Opportunities identified were:

- Mass mailing to everyone in the watershed- initial outreach to introduce the project and gauge interest in further participation. Get feedback from people on what ways they’d like to participate or just give the opportunity to mail back form to BRWA with issues/ concerns/ ideas to include in Watershed Action Plan.
- Newspaper articles
- “House parties”- small gatherings in homes to have informal discussions with friends and food
- Marengo River Watershed project newsletter- to be sent several times throughout the project and beyond to update on progress and inform
- Fish Boil or similar social event- referenced success of fish boil hosted by “Friends of the White River”
- Town gatherings at churches or town halls
- Event at fairgrounds in Marengo
- River-cleanup or similar community event- some concern about something like this with many residents being retired or older, river may not be accessible enough for something like this