



MINUTES

Upper Fox River Watershed Planning Stakeholder Meeting of September 14, 2022 **Held at Fox Waterway Agency Headquarters**

Meeting called to order at 1:00 pm and at 6:00 pm

1. Welcome/Introductions - Joe Keller, Executive Director, Fox Waterway Agency

Mr. Keller gave a brief Welcome and introduction to those present with the goal of creating and maintaining a healthy waterway for all to enjoy.

2. PowerPoint Review of Water Quality Issues & Opportunities - Randy Stowe, Project Manager

Mr. Stowe reviewed the definition of a Watershed Plan for this project. He suggested potential water quality issues to look for; Potential Best Management Practices (BMPs) for some issues; and the types of watershed plan projects potentially eligible for future grant funding.

Project Manager Stowe explained the need for a Watershed based plan for the Upper Fox River/Chain of Lakes and the limitations of the plan (must be south of the State line with Wisconsin). He noted that once we have a list of potential projects, the BMPs will be addressed on an individual case by case basis. Project Manager Stowe then covered some of the primary issues affecting water quality in the study area that the group knows about but there is a need for the stakeholders to identify issues not on the list and specific locations where some of the issues are located. Northwater Consulting, with the Fox Waterway Staff, have identified some visible issues along the entire shoreline of the open water but not all of the upland or low water issues were able to be identified.

Samples of some of the issues, possible causes and sources were shown in a PowerPoint presentation. Samples included: Contact Recreation impairment by suspended solids and high nutrient levels; outdated/failing septic systems; Stormwater Outfall erosion; lack of stormwater filtration method; general shoreline erosion; shoreline recession; deteriorating seawalls and lack of buffers; invasive vegetation causing excessive shading of native stabilizing vegetation; sediment deposition; and landscape waste disposal to name a few.

Project Manager Stowe then explained two categories of BMP projects: the landowner scale which can often be done without regulatory permits, engineering plans or other requirements; and larger scale more commercial projects that would typically require engineering, permits, competitive bidding and other possible requirements.

Project Manager Stowe then showed pictures of some mitigated water quality issues as examples of BMP: Bioswales, rain gardens, reduction of turf grass, buffer strips, permeable paving, streambank stabilization with riprap and brush removal, shoreline stabilization with buffers, dredging, agricultural tile removal, and livestock exclusion fencing.

Project Manager Stowe explained the 319 Grant application process which generally favors larger projects and those that affect Pollutant Load Reduction (PLR) as they are usually more cost effective. The 319 grants are very competitive, but applications must first be identified on the approved Watershed based plans. These grants are 40% local match and 60% grant funded. The grant funding comes from many sources including various taxes collected locally up to the Federal level.

At this stage of the planning process the team needs input from stakeholders identifying areas where specific water quality issues may exist to make sure none are missed; Identifying areas where specific BMP may be appropriate; Identify the type of education and outreach activities wanted to help stakeholders become more aware of water quality issues and opportunities. Project Manager Stowe shared one event on septic systems used by the Wonder Lake Master Property Owners Association as an example.

3. This is Your Waterway! Pat Smarto, Chairwoman of the Fox Waterway Advisory Committee

Ms. Smarto reviewed who are the stakeholders: Landowners, watershed users, businesses (large and small) and business associations; Environmental Organizations, state and federal agencies and local governmental agencies. Involvement can be a little or a lot. The best way to help is to educate themselves on identifying water quality issues and locations, sharing what they find, learning possible Best Management Practices and supporting the implementation of the plan projects once the plan is complete.

4. Education and Outreach – Anne Basten, Fox Waterway Advisory Board Member

Ms. Basten led a brainstorming session with those present and collected the following areas of interest for ongoing education for stakeholders.

1. Water Quality Issues – where do they come from - EnviroScape – Friends of the Fox and Probably Lake & McHenry County Water Resources have them – shows people what happens to pollutants under various scenarios – tours of successful BMPS
2. Goose Management Alternatives -
(Goose chasing dogs – Chicago Botanic Gardens; Vegetative Buffers – IDNR – McHenry County Conservation District; Chemical deterrents; Suggested species for buffer strips)
3. Landscape based solutions - How to handle chemical additives (fertilizers) and landscape wastes (BMP), Rain Gardens, swales, buffers, erosion
4. Tours or Self-guided tours of BMPs in place
5. Additional items of interest and suggested speaker topics:
 - a. Rain Gardens
 - Chicago Botanic Gardens
 - The Wildflower and Plant Propagation Committee (McHenry County)
 - Lake & McHenry County Stormwater Commissions and maybe water resources
 - LLISA Plant sale
 - Wisconsin Extension Service
 - b. Tour of Lake County Stormwater BMP display
 - c. State Monitoring of Effluents results
 - d. Educating New Development owners and residents about best practices before installation or when they move in.
 - e. Revitalization Projects should include (require?) retrofits/updates
 - f. Get HOAs together to discuss methods of communication and support
 - g. Marinas – Provide education for boat users and rental facilities
 - h. Restaurants – encourage outdoor gardens and outdoor services to show stormwater treatment.
 - i. Door Hangers re: Landscape waste for homeowners and landscape companies re: Phosphorus, nitrates, and disposal of waste BMPs and requirements of communities. Affecting Change through policy re: Landscape wastes Reach out to Landscaping supply companies about what topics education is being provided so they have the correct supplies and help spread the word
 - j. Identify and Improve major runoff areas and add to project lists
 - k. Use of Aluminum Phosphate for removal of suspended sediment – is it safe?

5. How Are Potential Water Quality Issues/Opportunities Identified – Rob Bowman, Superintendent Fox Waterway Agency

Superintendent Bowman reviewed the online project reporting pages on the Foxchaingwatershed.com website and explained what and how to submit projects, volunteer or subscribe to newsletters and updates, as well as to submit suggestions or inquiries.

6. Wrap up – Joe Keller, Executive Director Fox Waterway Agency

Executive Director Keller thanked everyone for participating today and save the date for upcoming meetings.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:10 pm and at 7:09 pm.

Partial List of attendees:

David Corrigan
Devon Frey
Ralph Wenzel
Tom Fernstrom
Jacob Jozefouski
Bruce Mason
Neil Moulis
Representative Tom Weber
Alan Saboc (aide to Sen. Wilcox)
Judy Andersen
Roy Andersen
John Fischer
David Ratliff
Sue Colbert
Michael W. Shields
Kay Starostovic
Chris Pach
Kevin Eppel
Jim Montrie
Diane Donaldson
Jeff Czuma
Linda Pederson
Lisa Rabe
Jason Hettermann
Isaiah Griffin