

Upper White River Watershed Alliance, Inc.
Technical Committee Minutes
January 16, 2002

The meeting was called to order at 2:05PM Wednesday January 16, 2002. Those present were as follows: Mr. Kent Ward, Hamilton County Surveyor; Mrs. Jacqueline Graham, Hamilton County Surveyor's Office; Mr. Rusty Spiars; Ms. Sheila McKinley, Ratio Architects; Ms. Cindy Fort, American Consulting; Mr. Don Anthis, City of Noblesville Utility Director; Mr. Steve Hall, Goode and Associates.

Review of Minutes of November 20, 2001 Meeting:

There were no changes made. The minutes were approved.

Citizens Advisory Committee for the White River Fish Kill - Projects:

Mr. Ward stated that he had been contacted by two members of the committee and was asked to come up with projects that they can be looking at for their recommendations. He asked for input from the members of the UPWRWA.

Mr. Hall stated that he had some additional information. Mr. Hall presented a copy of specific project recommendations that have been presented to the Board. The cover letter that he received stated that the Board has been hearing presentations from IDNR. The third meeting coming up on February 13 is an opportunity for Board members to present projects that would be supported by the entities that they represent. If there were any projects that the UWRWA would like to present Bob would be glad to speak or yield the floor to anyone from the alliance. Mr. Hall also stated that there are some guidelines as to how the dollars can be spent.

Mr. Ward stated that he had asked Mr. John Bundy how far up a tributary they would be able to go. The decree was pretty specific, but they were looking at doing something to tributaries but did not know how far.

Mr. Hall stated that they have been hesitant to discuss a project that was not on the main stem of the river, but there has been a small window opened when a project was presented on a tributary and the benefits could be seen immediately in the White River. Maybe something like that could be discussed.

Mr. Spiars asked how much money did they have to spend?

Mr. Hall stated that there was \$3,000,000.00 in White River Restoration Fund #1 to be used for projects expected to be funded in whole or in part within the twelve months of the affective date of consent. In addition after the twelve months following the consent to decree there is an additional \$3,000,000.00 that will become available in the second fund with no deadline set on when it has to be spent.

Mr. Ward stated that there is an outside deadline for the first \$3,000,000.00 because if it is not spent within the first year the interest on that money goes back to Guide. If they spend the \$3,000,000.00 the first year the interest goes back into the fund.

Mr. Anthis stated that he thought that there might be several grants.

Mr. Hall stated that IDNR currently has a proposal to buy conservation easements up and down White River. The area limited by the project is from Anderson to about 71st Street in Northern Marion County. The proposal by IDNR to spend about 1.1 million dollars to buy conservation easements in that project area.

Mr. Ward stated that there was another proposal to establish 100-foot wide vegetated strips along White River basically through the agricultural areas to help filter the erosion from the fields.

Mr. Spiars asked how much effort has there been on the White River to determine what the water problems are and where the real need for projects are?

Mr. Hall stated that the aqua program has been used on the White River for the last ten years. This program looks at very specific things so it is not very detailed monitoring and evaluation program. It monitors several sites but not necessarily a true assessment of a watershed or water quality at a detailed level. Part of what they have done with the upper White is to try to develop a bibliography data base that has all the projects and plans and studies that have been done along the White River. There has been a lot done but nobody has ever looked at all those things in a summary.

Ms. McKinley asked if that would be a place to use part of the funds?

Mr. Hall stated that it would be a great use for the funds, but they are not allowed to use the money for that. It has to be a physical project. He stated that on the citizen advisory committee one group is saying that they are going to be spending a lot of money, but it will not address any environment benefits. The others are saying this is a façade and waste of time so lets stamp whatever you want to do and go home.

Mr. Anthis stated that he had heard that some organizations have possibly proposed both grants, which would not improve water quality.

Ms. McKinley stated that it does not improve water quality, but it does allow access to the river so people would take more stewardship or pride in the river.

Mr. Hall stated that this was inherently the role the alliance has been discussing for quite some time. This organization presents a form to try and cohesively bring everybody's plan and projects and ideas together so things can be done in a coordinated fashion. Speaking with Bob and Bill Buranic their idea is to come in and talk about the alliance as a form for bring everybody together on the White River and trying to coordinate plans and projects on a comprehensive basis. In order for that process to work there are some tools that the organization would need, like developing a GIS system that would be usable to all the communities. Another issue that was brought up was a networking system so departments could post information and would be accessible to governments, health departments. The final project mentioned was network within the project area where real time water quality monitoring tools could be fixed and they could report to a web site or report the information to a place where the it could be compiled.

Mr. Ward asked if those stations could be included in the gauging stations?

Mr. Hall stated that they could be integrated and report through the same mechanism.

Mr. Spiars asked what the primary source of communication is on the gauging stations?

Mr. Hall stated that most of them are phone lines. Bill Buranick and Bob Meyer had a conference call with him before Mr. Meyer went to the committee.

Mr. Ward stated that one of the issues that he approached Mr. Meyer and Mr. Bundy about was the logjams. He stated that most of them were either along a bridge abutment or at the head of an island.

Mr. Spiars asked if that was a water quality concern?

Mr. Ward stated that it was a flooding concern, which is a water quality concern because as it floods it will cause erosion and will pick up sediments.

Mr. Spiars asked who makes the decision on how the money is spent?

Mr. Hall stated that there are three trustees _____ from IDEM, Carrie Dorman with IDNR and Scott from US Fish and Wildlife. The citizen advisory group is there to make comments on proposals so the trustees can get a feed back.

Mr. Spiars asked when the one-year is up?

Mr. Hall stated that the it was filed on June 18, 2001 and they had 60 days to act and finalize it, but he thought it was finalized before the 60 days were up.

Mr. Spiars asked if they were taking requests for projects?

Mr. Hall stated that the different board members that who are represented on the citizen advisory group have the opportunity to present whatever the group they are representing is most interested in. Some of them are citizen representatives rather than association representatives. Bob Meyer, Kevin Harding and Kevin Shrunk. They need to come up with some projects that all three of them will agree is beneficial, but there is no guarantee what the trustees will decide on.

Ms. McKinley asked who plans on purchasing land along White River before it becomes developed or the floodway is cleared of vegetation?

Mr. Hall stated that the only purchase that he has heard of is purchasing property for boat ramps and purchasing conservation easements.

Mr. Ward asked on the easements what would be the suggestion? Buy a 100-foot strip or whatever is in flood plain?

Ms. Fort stated that from a flood plain management standpoint and regular water quality she would buy the flood plain. The developer would try to minimize the amount of flood plain to the point that IDNR would allow.

Mr. McKinley asked about the homes that are currently in the flood plain?

Ms. Fort stated that they would be grandfathered in. You may not be able to take the whole area from beginning to end, but in the agricultural areas take the conservation easement. Take it out of farming if it is in farming or plant tree buffers, which might be a good thing to add. Put native vegetation in.

Mr. Anthis stated that there is an area that is a concern to him. It is probably the most polluted stream in Hamilton County; Stony Creek has a complete no fish advisory. There could be something done there that would benefit Hamilton County, City of Noblesville and Soil and Water Conservation.

Mr. Spiars asked what the source of pollution was?

Mr. Ward stated that it was Firestone.

Mr. Anthis stated that it had extremely high E. coli as well.

Ms. Fort asked if it was from live stock and failing septic?

Mr. Anthis stated that there was live stock in the creek in the summer.

Ms. Fort asked if they would be able to buy a conservation easement?

Mr. Anthis stated that from his point of view that is where most of Noblesville's growth is going and if they could protect that flood plain area through there it would have some potential for some real benefit for them today. There is not too much happening on the north end of town with flood plain problems right now because there is no sewers there.

Ms. Fort asked if they could get a conservation easement on there and fence the cattle out or put some buffer strips under this project.

Mr. Anthis stated that it would be a great area for some plantings. This is the worst area in Hamilton County that he could think of and runs right into White River.

Mr. Ward asked who made the determination on how far up the tributaries they could go.

Mr. Hall stated that it would be the trustees.

Ms. Fort stated that if you could show that there would be an improvement to White River from a tributary they may agree.

Mr. Anthis stated that IDNR and IDEM have a lot of data on Stony Creek.

Ms. Fort asked if it was on the 303D list?

Mr. Anthis stated that he did not know.

Ms. Fort stated that it would be easy to check.

Mr. Hall stated that they need to come up with an idea that fits with the guidelines.

Ms. Fort stated that IDNR is pushing for conservation easements along the White River and a conservation easement along an agricultural area that is going to be growing fits in those guidelines plus if it is on IDEM's 303D list it would fit in IDEM's clean up.

Mr. Hall stated that another idea would be to establish a revolving loan fund to place everyone on septic systems. A lot of communities are looking at applying for different grants that will allow them to do that.

Mr. Anthis stated that he would like to steer away from that especially in Noblesville and Wayne Townships. They have a good barrett law procedure now and they are slowing getting Barry McNulty with the Hamilton County Health Department on board to start writing some health orders and resolving these issues.

Ms. Fort wanted to know if there was grant program to help buy down the cost of taking septic systems off and put sewers in. They would have to be directly related to White River.

Mr. Anthis stated that there was not any matching money and there would have to be a lot of septic emptying into White River to make it possible. He stated that he would like to see some buffer zones and plants.

Mr. Hall stated that there are existing programs. Quality incentive programs through NRCS. They work on a match program depending on how much the priority the area is. Several counties have received additional grants that have been able to enhance that program up to he has heard 140%.

Mr. Anthis asked if on the legal drains they would be able to designate a wetland area that would clean up the water before it discharged into Stony Creek? He stated that he felt that there is a lot of areas that the septic is tied into a field tile.

Mr. Ward stated that the Drainage Board would say “no” because they are in the drainage business.

Mr. Hall stated that he was meeting with Bill Brannick next week and can take what they have discussed. If anyone would like to attend the meeting, let him know and he will provide you with the details.

Survey Results:

Mr. Hall stated that he had an initial influx of people filling out the survey, but none recently.

Mr. Anthis asked if there was a mailing to any of the mayors?

Mr. Hall stated that there was no mailing to mayors.

Ms. Fort asked if the wastewater treatment plants were on the mailing list?

Mr. Hall stated that they were.

Mr. Ward asked if there are other organizations that may have a web site.

Ms. Fort stated that ASCE sends a newsletter out.

Mr. Anthis stated that Central Indiana Operators Association sends one out as well.

Mr. Hall stated that they were trying to focus on programs that are monitoring water quality.

Mr. Ward stated that the Indiana Association of Stormwater Managers or the Indiana Water Resources Association. If anyone can think of any other organizations let Mr. Hall know.

Phase II State Rule:

Mr. Ward asked if anyone had been on the web site to see Phase II State Rule? This is out for 30-day public comment period and hoping to take it before the Pollution Control Board in March. The first meeting of the guidance document work group was yesterday at Purdue. He stated that he could e-mail that document to anyone who wanted it. Mr. Ward stated that he encourages everyone to read it and send comments in.

Mr. Spiars stated that question is going to oriented towards what EPA and IDEM is calling for, the additional burden and the excessive requirements.

Mr. Ward stated that they tried to keep some of those items out and they were told that although it might not be in EPA rule, EPA regional five has passed it down that they *will* put those items in.

Mr. Anthis stated that they have pulled that trickery numerous times, sometimes it was true, but a lot of the times it was not. The best way to find out is to call regional five and ask them or write them a letter.

Phase II BMP's:

Mr. Ward stated that he suggested that they have a section in the guidance document that includes BMP's, but did not get a good response from IDEM.

Ms. Fort presented a copy of a BMP toolbox; there are some items with formatting that may need to be looked at. She put the document together, but did not have enough time to fill her part of it in. There is a reference section in the back. The summary that RW Armstrong put together stated that it was for cities and towns and does not say counties.

Mr. Ward stated that it was Senate Bill No. 439.

Ms. Fort stated that regional sewer and solid waste district do not include storm water, so she does not think they could use that rule for it.

Mr. Ward stated that Baker Daniel's wrote legislation for that. It was put in ways and means sub-committee.

The next workgroup for IDEM is February 19, 2002 in Indianapolis from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Mr. Spiars asked if IDEM is talking about developing a stated BMP menu?

Mr. Ward stated that they were not.

Ms. Fort asked to receive copies back with comments in red or blue ink or e-mail comments back.

Gauging Station Reductions:

Mr. Ward asked if they were going to be affected in the UWRWA?

Ms. Fort asked if they would be able to use the fish money to fund gauging stations?

Mr. Hall presented a map of all the gauging stations. There are a few stations that are already gone and some that are targeted to come down next year.

Mr. Anthis asked who's gauging stations were these?

Mr. Hall stated that they were USGS. There are some that are both communities and USGS for the flood protection programs for cost share for the maintenance portion.

Mr. Hall stated that there is a USGS web page with more details.

Mr. Ward stated that he would add gauging stations to the list for funding.

Other Business:

Mr. Hall stated that on LGN updates there are a couple of grant opportunities. There are \$250,000, 000.00 nation wide for legislation grants to help decide assessments and remediation. They are promoting watershed type grants, specifically contaminated sediments pollution prevention, habitat restoration and evasive species.

Set Meeting Date:

The next meeting was set for February 15, 2002 at 3:00 PM.

The meeting was adjourned.

Kenton C. Ward
UWRWA Technical Committee Chairman