



Upper White River Watershed Alliance, Inc.
January 18, 2007

The meeting was called to order at 2:03 PM Thursday, January 18, 2007. Those present were as follows: Mr. Kenton Ward, Hamilton County Surveyor; Mr. Robert Thompson, Hamilton County Surveyor's Office; Ms. Jill Hoffman, Williams Creek; Summer O'Brien, Williams Creek; and Bret Robinson, USGS.

Future Plans:

Hoffman stated that at the next general membership meeting we are going to look at the future plans and work on committee structure. We know we want a Technical Committee and this group already has a couple of tasks on its plate, but we might look at other committees we might be missing (outreach and education committee, fund raising committee, etc.). Between now and March we want to make sure our core group is comfortable with what the Technical piece will be and what we'll need other committees to do.

Review of Minutes of November 9, 2006:

There were no changes made; the minutes were approved.

UWRWA Technical Committee Potential Projects:

Draft UWRWA Website Map – This is a summary of things we wanted to see on the website. The two tabs presently on the website include the interactive GIS and water quality grafts. The tabs on the left side are What's New, Officers, Meeting Information, Membership Information and the Members Only Resources, which would be a log in; Calendar, Local Watershed Projects, Maps and possibly static reference maps and Strategic Plan Elements. The IRS wanted a five year strategic plan, which can be used for the membership push. Each of these items is being worked on as we can. I have the officer's biographies and pictures and the meeting minutes from the December meeting will go out. Some links need to be fixed like the Stony Creek Plan. I would like to get somebody here to help with key links or related links. This is a random listing of possible resources. We could group them into an agency and make it more useful than what it is, categorize it and figure out how to departmentalize the links (surveyor's, counties, cites, towns and conservation groups).

Thompson stated that he would take that item.

O'Brien stated that she would take the aerial photography and local GIS sites.

Hoffman stated that USGS has an active GIS mapping site; is that on O'Brien's list?

O'Brien asked if the maps were a topo zone maps?

Robinson stated that topo zone is a resource that we helped develop and I believe that those are now privately owned. That is very user friendly; you can type in any little creek name and it will usually take you to the right spot.

O'Brien stated that she didn't include the topo zone maps because it showed just quad maps.

Robinson stated that it would be a matter of linking to EROS and I can send you the information.

Thompson asked if they had one foot contours?

Robinson stated that they did not.

Thompson stated that he was hoping to have a list of past and current watershed studies done in the Upper White. I hoped IDEM could help us with that. We know some of them that are current in our county, but some of the other ones I have no clue. If IDEM could give us a list of past watershed projects in the Upper White and links to any current or past web links. IDEM is the source that should know.

Hoffman stated that she would follow up on that.

Thompson stated that some of the consultants would probably have a good feel for watershed studies, too. I will send an email out to some of the firms asking for what they know that has happened in the past. We can send a general email to the Technical Committee asking them for watershed projects past, current and future.

Hoffman stated that she would try to put some placeholders in for watershed success stories.

Mitigation Clearing House – Hoffman stated that this is a big topic and hopefully when we get more people back on this committee we can make headway faster. By our next Technical Committee meeting we will have had our General Member meeting after the membership drive. After the discussion about committee structures there might be more people at the following meeting. Ohio has a Mitigation Clearing House that their State Agency runs. Would O'Brien look at that and see how it works. What's the interface? Can you just upload stuff to it? Do you have to go through someone for that? You might want to find the contact for who is running the Clearing House. Between now and the next meeting we might want to have an email discussion about what we think it would look like at this end. Is it like selling a house where you put something up there? Is it more like a board to post things? Is it targeted in some way to the priority areas in the watershed? Do we set a central contact where CILTI is the place you go first? This is a big undertaking to do, but we as a Technical Committee should be thinking about how we would like it to work.

Thompson stated that we need to get Soil & Water involved as a member of the Technical Committee because they are out in the field. They are going to be closer to where the properties are that are potential sites. Until they get involved I believe this will be an up hill battle knowing the potential property owners that would be interested. Would we want to include a layer of what is available from IDNR in our mapping about current mitigation sites? Sites currently in the watershed that are mitigated sites?

Hoffman stated that Jamie Robb just did a big effort to go around and map the sites, so we should touch on that. When we get more sophisticated we should be trying to link some of those sites.

Thompson stated that if you have existing sites that at least gets you out there in general areas where additional sites might be adjacent. You could possibly target some of those areas. Future sites could be the next layer of potential sites; sites where people have shown an interest in their site being a possibility and that way its there and the next step is when the consultant comes in and looks at the sites. We can add potential areas of stream bank restoration and work towards wetland mitigation area potential sites.

Hoffman stated that if we can give any information to that group as we meet the next time about programs that are going on in other places and how they look that would open up the discussion for what we want ours to look like. What's that platform? What's the exchange look like here in Indiana? If we do in fact go through the membership drive, which is coming, this Committee definition at our next general meeting we'll have more people here and need to have a clear track for them.

Thompson stated that Hoffman mentioned the Education Committee as a possible committee. You might consider the MS4 coordinators in the watershed as members of that committee. They would have an invested interest in that.

BMP Toolbox – Hoffman stated that she talked to Ward about the needs survey and the same kind of idea so when the Technical Committee met again the survey is together and maybe we can get far enough along by then to send it out. We show what our membership audience wants so they can start figuring out what's included in the toolbox, which is another big project. We might table one of those or we might have two sub-committees depending on how many people and how much interest we have. The needs assessment is the first step. My goal in the next couple of months is to get whatever we can to help the group be better prepared to go at our next meeting.

Public Education PSA – Thompson stated that the Upper White has the potential to be a resource for MS4 Communities. We're now halfway through our five year permit cycle. Some communities are farther ahead than others as far as public education. The MS4 Communities in Hamilton County have formed a partnership so you already have a nucleus of a partnership and we've done a lot of brochures, radio ads, etc. To really get more the MS4's need to get together through an organization like the Upper White to explore mass media like television and partnering with IDEM, water company, Upper White and other entities that have that experience in mass media and the funds to generate it would be an ideal project for the Upper White. You could kill two birds with one stone, it educates, but also a marketing field for the Upper White. Very few people have ever heard of the Upper White.

Hoffman stated that there were a couple of strategies that the group came up with to share education budgets, provide focused homeowner education that's universal, etc. The Technical Committee should stay focused on technical issues. Thompson said I should include in the list of benefits something specific to MS4's in the membership flyers. Are you saying that the MS4's get credit by participating in a watershed group?

Thompson stated that the MS4's do get credit for participating in a watershed group.

Hoffman asked what phrase would get the MS4's attention.

Thompson stated that his first thoughts would be ‘help meet your Rule 13 Public Education requirements’. If I come up with anything better I’ll let you know. Most of the communities in this area had Burke do their NOI application and one of the things that IDEM looks for is minimum control measures. IDEM has a package of 35 and you either have to do them or come up with one that you think is better so most of them went with the 35. Things like clean up events, supporting local watershed groups (the Upper White), etc. Not all these MS4s are associated with a watershed group, but public participation and education go hand in hand. If the watershed group is involved with educating the public there’s that route; if the watershed group is a public participation event and if the watershed group does clean up events, restoration, mitigation, etc. then that adds to it.

Hoffman stated that the Mitigation Clearing House and the BMP Toolbox will be the Technical Committee’s big thing and then to the extent that those things are interfaced on the website, the website goes hand in hand with those.

Thompson stated that this seems logical at this point. The Toolbox could go a couple of different ways; one is links to BMPs and other sites that evaluate BMPs or it could actually have design examples. Unfortunately there’s not a lot of data yet. We’re planning a workshop for design engineers and MS4 people, developers and one of the principle topics will be how to design for BMPs, how to include them into your project and why we are requiring it. At that workshop we will have booths and vendors and the Upper White might want to have a booth there. John South, Zach Bishton with Christopher Burke and I are putting the workshop together.

Hoffman stated that she will talk to John about targeting plan commissioner members, town planners, surveyors to talk about BMP ordinance design and low impact design; what does it mean? And then take it to the next step.

Thompson stated that AIC and the Association of Indiana Cities and Towns each have annual meetings and they are always looking for new topics to discuss and the Upper White might be a group that could present.

Strategic Plan:

Hoffman stated that she just got this back from Lenore. I’m going to put this up on the web and at our next general membership meeting we’ll talk about how to move into the implementation phase based on these strategies. A flier will go out that Lenore and I put together about why the Upper White is so important and why it’s important to talk about regional water quality issues and kick off the membership push. We met with an accountant last week that Tim Hewlett from Veolia hooked us up with. She has taken the books to clean them all up and we’re ready to start taking in money. We wanted to make sure we were a clean slate before we started taking in money. It will be the end of January before the official membership announcement from is out; flier, plan on the web, officers on the web, etc. As soon as you see that from me please forward it anywhere and everywhere you can. Lenore and I are starting to set up some strategic meetings with partners. We’ll then start going after American Starch and some of the other big water users and get them involved and engaged. Any help we can get with the membership campaign from you forwarding things on would be great. If you have comments between now and then please let me know before I put it up for mass consumption.

Contacts – Hoffman stated that if you forward this to someone you think is relevant, would you let me know that or copy me. Until everyone is caught up on dues I'm going to keep my membership list as big as I can make it. There will be a canned email that Lenore and I worked on a week or so ago that explains that this is a revitalization effort, this is why regional planning is important, this is who we are, etc. You won't have to explain the background of the organization again. The cover email will talk about the controversy about the membership dues structure and that it was set up to get municipal buy in so that the dollar to buy in is high. Some of the local groups objected to that because they feel that it's passed them. I told them that legally we need to function within the bylaws of the existing dues structure. If the group wants to take on restructuring that after we're revitalized then we can do that. There's a brief paragraph in that cover email that addresses that this structure may change so your not turning off, but that we're also not going to get caught up in just re-writing the rules every year and that we're focused on projects.

Thompson asked if these were tax deductible for an individual?

Hoffman stated that we filed with the IRS before December 31st to get that to go back to a public charity. The first two years it was a public charity by vote, but if you don't take care of filing your tax paperwork then it kicks you to a private foundation status and taxes haven't been filed since 2002.

Golf Outing:

Hoffman stated after the next meeting, depending on what kind of committee structure we come up with, it might be better suited to an outreach group rather than the Technical Committee, but knowing how long it takes to get things planned we can pass that baton later. Lenore spent last week going through all the receipts with the accountant and the outing made us some money and also generated a lot of interest; new memberships out of it. It seems like a really good idea. How far in advance should we be thinking about?

Thompson stated that we should at least have a small handful of individuals working together and starting the discussions. We really need to have the course reserved by May; earlier is better than later. Our experience has been that the later in the season golfers get worn out and over committed.

Hoffman stated that we talked about a spring or early summer event.

Thompson stated that May, June and July are the prime months.

Hoffman asked when the Technical Committee should meet again?

Thompson stated that it should be after the membership meeting so the Technical Committee members that aren't there will find out what happened, people then at the General Membership meeting can be encouraged to come to the Technical Committee meeting. You should have your flier out a month in advance to get your people signed up.

Robinson stated that he believed that USGS best involvement would be the Mitigation Clearing House and maybe some discussions between ourselves, NRCS, Fish and Wildlife. The north part of the basin is a lot different than the south part of the basin and I think the mitigation programs are going to look significantly different.

Thompson stated that Ward has been active in restoring USGS stream gages in Hamilton County and that's a program he would like to continue and eventually upgrade to water quality monitoring.

Robinson stated that this is a program that we're supporting so we could bring some dollars to the table if all the cards fall into the right place.

Thompson stated that each of the MS4 communities would also benefit from that because of the data and the requirements for water quality monitoring. Organizations like Hoosier River Watch is an organization we support and that is a public participation event and when volunteers in Hamilton County do their own thing that's part of the database or Hoosier River Watch.

Next Meeting Date:

The next meeting was set for Thursday, March 29, 2007 at 2:00 p.m. in Noblesville.

Kenton C. Ward
Hamilton County Surveyor

Attest: _____
Executive Secretary