



Upper White River Watershed Alliance, Inc.
November 9, 2006

The meeting was called to order at 2:19 PM Thursday, November 9, 2006. Those present were as follows: Mr. Kenton Ward, Hamilton County Surveyor; Mr. Robert Thompson, Hamilton County Surveyor's Office; Mr. Larry Stout, Hamilton County ISSD; Ms. Jill Hoffman, Williams Creek; and Mr. Bill Hahn,; Summer O'Brien, Williams Creek; Eileen Hack, IUPUI; and Robert Barr, IUPUI.

Review of Minutes of July 19, 2006:

There were no changes made; the minutes were approved.

UWRWA Technical Committee Potential Projects:

Website Hosting, Content and Format – Hoffman stated that people need to be trained on how to use the website; there seems to be navigation problems or wanting a class on how to use the website. There have been some comments on missing data or functionality issues; the lack of accuracy and speed. Is it valuable to keep the concept of the GIS?

Barr asked if Hoffman had some sense of what the various users want to take off of the GIS function? What do they want to see and who are the users? IU has dealt with a lot because we have a GIS portal and the idea was that there was all this data out there to be used, but at the end of the day the people that use them are the people that built it, primarily. You scale back your distribution efforts. The idea that we will have this broad public group out there making maps in GIS I don't think is going to happen.

Hoffman stated that she believes that people want to see some data; some of the comments from the strategy we did were where all the planning priorities are. On a bigger scale all these smaller watershed projects; they have maps of their own priorities, but a bigger map showing the larger picture. Data was a big issue or consolidating it. Hamilton County's GIS is very user friendly because you only have the base amount of layers that are called things you understand; it's simple. I don't know how you scale back the intensity of what's on the Upper White Website. If we're going to keep that element of the website we have to handle the issues that came out in the surveys, which are speed and accuracy and then somebody needs to show people how to use it, but that can be part of the overall outreach.

Thompson stated to have a source of information from all the watershed studies that are ongoing in the Upper White and relate that also to the original funding source, the fish kill, and show where projects are; those are two items that would be useful and I don't know that we need to duplicate some of the things that are on the other websites, but make this unique to the Upper White.

Hoffman stated that if we keep it, what would we want as unique layers; if all they want is Google Earth data, pictures, aerials, trees, etc., we can link them to the IU site. Are the fish kill projects a layer in there now?

Thompson stated that is not a layer on the site now. The County has done several watershed studies, both hydraulic and water quality. There are others in the Upper White that are ongoing and have been completed, but at least showing the boundary of that watershed and linking it to that project's website or the data that was gathered. If I was a consultant and wanted to do a project in the Stony Creek Watershed I should be able to click on and see the watershed boundaries and then be directed to that report for that project.

Ward stated locations of stream gages.

Hoffman stated that what's nice about Hamilton County's GIS is that there are not a lot of layers to pick from; it almost tells you what you want to know; it leads you to do something by what's listed.

Thompson stated that if we did move further down the road, Wetland Mitigation potential sites would be another good area.

Hoffman asked if those would be restoration sites identified from the studies or people that are interested.

Ward stated that he would put both on the site.

Hoffman asked if those would be things that were identified in the study or we have interested landowners; is it going to be looking at low spots in agricultural fields that are potential restoration areas?

Barr stated that he wouldn't think this would be an exercise in identifying potential sites so much as sites that are already available in some way. You can burn a lot of time and give a lot of false hopes by showing potential sites.

Hoffman stated that we have a function question about who then builds these layers.

Barr stated that we need a synthesis of existing data. We need to know what is available, what is out there and what has been done; it needs to be gathered and collected and literally reviewed so we can see where the data gaps off; what is it that we don't know; there are lots of general, almost antidotal information about the Upper White, but very little of it is actually being analyzed, detailed and a summary document put together. Bret Robins USGS survey of the Upper White looks at areas of large woody debris and erosion; that's one of the only documents that actually pulled that together; it's a website and should be linked, but there are photographs all the way from Anderson down through Noblesville that you click on and it shows you the large woody debris and areas of erosion; he mapped the river all the way down to show you where these points are, but he argues that this is a first step because it's not enough to say that there is erosion at exit bend; why is it there? Meandering rivers will naturally erode in some places and we need to be able to discern whether or not this is a natural process of a function extreme and what can be expected or is this being driven by a cause. Those are two very different critters; one item we can do something about and the other, arguable, we can't do much about unless it's impacting someone's property or potentially hurting a home.

Hoffman stated that with the synthesis of data we have somebody go through what we have, in terms of the plans, but it also seems like we should put a callout for data we don't know about.

Thompson stated that this sounds like a reasonably complicated project. For the past four years a relatively simple project, like putting together post-construction water BMP manual, is still four years in the making. I envisioned doing a similar type thing with the Little Cicero Creek Watershed Project. There is a spot in the stream where we took a sample; there is a photograph and the data. We have that information kind of loosely tied right now because the project is not completed yet.

Hoffman stated that this goes back to how much data we want to put out there because as soon as we put it out we're responsible for keeping it updated. What might be more interesting, on a planning scale rather than on a data point, is chemical parameter points.

Barr stated that IDEM did restoration documents for the streams in the early 1980's. It was more of a general discussion of what the problems were; we generally know that this tributary has problems and what they recommended in the future be done. Those were very broad planning level documents. They pointed you in the direction of additional work and things that could be done, but those haven't been updated. They were initial drafts and then they stopped. Those exist for a number of the big streams.

Hoffman asked who is technically capable of building those layers and updating that. Who did it originally, Polis? Were any of the layers new to begin with?

Ward stated that all the layers that are there were layers that were existing in the counties.

Hoffman stated that we are agreeing as a group to keep the GIS and we may have to keep the GIS based on the settlement. If we keep it we want it to include more of these broader planning, combination, almost newer layers, so it's different than just Google or its different than just going to the GIS website where you can get all the backdrops; we want more than just the backdrops; we want a synthesis of new data.

Barr stated that we might think about changing the name from GIS information because this is a broader type of geographic information. GIS is a set of tools, set of methods and procedures. We might think about having a section where we gather the aerial photographs and make those links. I don't know that we can have the sophistication that Hamilton County has because I don't know that we can get everybody together on the same page with building that kind of system right now. However, we can link to the Hamilton County system, link to NRCS, link to USGS and IDEM databases. We can link to the IU portal, for the folks that are GIS savvy, and they can pull the data off. We don't necessarily package it for them, but show them where it is.

Hoffman stated that on a larger push, when we start strategizing, have our own that has the planning functions.

Barr stated that we might want to think about looking at USGS nogle depictions. Those are images, not necessarily GIS interactive, but layers that show land use, restoration sites and water quality. They are built maps so you can look at what you want and there is a list of what you can look at. It's like a power point slide, but worked good for their depictions.

Hoffman asked if we still want an interactive piece? I wasn't around when the original settlement money paid for this; was that something they committed to?

Ward stated that this was the direction we were heading.

Hoffman stated that she prefers the interactive piece because it lets me get my own scale of what I want to look at. I do think there is value to a lot of our groups that just want to know some of the basics and their outreach would benefit from us having preset picture maps.

Thompson stated that if you're going to make this interactive and keep the mapping function, one of the items I would prioritize is the accuracy of the mapping. I know we had discussion with Larry and John before about why this is not accurate and potential ways to get it there.

Stout stated that their geo-coding uses Census data. There are two ways to improve that; one of them is to use the Centerline File that INDOT has published; it is quite good, but is not being maintained. The other way is to use Telly-Atlas data if we can get permission.

Hoffman stated that what we have right now are project locations from the fish kill funding, priority areas from all the studies, boundaries of active and past watershed projects, links to the reports when you get to those boundaries, water quality sites, stream gage stations, USGS stations, potential mitigation sites, stream and wetland, erosion and woody debris, land trust and natural areas.

Barr stated that Hamilton County has done a good job of mapping of what could be considered drainage alterations, which become part of the hydrologic layer, but we don't have that for anywhere else.

Hoffman stated that as far as the function issue, we have a synthesis of data, looking at all the plans to get some of this pulled together. Once all this is brought together, somehow we are going to have to figure out who can build that shape file.

Barr stated that the thing that makes this difficult is that it's not strictly a GIS project. There is a GIS component to it, but there are many times hydrological water quality components to it, as well. Those are usually different folks. Merging those two activities can be the hardest part.

Hoffman stated that on a larger scale with the Alliance, we need to know what we're asking money for and we need to start telling our members what we are going to try and do if they support our organization or nobody is going to fund us.

Thompson stated that the first thing is to know what we want and then we can go after grant money to hire a consultant to do the leg work and the mechanics.

Hoffman asked if, in the meantime, it is valuable to set up these standard screen captures?

Barr stated that this could be a first step. The problem that we have is that they have to be built and they have to be built by folks that know what they're looking at and there are only a handful of people that can do that.

Hoffman stated that it would be fairly easy to go to one of the good GIS sites and build a simple watershed with the Upper White boundaries, streams and natural areas.

Barr stated that this was doable, but not easy. It requires good spatial coordinates; where are these things, where are the boundaries and that data coming in some type of uniform package so we can work with it; locating where those are.

Thompson stated that you have an area called downloads where you have a lot of public and shareable information. You have your water quality graphs, GIS component and meeting minutes.

Hoffman stated that we have a lot of requests for meeting information; what's new and events. Someone asked for a master calendar of what's going on. One of the comments from the strategy session was an electronic rolodex; a list of members by category, where people could find technical resources, who they are and how to contact them. We would also have members that want to be on the rolodex and some that may not.

Ward asked about the membership roster and to let them pull from that what they're looking for.

Hoffman asked if they would know who does what from the roster.

Barr stated that we have different skill sets and different needs, particularly in regards to the technical tools. This is probably an ideal meeting to start thinking about how we might enhance some technical aspects and what to do what the technical groups want. With that, sharing may be done more effectively with this level rather than an open site.

Thompson asked if we could start tracking the number of hits so as the site improves and gathers more interest we can have a metric on our success.

Hoffman stated that some other items that came up was a speakers bureau, funding sources, a collective list of grant funding sources, things that have been successful in other places, a list of other community resources for groups to think about (i.e. Chamber of Commerce, Visitors Bureaus, AIC, AICT).

Barr stated that you have already made a start towards that when you posted the links to the watershed plans on the website. That is a good first step because they can look at those and see who is doing what and who is responsible; there are always the funding acknowledgements and where the dollars came from that funded the project.

Thompson stated that our state watershed coordinators would be very helpful in identifying sources for the funding projects. I know IDEM and EPA has those links, but you can tell where all these links are. There might be private grants that aren't listed.

Hoffman asked what kinds of things would be in public education?

Thompson stated that the watershed is made up of all the MS4s and one of the six minimum control measures is public education and outreach. The science of watershed events and the sampling, Hoosier River Watch, educational material, public service announcements and brochures; people like to share these things. If this is created with any sort of money or 319 Grants they're all pretty much open.

Barr stated that we could spend days to weeks just building the links and you can't minimize the size of that task. We don't have good links to the cities or long term control plans; we don't have links to the nine minimum control languages for the CSO and on down the line. This is a lot of work.

Thompson stated that the Committee will have to prioritize the list.

Hoffman stated that she would be willing to just cluster the list into what makes sense for the next meeting and pick priorities then, but at least we have a vision for asking for the money. There are a lot of groups interested in helping with this project.

Ward stated that on the maintenance of the GIS that John's been doing, do you think John would be willing to add some of the creation of these links to that as far as maintenance?

Barr stated that they might, but I believe that the problem is going to be in part that we almost need to identify them first. When we get to that point it's almost easier for us to put them on.

Thompson stated that he noticed a couple of weeks ago that the two links to the Upper White went to two different sites. I got it figured out after some email that part of this is on one server.

Barr stated that we migrated many of its functions over to a "C" Server so we could start upgrading, adding and cleaning up some things and left the GIS data back over on the other server for the time being. That procedure was discussed at the last general meeting that this was going to happen so we could go in and make that front end more accessible in part with these links.

Hoffman stated that one other item she added to our list is the external marketing of our strategies and goals that need to be somewhere on that page. It's very clear what the Alliance Schools are and you can tell people when you're asking them to join that there is a plan in place and what we're aiming for. The website is somewhat related to the events issue. There is a lot of commentary about networking from the strategy session. People want educational events, networking events, social events, places for public involvement that are friendly instead of regulatory. That could be a separate page on the website. I think the golf outing was a good fundraiser; it made a lot of money and there was the networking element, to the extent we can have fundraisers and networking, but it sounds like we also need to have some networking opportunities that are what people want to do.

Thompson stated that after we have an annual meeting with a social gathering afterwards.

Ward stated that we used to do the annual meeting with a dinner or lunch.

Thompson asked if there should be an opportunity to click on one of the Board Members and have a biography or contact.

Hoffman stated that she would like to get the framework set up a little bit better than it is so when the membership drive comes out we can tell them to check out the new stuff on the website and here are these new members' only things that are coming. The membership drive has to happen in December.

Ward stated that he has never been involved with a member only set up; is that something that would be difficult?

Stout stated that he didn't believe it would be difficult; you just click on the members only and that will prompt you for a password. It wouldn't be hard to set up if you set it up where everybody has the same password.

Barr stated that if this is on the "C" Server we would probably build one with a little more security in it. Each member would have their own unique password; we would log those passwords and see who has been in the site and for how long and are these coming in from the same place or is it one person giving their password out to fifteen different folks and now they're hitting us from all over. We can track all of that.

Thompson asked if the Committee wanted a place where a member could upload some information that may be a large file, but they could upload it for a later consideration for the website or posting.

Ward stated that something like that should go to the webmaster.

Barr stated that it may be something for this table; somebody brings that request to the Technical Committee, would you please review this and see if you want to put it on your website; this group makes that decision. It is the Technical Committee's role in that you provide some type of data over site.

Thompson stated that a couple of associations I belong to have sponsorships for their websites so consultants, suppliers or contractors will advertise their firm with an Icon on the website as a sponsor of this website for a fee.

Ward stated that this might be a consideration for a level of membership.

Hoffman stated that you want this GIS done and you want funding for it so you offer to let someone sponsor the GIS. Is anybody willing to find who else should be linking to us?

Ward stated that it would be nice if all the cities and towns would link to us.

Barr stated that web maintenance is something that just doesn't happen. Look at watershed groups; last updated 2002; last updated 2001; over and over again. There is a lot of data that is no good.

Hoffman stated that she would like to ask for a bigger list of who should be linking to us. Once we start working on some of these items, we know who we want to contact and at a minimum asking them to consider linking to us.

Thompson stated that consultants that do watershed planning would be one option.

Barr stated to put together a list of cities, towns and county folks that we need to get on there; let's take that as a first step.

Thompson stated that everyone could put together their list and send the list to him and he will consolidate them before sending them on to Hoffman.

Barr stated that we can go down the map and start putting in links; that makes it easier than to go to them. We need some of the other counties at the Technical Meeting because this is a good place to do that. City, State and local government sites would be on here and the fact that all of the SWCD's that are abutting the watershed isn't in here, is amiss; the fact that we don't have links to all the county NRCS offices.

Hoffman stated that she wants our members to think that this site is useful and not that they click on one of the pages and there are hundreds of websites to go to; let's get serious about who the big players are; not every city site is useful to this cause.

Barr stated that if you're a city on the river you should have some part in this.

Hoffman stated that she is more interested in who is linking than providing a million links to other people; it's easy for a watershed group to know that they are supposed to contact their city.

Ward stated that we should go after the MS4's because we can tell them that this is part of their education.

BMP Toolbox – Hoffman asked what the group originally meant by the BMP Toolbox because some of that could be put together; if nothing else I would like to have it in the “What's Coming”, but I need to better understand.

Ward stated that the original toolbox was basically a matrix that was done, giving a problem and the solution to that problem and its possibilities. That was done in 1999 so there has been a lot of new ideas come along since then. Basically this would be an update of that matrix.

Thompson stated that there was a document on the old Upper White website. They did a study on detention basins, bio-filters, hydrogenetic separators, retention ponds; are they effective at certain pollutant removals; something like this melding with the BMP Toolbox and updating the mess would be very useful. Where it says 'detention pond or wetland basin', linking that information to an actual accepted CAD drawing would be a benefit for a consultant or somebody in the design field.

Ward stated that it wasn't going out and developing a new product; it's basically trying to bring everything that's been done together on a matrix that you could use.

Thompson stated that this was originally done by Ratio, ACE and the Upper White; the person at Ratio at the time is now with Christopher Burke, Sheila McKinley and Cindy Fort with ACE.

Barr stated that the Center for Watershed Protection just recently re-did theirs.

Hoffman stated that the cross section rendering, the effectiveness ratings, latest research; is that something we want to be part of this.

Thompson stated that our Public Education Committee is working on 'What Homeowners Need to Know about BMP Maintenance'. Many HOA's have them, but there are other maintenance documents for more sophisticated equipment; maintaining BMPs is important. Ward is working on an ordinance now that ties the HOA to making sure they maintain their BMPs and if they don't what will happen.

Ward stated that what will happen if the BMPs are not maintained is the County will come in and make it regulated drain and whatever it costs they pay.

Hoffman stated that Boone County basically takes over all the post construction BMPs and that's why there is always a maintenance concern. We need to figure out not only who, what and how this is going to happen, but how much money it will take. Lenore has asked her to try and figure out a budget for our wish list of things. The BMP Toolbox might be something that somebody could sponsor as well, but it's easier to go after that if we know exactly what we're trying to create.

Barr asked if you could have a conversation with someone and ask them if they could tell you what you need, what you would like to see in terms of Stormwater tools. You may know that, but if we could get a response from each County Surveyor or each County, if they have a Stormwater Office, which some of them do, we could get that. That kind of thing we can use to generate dollars because then we can go to folks if we know what our needs are and ask for money. If we don't have a clear statement of what our needs are and are not in agreement with what those are we are kind of shooting in the dark. Stormwater is a good place to start. How many Stormwater communities do we have out there that we could actually communicate with that will give us a list of what they need.

Thompson stated that County Surveyors, county and city engineers and the MS4 coordinators would be the three I would target to ask that question.

Barr stated that if we could generate that list, then our toolbox becomes more valuable and we find a better way to get people to support it.

Thompson stated that Lori Gates has a list of all the MS4 coordinators and there are surveyors on that list; Indiana Association of Floodplain Managers; Lori has that Stormwater Committee and there is an entire listing; we might be able to break out just those in the Upper White. The one big issue is they will want facts and figures about performance; how to design it. There is a lot of performance data out there from the east and west coast, but they want something local.

Barr stated that it may be possible, if we build this list, to get an agreement from the Stormwater Management Center and say we need a watershed map. If we go up the river and look at the different MS4's, look at the Stormwater and City Engineers and what they need to accomplish what they have to accomplish then we're in a position to go to IDEM and EPA and say what our communities need.

Thompson stated that supposedly the Post Construction BMP Manual that IDEM has been working on is nearly done. That, in it self, depending on what they put in there and the quality of what is in there, would be at least an element that could go into the package.

Barr stated that we can't go out and get dollars if we can't demonstrate need; if we demonstrate need and if we can demonstrate a large community need, then it's not too hard. If we can show that every Stormwater community upstream in the Upper White needs to figure out performance then we have a clear need; we can call IDEM and say we need money to work on this and start our own performance.

Thompson stated that initially we have to start out with BMPs that are out there and have performance based upon other locations, other soil types, but once we have that then we can refine it. Each of the MS4s has Stormwater Design Manuals; some better than others have a list of BMPs that the developer can use in their project. As those get installed we'll know more about how affective they are.

Barr stated that he agreed, but disagreed in the sense that we have an accepted list, we have them being installed currently; what is not being done is any long term monitoring that show performance and efficiency, nor do we have any long term studies.

Thompson stated that this is where we go to IDEM to get the money to do that.

Hoffman stated that she would like to cluster this information, come back and talk about what we came up with and what the page layout might look like; what are our priorities and then start assigning those tasks to people or figuring out what it takes to get there. I think we should at least talk about this wetland mitigation clearing house.

Barr stated that we need to think very carefully about the commercial aspects of it; not that there is anything wrong with 'for profit' entities, but there will be folks that are going to want to use that mitigation clearing house for advertising.

Hoffman stated that between now and our next meeting we will do some type of membership drive. We had talked about helping to expand this Technical Committee a little bit; do we want to ask for this during the membership drive?

Ward stated that he would think so.

Barr stated that we may want to go to Marion County and ask them to send one of their Stormwater folks up here; Marion County is one of the biggest storm water producer.

Hoffman stated that maybe the other agenda item is do we have to target people like that; how does this group change or start changing as we take on some of these projects; it might be that the website has it's committee, a sub-committee of this group; somebody who always focuses on the website and what's happening with it.

Barr stated that West Lafayette people are talking about a similar initiative on the Wabash; they consider the website a big enough time-save that they are thinking about putting on a part-time person to do it.

Thompson stated that we could get Indianapolis involved since they will be a big player.

Next Meeting Date:

The next meeting was set for Thursday, January 18, 2007 at 2:00 p.m. in Noblesville.

Kenton C. Ward
Hamilton County Surveyor

Attest: _____
Executive Secretary