



Lost Nation-New Landing  
River Conservancy District of IL  
205 Cuyahoga Drive, Suite A  
Dixon, IL 61021



## Minutes TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

**July 27, 2009    10:00 AM – 12:00 PM**

### Attendees:

Frank Ostling-    IDNR

Marty McManus- IDOA

David Meisenheimer- NRCS

Rebecca Olson- Olson Ecological Solutions

Rebecca Breckenfelder-LNNLRCD

**1. Meeting started at 10:10AM; Approve minutes from June 8, 2009 Technical Advisory Committee meeting.**

### **2. Updates**

**A. Watershed Planning Committee meeting on June 22, 2009.** The WPC met on June 22 and identified and prioritized their concerns. Their job is to see what they want this watershed to become and the TAC's job is to make sure they are on track technically. Stream bank erosion was their number one priority. Working into the waterways and fields was a second priority. They know that row-crop agriculture produces a lot of pollutant and sediment runoff but they also recognize that economically, it is the only way you can farm. Grazing isn't as profitable and you can't do it as late in life. The meeting took place the same evening that a huge flood occurred, taking out roads and doing a lot of property damage. Someone asked what damage occurred and Becky Breckenfelder said that there was a significant amount of water that came through and it took out the bridge on Babbling brook, confining several residents to their homes, as well as several docks and sea walls. The water came so fast that it covered roads and lifted boats off of the racks (about 18 of them went over the dam). The pipes at the dam bent early the morning of June 22 like they are engineered to do, thereby lowering the lake. The RCD had an engineering study done on the dam and pipes and it indicated that they worked properly and that there was no significant damage to the dam. Rebecca said that riverbanks and fences around the watershed were damaged as well. About 4-6 inches fell on the entire watershed in 3-4 hours on an already saturated ground.

**B. IEPA Section 319(h) Grant awarded for watershed planning!** – Rebecca said that they received a grant from the IEPA for watershed planning for \$88,000. The planning involves many steps like holding the WPC and TAC meetings, getting stakeholders and technical people in place and working forward to form their concerns and goals, getting out in the field and collect and analyze data, and coming up with a plan that can be published. That opens the door with the EPA to fund the stabilization projects that will take place in the watershed. They need to identify the best and cost effective projects to do in the watershed with the goal of improving water quality. Rebecca asked the TAC members if they could keep track of their hours, including

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drive time and their financial information such as salary and benefits so that they can account for all of the volunteer hours that are going into the project and turn it in at the end – Rebecca will provide them with a worksheet to keep track of that so that everyone's is the same. Rebecca has outlined the planning that the grant will cover (STEPS FOR DEVELOPING WATGERSHED ACTION PLAN FOR THE CLEAR CREEK WATERSHED, OGLE COUNTY, IL), with the TAC's involvement listed in Steps 6, 7, 11, 14, and 15. The first five steps of the plan have already been completed. They would figure out how much of the watershed to assess, usually 10% and strategize what properties would be a high priority, second priority, on down.

**3. Determine leadership necessary. Nominate and elect leadership for the committee.** – Rebecca figured that at minimum they would need a chairperson and secretary. No leadership determined yet – will wait until more people are on hand to make a decision. Marty McManus said that if someone else doesn't do it, he'll step up and be chairperson.

**4. Review current conditions of the watershed listed by the WPC. Add other conditions, if necessary. –**

- **Current Conditions:** GIS information shows that 36% is forested, 40% agricultural and 20% pastureland. Frank Ostling said that he would like to look at the grazing practices and find out if the farmers rotate their fields or are receptive to rotating their grazing fields. Rebecca said that she doesn't know the farmers' rotation practices; however, she does know that the stream is the water source for the cattle, which beats down the stream banks to the point that there is concern. Rebecca said that Steve said that the RCD may be willing to help financially support some of the projects that the NRCS has available for farmers along the stream banks such as fencing and alternative water source to keep cattle off of the stream banks. Nachusa Grasslands wasn't listed in the current conditions of the watershed, although they have 1,400 acres within the watershed.
- **Soil Productivity:** Many different soil types with a good vein of Type A soil on the East side of the watershed.
- **Hydrology and Stream condition of the watershed:** Water runoff, Flashy hydrology, undercut banks, and bank erosion. Frank said that Karen Rivera can speak on that better if she has concerns.
- **Recreation and wildlife:** Frank asked if Lost Lake has a goose problem and Rebecca said that they did, however, they've had an effective goose control program in place for a few years now. Becky added that they oil eggs in the nests each year and bury the eggs and they also fence the beaches and other RCD shorelines during the off season as well as keeping riparian buffer strips on RCD properties and educating lake shoreline owners about doing the same on their properties.

**5. Review strengths and obstacles identified by the WPC. Provide feedback to the WPC.**

- **Strengths** – more than 10% of the watershed is covered by grass or woods, (36% forest, 20% pasture), landowners can most easily work on stream banks, Lost Lake acts as a sediment basin to protect the Rock River, producers living and working in the watershed are more educated about conservation farming than the past generation. Most owners are also the land operators. The watershed is not commercialized, the watershed is relatively flat, limiting erosion potential, and most soil types have class B slopes or better. Rebecca added that this watershed is included in a couple of conservation opportunity areas and that it is also recognized under the forest legacy program as one of the key places in the state for mature forests. Frank was concerned about listing the stream bank erosion control as a strength because it could end up being too expensive for a landowner to do, which could be an obstacle to getting it done. Rebecca said that she would put that under obstacles. Regarding Frank's statement, Becky inquired as to whether some of the costs to the landowner could be addressed in some of the grants that they are applying for. Rebecca said that they are planning on doing that – they are applying for another 319 grant application this year with landowners that have already indicated an interest in stabilizing their stream banks, and although it would be a stronger application if they waited until the watershed planning was done so that those properties were recognized as the most important, that's years away and so they are going to see what they can do now. Frank asked what type of stabilization they were looking to fund with the grant - weirs, riprap or grasses. Rebecca said that they are 1. Looking at installing a silt basin upstream of the lake on Babbling Brook and an expansion of the silt basin on Clear Creek 2. Remeandering the stream bank that lies within the Nature

Conservancy's property 3. Nature Conservancy - stone tow protection on a highly eroded bank 4. RCD is providing a Stabilization Rebate program to lake shore owners. Dave added that the Clear Creek watershed is located between two high quality natural sites – Lowden-Miller and anything that can be expanded on to connect those two areas would be a good thing.

- **Obstacles** – Stream banks are most likely expensive to stabilize and sedimentation resulting from bank erosion is greater than that originating from fields, There are fewer fence rows on current farms compared to historical farms, which results in waterways handling more storm water, tiled fields exist, which carry nitrates to the streams, the economics of livestock farming are difficult and the dollars earned rarely support the producer, most landowners have already accomplished the standard conservation practices and it would be difficult to convince them to do more, waterways are expensive to install and difficult to maintain, individual producers cannot control macro-economics, it's easier to raise corn and beans than cattle and farmers are physically able to raise those crops longer than cattle. Cattle are typically raised on land that cannot be row-cropped; houses within the watershed may be introducing fertilizers and pesticides into the water table. Becky said that the RCD print a couple of pages in the bimonthly newsletter that goes out to all of the property owners in the district and in there they put out articles to make the owners aware of the danger of phosphorus in the watershed and ways to minimize contributing to the problem. Becky asked if septic fields that are on properties that are adjacent to the lake were a concern and Dave said that they could be and asked if they are inspected regularly. Becky said that she didn't know as the RCD doesn't regulate private property – perhaps the ULLPOA would know something. Becky also asked about the sewage plant that is owned by the LLUD and what do they do to ensure that they are not contaminating the water downstream of the lake and how are they regulated. Rebecca said that Karen Rivera brought up fish passage at the last meeting and how the dam is an obstacle to that. Dave Meisenheimer disagreed with the statement that waterways are expensive to install and difficult to maintain – stating that it is a common practice and there is a cost sharing program through the NRCS that helps out with that. They are also easy to maintain by mowing. Marty said that waterways may be inconvenient to producers. Frank said that as far as the WPC's second priority listed as installing tiles to create a wetland to reduce runoff – that it is great if you can do it, however, sometimes you run into neighbors and once you start breaking tiles and changing waterways, there is always going to be someone who will object to it, stating that you are either holding too much water or taking too much water away – so it can be a potential obstacle. Water management is in everyone's best interest and maintaining good neighbor relations is an important goal too. Dave said that the tiling is affecting farmers as to when they are applying their fertilizer – more and more are putting it on in the spring.

## 6. Review natural resource concerns prioritized by WPC. Provide feedback to the WPC –

- **Top Priority** – minimize creek bank erosion, begin with creek bank stabilization then work into the waterways and fields, work with landowners that are currently not practicing stream bank conservation, save Class A soils and other soils. Marty asked if the stream banks are more in agricultural setting are urban setting and Rebecca said agricultural. Becky asked if they would want to list obtaining grants for creating filter strips along the stream banks and paying the landowner for an easement so that they don't use the land that is right on the stream bank. Dave said that producers would be less apt to put money into stream banks than their own fields, especially due to the high cost of stabilization. Dave asked if working with landowners that are not currently practicing stream bank conservation is an educational goal of the WPC and Rebecca said that she is not sure.
- **Secondary Priority** – Maintain good neighbor relations and outreach to more property owners – Frank said that Dave knows producers here and when they come in he could let them know about the watershed program. Frank asked if they identified priority landowners in the watershed and Rebecca said yes, they met with some committee members of the RCD along with Bill Kleiman and identified some key owners. One of their concerns was cattle grazing up to the stream banks. They have the addresses for all the landowners in the watershed and they can target mailings for pertinent programs are available to them. Minimize row crop erosion, including tiling, waterways and filter strips, implement best management practices as pilot projects to use as examples, test procedures and determine if others want to try it. For example, break tiles to create a wetland to reduce nutrients in runoff.
- **Low Priority** – Reduce runoff, use of fertilizer, and other pollution from lawns

- **Other priorities** – protect wildlife and the rural life-style; maintain opportunities for recreation, hunting, and fishing. Frank said that it is nice to keep a rural lifestyle; however, it is a hard thing to keep when there is money at stake. Frank asked if they have any problems with beaver and dam activity and Becky said that they have had beaver activity in the past and the RCD had a wildlife control specialist come out and trap the beaver. The community is pretty good about letting the RCD know when there are signs of beaver damage. Frank suggested that someone in the association could obtain a trapping license for \$15 a habitat stamp to trap the beaver and then they wouldn't have to pay a specialist to trap the beaver, which would save the RCD money. Becky said that they have done similar things to that other wildlife with the goose control program and a carp bow-fishing derby.

**7. Compile list of any and all readily available data to add to the natural resource inventory. Determine who on the committee will provide each set of data.** – Rebecca has a working document created with GIS information and she would like the TAC to decide what information they need to add to it and who can provide that information.

- **Plat of Ownership** - Frank said that it would be nice to have a plat representation of ownership so that they can get an idea of who the big landowners are. Rebecca said that they already have that and that it can be added.
- **Hydrology** - The grant that Rebecca just wrote asked a lot about the hydrology – Dave said that the DNR water resources may have a description of the hydrology. Dave suggested Bill White, with the Illinois Water Survey might be able to help with that. Rebecca said that she would need the information for the grant by Wednesday – Dave said he will send her anything that he might have.
- **Geomorphology** - Rebecca asked if they know of anyone who knows anything about geomorphology and Dave said no but that they will have a meeting on Thursday and he can ask then. Frank said that it would be a good idea to divide the watershed up into priority areas.
- **Cultural Resources** - Dave said that they have an archeologist and he could ask her to put together a report on cultural resources without pinpointing the exact locations of them to protect against people coming out and excavating it. Rebecca said that they could also keep the information confidential or just report general information.
- **Rapid Assessment** - Dave said that they have the first part of the rapid assessment on soil erosion on the sample areas in the watershed done. He went out this spring and did surveys of all the fields in that and looked at crops, crop rotation and erosion. The second part, the gully portion, of the survey will probably be done this fall. Rebecca asked Dave to send her an e-mail indicating what has been done so that she can note it in her report.
- **Fish Data** - Rivera sent data to Rebecca that she can add to the document. Dave asked if there was any information on the fish kill that occurred and Frank said that supposedly there was an alcohol spill that might have deoxygenated the water - they were going to do tissue studies but he hasn't seen anything yet on it. Karen might have more information on it. Local people think it might have been manure or some other contamination.
- **Lost Lake Beach Closings** – Rebecca asked Becky if there have been any beach closings and Becky said that she has a record of all the water samples that list e-coli levels and all the beach closings that have taken place over the past few years. She recalls that it was closed once last year and this year they closed it after the big rain even in June until the beaches were repaired and the water tests came back good.
- **Lost Lake Dredging and how much silt was removed** – Becky will get Rebecca the information on how much silt was removed from the lake when they dredged in 2003. They dredge their silt basin a couple times

a year as well and there was a bathymetric survey done on the basin as well. Jerry Sellers or Joe Rush may know more about that.

- **VLMP** – Rebecca asked about the work that the VLMP does and Becky said that Joe Rush or Jerry Sellers would be the ones to talk to on that.
8. **Schedule next meeting** – Possible dates - September 14 or 21<sup>st</sup> and once date is determined than Becky will send out a save the date notice. Next meeting – identifying goals and prioritizing them – Marlon Schafer offered to do a program and they are going to ask if he can present what they can offer at that meeting as well. They are going to plan to make it a joint meeting between the WPC and the TAC.
  9. **Adjourn** – meeting ended at 12:05PM