



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



WATERSHED PLANNING COMMITTEE and TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

March 9, 2010 12:00PM to 2:00PM

Lost Lake Community Center

404 Lake Court, Dixon, Illinois

Meeting Attendees			
WPC Members		TAC Members	
Joe Baker	Jim Brown	Marty McManus	Joe Rush
Marian Baker	Bill Kleiman	David Meisenheimer	Roger Windhorn
Ed Bettner	Dave Point	Dan Pierce	
Dan Boehle		Karen Rivera	
Guests		Coordinators/Employees	
Audrey Taylor		Rebecca Breckenfelder	
Les Taylor		Rebecca Olson	
		Shannon Thruman	

1. **Accept Minutes from 1/18/2010 Watershed Planning Committee Meeting** – Marian Baker motioned to accept the 1/18/2010 minutes and Dan Boehle seconded the motion. The committee passed it unanimously by a call of aye.
2. **Review and Revise Goals, Objectives, and Future Conditions** – In January the WPC met and took the list of natural resource priorities that both committees commented on last summer and changed them into preferred future conditions. Rebecca organized and consolidated the list and thoughts that came from it and made a list of “Goals and Preferred Conditions” that consists of 6 goals, some with related objectives listed alongside. They got about half way through the concerns before they ran out of time so what is on the list is what they discussed at the last meeting as well as what was on the prior list that they hadn’t had time to go through. She wants to wrap it up and accept their preliminary goals, which may change in the process as they find out more about the watershed. She would like to go through the Goals and objectives list and, in the future, she may add another column titled “Measurable Results”.

Goals

A. Minimize Erosion & Sedimentation – Rebecca asked the WPC if goal #1 covers everything that they talked about and if they are missing anything. She added that she would like the TAC’s input on the goals. Audrey asked if they were going to talk about the means with which they are going to do this and Rebecca said, “Not today, but we will”. Rebecca said that after she categorized the goals she looked back over the list and felt that #6. *Reduce negative environmental impact of road improvement projects and the installation of culverts* should be an objective

under #1 because she believes that it is really talking about sedimentation & erosion and is really more of a specific thing that could fall under #1. Jim Brown asked if there anyone has any input from the DOT and Rebecca said that they could be a suggestion to formulate something like that. She asked if anyone knows if there is a process that already exists for the DOT in this area and Ed said there is a code for putting in culverts. Dan Pierce said that the DOT announces ahead of time when they do projects, unfortunately, IDOT doesn't have any control over it, rather, it is townships and counties. In the Parking Lot of Ideas, Rebecca put down the idea of contacting the group in charge of planning road projects in the area in order to keep aware of their future plans. Jim Brown said that he lives on a 3200 acre glacial lake in NW Wisconsin that has a county road that runs along side it and in several places where the road comes down low is adjacent to the lake and they are getting a lot of erosion there to the point where the shoulders are collapsing on them. When they did their watershed study, they inventoried all of those and monitored what the influx was there after heavy rains. They were able to very effectively get them to go along with reconstruction - some of the ditches that came down and had culverts; they were able to get boulders in and to blacktop the bottom of the ditch and along the shoulder of the areas a blacktop curve was installed. Rebecca said that they could look at that and the proper way to do it would be to gather the information, pinpoint on a map where the areas are and decide how to go forward and possibly make it an action item. Dan said that they can talk to the DOT about things that they put in and make suggestions if necessary; remembering that they have to follow safety standards to try to get the water off of the road that may not coincide with erosion control (practices). Ed asked if the lake has any regulations when new houses are built and Becky said that last month the RCD worked with the POA to put a paragraph in their covenants that requires the property owner to install fencing on construction sites to mitigate soil entering the lake through runoff. The RCD also adopted shoreline stabilization SOP's for re-vegetation & rip-rap for lakefront property owners in 2008.

B. Minimize Pollutant Loading – Rebecca listed the four objectives, a. Reduce the use of fertilizer, herbicides..., b. Reduce fertilizer loss from soils, c. Reduce pollutant leaching into groundwater, d. Practice conservation tillage under the second goal and added that she kept a, b, and c general because those goals apply to both lawns and agricultural fields. Bill Kleiman asked if they should also say that they are protecting the stream from pollutants in runoff as well as in the groundwater.

Jim Brown asked about infiltration and runoff and whether the Lost Lake community had ditching to get water off of the roads. Dan Pierce replied that there is ditching along the roads for standard hard surface runoff as well as a couple of culverts that run off the roads and lead directly into the lake. Jim asked how many places does the ditching system run off into the lake and Joe Rush said that there are only two places that he is aware of. Jim said that for the ditches that actually drain into the lake that between compaction and bluegrass they are probably too efficient. Joe Rush said that in some ways that is not necessarily a bad thing, especially due to the size of the watershed. We don't have a lack of water entering the lake so they don't feel that they need more water so anytime that they can filter the water through plantings, that is a good thing. Jim asked if there was groundwater and Joe Rush said that without doing any studies he would tend to believe so and even the septic systems push water through to the groundwater.

Karen Rivera asked if there are any rules for the landowners on the lake regarding the type of fertilizer that they can use on their lawns and Joe said that the RCD classified the community as a phosphorus-free community and through an educational program they are trying to help residents become good stewards of the community and reduce phosphorus. Becky said that they put out information on ways to reduce phosphorus in a bi-monthly newsletter that goes out to all of the property owners in the district. They also mailed out a Phosphorus-Free brochure to all of the district constituents last year. Joe said that it is a difficult thing to police, so they are approaching it from an educational standpoint. They are also looking at making recommendations on septic maintenance; which shouldn't cost the homeowner more than a couple hundred dollars every few years.

Joe asked what lead to committee's objective to reduce pollution leaching into the ground and surface water. Rebecca said that Shannon has been requesting a lot of data and some of the pollutants that they have been focusing on are fertilizer and septic systems. Someone asked if they had a major problem with a septic system down here and Joe said that there was a private system that failed. Becky added that the utility had to fix the sewer plant and have the city of Dixon's water company come in and pump out the tanks periodically a couple years ago. Joe said that they have a lot of livestock in the watershed as well and he wondered if there was a concern about livestock in the streams.

Bill Kleiman commented on 2a – and stated that whether a farmer uses those things or not is their business, rather, he is more concerned with it entering the streams and so thinks that the wording should be changed to reduce the amount of fertilizer, herbicides and insecticides entering the streams. Dan Pierce added that the NRCS tries to

ensure that the farmers are not putting on more nutrients than their crops can use and most farmers are aware of that. Their goal is to find a balance and for the most part he thinks that most producers do that. Marian asked if there is GPS so that when applications are made whether they can control that and Dan said yes. Marian asked in creating their objectives, how they are going to measure it and Rebecca said that that is an important step that will come later – right now they don't have to worry about how, they just have to figure out what they want to do. Ed said that the majority of the herbicides that are used today are contact killers –they are applied to the weed and are soaked into the plant rather than into the soil. Rebecca said that it sounds like they want to reword objective 2a to indicate fertilizer, herbicides and insecticides entering the stream and they want to add another objective to ensure that the correct amount fertilizers and herbicides that can be taken up by the plants is applied. Ed suggested that they could word it as "Manage fertilizer, herbicide and insecticide loss. Ed said that anytime they have a massive amount of water and flash runoff; for example, a spring thaw before snow melts, then it's going to bring down a higher rate of fertilizer into the streams. Joe Rush said that that did happen last December. Ed said that if they get heavy rains this spring after the fertilizer is down then they will lose a lot of fertilizer. Rebecca added that even when they do everything right, things can happen. Joe said that even if they can't control fertilizer loss when flooding occurs, at least, if they are doing everything right, over the long run, it'll make a difference. Karen Rivera asked if they manage a lot of the fertilizer runoff through buffer strips along the stream and Ed said that typically they don't farm right up to the creek bed – there are buffer strips; however, anytime the ground is frozen, even a buffer strip won't help. Dan suggested that they could add even more buffer strip area to what is already there. Karen said that they could increase the number of people who have buffer strips through an educational program.

C. Protect "Class A" and other productive soils. – Rebecca asked if there are any specific objectives that would go underneath this goal. Jim Brown asked what they meant by protecting it and Rebecca said that they want to protect the Class A soil from a land usage change like development.

D. Protect wildlife and their habitats – Jim Brown asked if, during hunting season, the deer that live in the surrounding areas congregate in the protected area of the Lost Lake subdivision. Rebecca said that she is sure that the deer do come into the protected area as the deer range is too large to think that the deer wouldn't move out of their area. Karen said that at the nature preserve at Castle Rock State Park, all of the deer move into the preserve to the point that they were destroying the nature preserve's habitat to the point that they had to allow hunting there – she can guarantee that if there is no hunting allowed that the deer are moving in there. Karen asked what type of wildlife they are targeting. Rebecca responded that she can think of a lot of examples of animals, for example, this a really important area for forest interior migratory birds. Karen said that they could create corridors to connect the significant areas that are already in place. With streams and the fish in them – if you have a stream that is channelized and muddy, it actually creates a blockage that the fish won't move through. Bill Kleiman said that they could list several strategies under the goal such as corridors, buffering, habitat areas, managing natural areas using fire, etc. Rebecca said that this would be the time to come up with the goals, not necessarily the strategies, but what she is hearing from them as strategies is buffer and manage existing natural areas, create corridors between existing habitats and reduce fragmentation. Karen said that they should come up with criteria of what constitutes a higher quality natural area vs. a lower quality natural area. For example, is a wooded area an Oak Wilt free wooded area, Dan said that they could do that –they are using GIS. Rebecca said that another objective that she sees coming from this and that is to tie into some of the planning efforts that have already been made – there are a couple of organizations that recognize this area as biologically important such as the Forest Legacy Area and some conservation opportunity areas that have been identified and whose boundaries are known. Jim Brown asked if the RCD has considered stabilization of the lakeshore and Joe said that the RCD as an SOP established for re-vegetation of the shoreline as well as rip-rap – both of those options are available to the property owner. For the upstream area, they are looking at creating an educational area to show people the different methods to effectively stabilize their shorelines. Karen said that if you start working on a stream bank, you could do more than just add rock by incorporating reptile habitat or a wetland off to the side for amphibians there is a whole other pile of money that they could tie into for that work and it wouldn't cost a whole lot more to do.

Rebecca said that there is a state wildlife grant application coming up April 2 – there are a lot of different pots of money coming up from the different organizations; for example, the State Wildlife Organization focuses on specific wildlife that is identified as in greatest need of conservation in certain plans. For implementation of a project, they would provide 65% of the funding. Karen said that there is a new partnership grant that covers this area called Fishers and Farmers that addresses streams to benefit fish. Rebecca said that there are other ones too that cover this area – she said since she has worked a lot with various groups that rather than trying to fit what they want to do into a program, they should first decide what they want to do and then they can talk to her to find out what organizations have the same mission as what they are trying to do that they should pursue for funding. They could

also talk to Dan and Dave with the NRCS because their programs are also quite extensive. Jim Brown asked about the types of groups in the area that would hold titles on land and Rebecca said that the Nature Conservancy is the one in this area and the Natural Land Institute pretty much defers to the Nature Conservancy in this area. So if it didn't fit the mission of the Nature Conservancy District then the Natural Land Institute would be the one to talk to. There are a couple of private organizations that they could go to for buying up land for conservation such as the Grand Victoria foundation and the Illinois Clean Energy Foundation. Rebecca said that some people don't like to take property off of the tax rolls and there is a way to keep the property on the tax books by creating a conservation easement, which would change the land use while the landowner still maintains ownership of the land. The Nature Conservancy or Land Institute could monitor that it remains natural. The value of it could be seen in a tax deduction or a purchase.

E. Protect the Rural Lifestyle – Karen asked if there is any public fishing in the area or whether there were any areas that they could open up to the public for fishing, canoeing, or other recreation opportunities. Rebecca said that depending on how the committee feels, they could make that a goal. Becky said that in the past the RCD had talked about cleaning up the Flagg Road Silt Basin on Flagg Road to make a fishing area. Ed said that the township looked at getting a bike trail through the township and hooking up with Grand Detour to install a crosswalk across the Rock River – there was a lot of interest in it; however, it didn't seem to progress very far. Byron was real big on it and until they open up between Byron down where Lowden State Park is at, this area is not really being looked at. Once they get Byron down to Lowden Park then he thinks that their plan will kick in. Karen said that things don't start getting looked at until people start asking for it. Rebecca said that grants like to see plans – they like to see the effort that they are going through right now and on paper – then they are more likely to get funding for a project. There are some hunting opportunities available by the Nachusa Grasslands. Becky said that perhaps the reason that they are not focusing on creating more public opportunities in the watershed is because there are already so many public options nearby on the Rock River and Lowden and Castle Rock State Parks. Ed said that he could see them installing public trails in the future and that it is very doable. Rebecca said that she would add support opportunities for recreation, hunting and fishing and that when they get to their strategies, they can talk about it again.

3. Watershed Resource Inventory

- A. **Update on Progress** – Rebecca said that they have been working on the watershed resource inventory and have accumulated a great amount of information for it, for example, Marty McManus gave them a lot of information on the watershed's soil and geology. Shannon has spearheaded that and although they have a lot of information already, they need more. The deadline is coming up and so they are going to focus on what they are missing right now so that they can get the report written in time for the group to review it so they can submit it to the EPA by May 1st.
- B. **Identify Information Gaps** – Shannon went through the memorandum that outlined what the data they are collecting for the Watershed Inventory. They need assistance on

#4: Groundwater/Surface Water as far as how much information the committee wants them to pursue. It is complicated to explain the connection between the two and they may want a speaker to explain it. She asked if there was anyone that would be able to help them with this or guide them to someone that could.

Karen asked where they got the designated use information from and Rebecca said from the EPA. She asked if they did Lost Lake and Rebecca said that they have it listed it hasn't been identified as impaired because the EPA hasn't sampled it. The EPA has sampling and categorization and they have categorized some streams as impaired according to criteria that they measure. Becky said that she recalls an e-mail that Joe Rush sent a couple years ago that said that the diversity of the micro-organisms of Lost Lake were very good and wondered if those tests were considered. Joe said that that was a report from Diane Caruso from the EPA so he is trying to understand what they are talking about. Karen said that the DNR works in conjunction with the EPA when making an impaired designation, which usually comes from their basement survey– the DNR samples the fish and the EPA tests the water quality and sediments. They also do other tests that the DNR doesn't do involving monitoring sites all over the state. Karen said that if the EPA has a monitoring site on Lost Lake then they can get all kinds of information - usually any kind of lake that has a lot of public use they have monitored. They could call the EPA to find out if they have a monitoring site or if they would consider adding one. Bill Kleiman said that they did a sampling of Ed Dewalt's property on Clear Creek for them for macro-invertebrates and asked if Karen did fish sampling for them on Clear Creek and Karen said she did a sampling of Nachusa Grasslands. Rebecca asked if they did any tests on water velocity and Bill said that they started doing it using a ruler on the bridge on Lowden

Rd that Clear Creek goes under – they kept data for awhile but then it got pretty tedious. Rebecca asked if the data was still relevant and Bill said the whole purpose of using the ruler was to build up an argument that they need a data logger to make it easier to collect the data. Karen said that the DNR was putting up temperature loggers on a lot of streams all over N. Illinois to try to locate cold-water streams – she can look and see if they put any on Clear Creek.

#5: Irrigation: Shannon asked if anyone knows of any farmers who are using irrigation in the watershed and someone (Ed?) said that the Caldwell farm on S. Carthage Rd on the far east and there is irrigation on Stone Barn Rd between Daysville and Hoosier – that is the only irrigation that he knows of in the watershed.

#6: Drainage: How do they classify a ditch vs. a tributary vs. a creek? Karen asked if there was some kind of rules for the ditches on private property that carry runoff to streams and Dan said that there are strict rules about manipulating natural streams and how close to a stream a ditch is dug. Property owners are pretty good about following the rules. Livestock waste is carefully monitored. Drainage tiles - on some of the aerial photos they can actually see the pattern of the drainage tile. How much info does the committee want to gather – do they want to contact every farmer or go off of the aerial maps? Dan Pierce said that the photos aren't going to show much unless they were constructed within the last year. There is a lot of drain tile that some of them don't even know is there. Someone said that you could look at soil type which might be more accurate. Dan said that drainage contractors typically keep records but they change often and it would be a nightmare to try to find information that is 40-50 years old. Karen asked if it is important information to have and someone said that if there was a landowner that wants to work with the watershed committee to do something a little progressive like creating a wetland to filter the water that their drain system goes into then you could find out where their tiles are. Rebecca suggested that they could make a statement about the likelihood of the existence of drain tiles based on soil type.

#7 Floodplain Boundaries: Have a lot of data but need someone to explain in paragraph form why flooding can create problems when a natural flood plain has been taken for other uses. She would like committee members to list on the map provided areas, with dates, that have been affected by flooding and any known damage estimates.

#8 Municipal Industrial Point Sources: finding storm water outfalls, illicit discharges. Jim Brown talked about looking at septic system repair permits and Shannon said that the only way they can do that is to get a FOIA on permitting on repairs that have been done on every single address in the watershed and that would be very time consuming. The most important ones would be those closest to the streams and lake.

#10 Hydraulic Modifications: Shannon asked if someone was interested or knew of someone interested in writing an explanation of the detrimental effect that hydro modification has on the biological characteristics of the stream system. We are working on some projects with Wendler Engineering already and Joe said that they could see what it would take for Dick Bauman of Wendler Engineering to do it for them – Dick may have something based on some of the silt basin design study that he could give them.

#11 Storm water management/residential non-point run-off: Joe said that with residential run-off (roof, management of property, asphalt) all of those come into play as to what the impact of hard-surface run-off would be. Joe said that there may be road areas that are not draining properly that are creating an impact in those areas – he has talked to Shannon about those.

#13 Biological Indicators: Fish IBI – Explain for report – Karen has a tape that she can send them that has the categories on it.

#14 Chemical Parameters: They don't have a lot of info on this and EPA has asked them to gather info on this.

#15 Priority Wetlands: If anyone knows of any organization that have similar priorities to the watershed committee, please let Shannon know - she will also be calling various organizations to find out.

#16 Soil Classifications: Marty did a great job getting info for soil classification.

#17 Soil Erosion: NRCS is doing a rapid assessment. Dan said that they are waiting for ice melt and that it would really be pushing things to have the info by May 1st – perhaps they can have a preliminary report of some kind.

#18 Geology - They have very general data on the geology of the area.

#19 Topography – NRCS office has topography maps

#20 Land Use/Cover

#21 Pollutant Loading: They don't have a lot of information out there and she doesn't know where to go. Joe may have info on this from VLMP.

#22 Best Management Practices (BMP): Have a lot gathered. If anyone is doing BMP's and is not in and NRCS or SWCD program – let them know. Where and what are they, what is the effectiveness? Ed talked about trying to get a plan together (75 acres) to water livestock using the creek – it will probably involve using some rock to put in designated crossings on the creek.

#24 Wildlife: Has some good information. Joe asked if they are concerned with goose management because they have been doing that at Lost Lake for a few years now. Karen asked if they checked the ENT list for hits in the area and Rebecca said yes. Rebecca said that instead of documenting a list of all of the wildlife species that has been documented in the area, they are only taking the species that have been identified as in greatest need of conservation or endangered (using the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan Report) and go through all the sources that they know about to find out which ones are in this watershed. Karen said that they have to go through a CIRP review and part of that process is looking at an internal endangered species database to see if there are any hits - Rebecca asked if that involved EcoCat and Karen said she didn't know and added that she could access the database for them. Rebecca said that would be good – she has done the EcoCat report herself and it comes up with hits – they don't know if it is the same information or not. Joe said that the RCD has records of fish species found in the lake as well.

#25 Socio-Economic/Human Resources: Sherrie Taylor works for the center of governmental studies and has provided a list of the socioeconomic makeup of the watershed. Joe said that the RCD put out a survey of all of the property owners in the district in 2008 that has questions about their attitudes on the lake and watershed that should be of some help to them. Becky said that they had about a 35% response rate to the survey. Land use – they want to get land use/land cover info – there are two ways that they can do it, either go to the FSA for that information or, if there are not a lot of farmers to contact, they could ask the farmers themselves what they planted last year. Jim Brown suggested that they could go off of the FSA aerial photos to figure out what was planted. Karen asked if there was anyone on the committee from the Blackhawk RC&D and Rebecca said Dave Dornbusch. Karen said that they have a lot of land use records and GIS. Dave Meisenheimer said that he can submit that he can give a percentage rather than exact acreage, for example, about 75% planted corn. Jim said that the department of revenue should have a record of statements of assessments from last year and look at the number of acres that are on there and perhaps what the land use is – he said that he can check on that.

C. Assign Individuals to Provide Information to Reduce Gaps

- 4. Adjourn** – Meeting adjourned at 2:25PM. Ed motioned to adjourn; Jim Brown seconded the motion.