

River Raisin Watershed Management Plan

Steering Committee Meeting
Tecumseh Community Center
March 22, 2006

Dan Stefanski opened the meeting by thanking everyone for their participation. Introductions were made by everyone in attendance.

Scott Dierks, team facilitator, covered three topics

1. Why are we attending this meeting?

Slide 2 - Graphic of River Raisin Watershed with EPA identified 303d sites – This graphic locates the identified impairments within the watershed. They include such things as habitat alteration, metals, pathogens, pesticides, etc.

Slide 3 - Watershed Health comparison graph is an EPA derived Environmental Condition Index of approx. 40 factors such as air quality and other factors. This demonstrates how the River Raisin Watershed compares to surrounding watersheds and the need for a Watershed Management Plan.

Slide 4 - Watershed Plan Background - This project is funded by Environmental Protection Agency, EPA and administered by Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, MDEQ.

Slide 5 - Identified participating organizations that have environmental data and analysis available on the River Raisin is proceeding currently. National Weather Service has a water forecasting model available. Heidelberg College has 20 years of data including total suspended solids (TSS), nutrients and flow. Rob Zbiciak, MDEQ, is conducting a wetland inventory of the River Raisin including change and function of the wetlands we see today in the watershed. Dave Fongers, MDEQ has completed a hydrology study that identifies the time for rainfall to run off the land and into the river for each sub watershed (flashiness).

Slide 6 - Plan Tasks – Steering Committee members are also stakeholders. For the Watershed Plan the time frame to consider planning for will be 20 years. The technology committee will provide technical support to aid in the decision process.

Slide 7 - Steering Committee Description – The goal is to bring together those agencies with authority to make changes, as well as bring together those parties that may have competing interest to collectively address issues in the watershed.

Slide 8 - A River Raisin Vision will be created. Six public meetings will help formulate the vision. A watershed Management Plan will raise consciousness of the watershed.

Slide 9 – Watershed planning byproducts may include experience, knowledge and contact with others that might not otherwise happen. Aligned organizational goals provide the support for things to happen in the watershed.

Slide 10 - Scheduled first Stakeholder meeting will be in July (not May as indicated in the slide).

If you have a contact that was not included today, we can still add that person to the steering or technical committee. This is a big watershed with lots of stakeholders. We have to limit one representative / organization per meeting. It is recommended that a backup person be designated so we can have continuity in the event that you cannot attend.

2. Mechanics of how we are going to collaborate on this project

The agreed decision making process will be by consensus. This means that the deciding body will represent the decided opinion to the extent possible.

Communication

www.riverraisin.org will be the primary source for information such as:

- Agendas
- Meeting minutes
- Draft watershed management plan
- Project description
- Project schedule
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The website was provided by Washtenaw County as in-kind support of the watershed management plan.

A listserv will be available to allow a broad audience to receive information from the River Raisin Steering Committee. Sign up will be available early April through the website.

Gayle Mitchell, RRWC, has “In kind Report” and “Hourly 319 Tracking” report forms available for all steering committee members. This is used to document the local match of in kind support for the Watershed Management Plan. This includes your time whether is it reviewing watershed documents, communicating information about the river raisin, attending meeting, etc.

3. Group exercise - Project Success Criteria

A brainstorming exercise was had with the following results:

- Creek groups – volunteers forming sub-watershed groups
- Individual behavioral changes e.g. some municipalities have ordinances for phosphorus free fertilizers.
- Implementable Plan

- New working relationships – get agencies to align goals
- Financial stability of the River Raisin Watershed Council
- Increasing the number of Adopt-A-Stream participants
- Expansion of concept of restoring wetland to improve water quality
- Potential wetlands map – identifying potential wetlands.
- Local units of government embrace best management practices, BMP. Set aside some of the wetland. Local “buy in” to improve water quality.
- Identified areas of river for highest priorities for preservation, and then finding funding to buy land or develop conservation easements.
- Improve perception of River Raisin.
- Promoting public involvement for water quality
- Increase recreation on the river.

Homework: Complete and return the River Raisin Watershed Stakeholder Survey to RRWC.

Second meeting:
Visioning

Third meeting:
Water Quality issues