

Black River & Paw Paw River Watershed Transition Team
September 10, 2008, meeting notes - Submitted by: Chris Bauer, MDEQ WB

Call to order: 7:05 pm
Bangor City Hall

Attendance: Erin Fuller, Linda Miller, Jeannine Grubisech, Lou Gibson, Al Baerren, Nancy Edwards, Rosemary Insidioso, Chris Bauer, Kevin Haight, Tom Howe, Ken Schneider, Pete Ter Louw, Sam Ewbank, Marcy Colclough, Dave Foerster, Julie Pioch, Matt Meersman

Minutes: Minutes for the August 13, 2008, meeting were accepted with no changes.

Discussion: Organization Name and Mission Statement

Chris Bauer assisted the group with the name selection process. The pros and cons of a name specifically identifying both watersheds vs. a unique name were discussed. A unique name was preferred. After consideration of several unique names, the group agreed upon: **Two Rivers Coalition: An Alliance of the Black River and Paw Paw River Watersheds.**

Matt Meersman presented a potential mission statement compiled from two statements favored by the group at the August 13, 2008, meeting. Several wording changes were suggested to better reflect the group's goals. The group agreed upon: ***The Two Rivers Coalition is a citizen-based group working to protect the health of the Black River and Paw Paw River watersheds through conservation, education, and advocacy.***

Discussion: Freshwater Future Grant Application

Al Baerren shared the core structure that he prepared for the Freshwater Future Grant application due on September 29, 2008. Al explained that the application needs language and budget polishing before submittal, and there is additional paperwork that needs to be completed to meet the eligibility requirements.

- Marcy Colclough, Matt Meersman, Erin Fuller, Chris Bauer, and Sam Ewbank will work together to finish and submit the application.
- The Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy has agreed to be the sponsoring organization because 501(c)(3) status is an eligibility requirement.
- Membership in Freshwater Future is a grant eligibility requirement. Erin Fuller indicated that the Van Buren Conservation District offered to purchase a membership, and she confirmed with Jill Ryan at Freshwater Future that this would satisfy the membership requirement for the group. On Matt Meersman's suggestion that the group "pass a hat" to secure money for its own \$100 membership, \$114 was cumulatively donated.
- It was suggested that the Van Buren Conservation District serve as the addressee for the group. Marcy Colclough/Erin Fuller will discuss this with Amy Lockhart.

Discussion: By-laws Development

Julie Pioch, MSU Extension, ran the group through a series of questions to shape development of by-laws. The topics discussed included Board of Directors formation and selection process, membership vs. non-membership-based organizations, membership constituency, membership benefits, and membership obligations. The group felt strongly that they wanted opportunities for membership in the organization. Julie will draft an example set of by-laws which she will deliver to the By-laws Committee.

Committee Updates: Phosphorous Committee

Dave Foerster explained that Van Buren County has committed to move forward with a Phosphorous ban and likely will soon be working on an ordinance. The Phosphorous Committee has not yet had a chance to work with Allegan County on education efforts.

Other Announcements:

Marcy Colclough

Chuck Nelson of Sarrett Nature Center contacted Marcy about a water trail group that is being formed on the lower Paw Paw River. Volunteers are welcome, contact Chuck Nelson for more information.

Watervliet Township would like to do a Paw Paw River cleanup. Those interested are invited to a planning meeting scheduled for September 16, 2008, 2:30 pm at the Hartford Township Hall.

Harbor Shores project representatives recently contacted Marcy about potential stream bank restoration work on the lower Paw Paw River. Marcy and Michigan DNR staff visited several potential sites with Harbor Shores representatives on September 10, 2008.

Marcy is working with the Van Buren Conservation District to submit a Paw Paw River watershed plan implementation proposal for Michigan DEQ Nonpoint Source Program Section 319 grant funds. The Conservation District would be the applicant, with the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy as a potential partner. Proposed work would focus on wetland protection and restoration, and may include some Black River watershed work as well.

Erin Fuller

Volunteers are needed for the Bloomingdale Park rain garden planting on September 20, 2008, at 10:00 a.m. The park is located just south of the 4-way stop in Bloomingdale. Contact Erin if you plan to attend.

Sam Ewbank

Sam Ewbank explained that, although he will continue to be involved with the group when possible, he will no longer be able to serve as a co-chair. Step right up; a volunteer from the Black River Watershed is needed!

For the next meeting:

- Continue By-laws discussion
- Debriefing on Freshwater Future grant application (**due on September 29, 2008, before the next meeting**)

Next meeting: October 8 @ 7:00 pm Bangor City Hall

Adjourn 9:03 pm