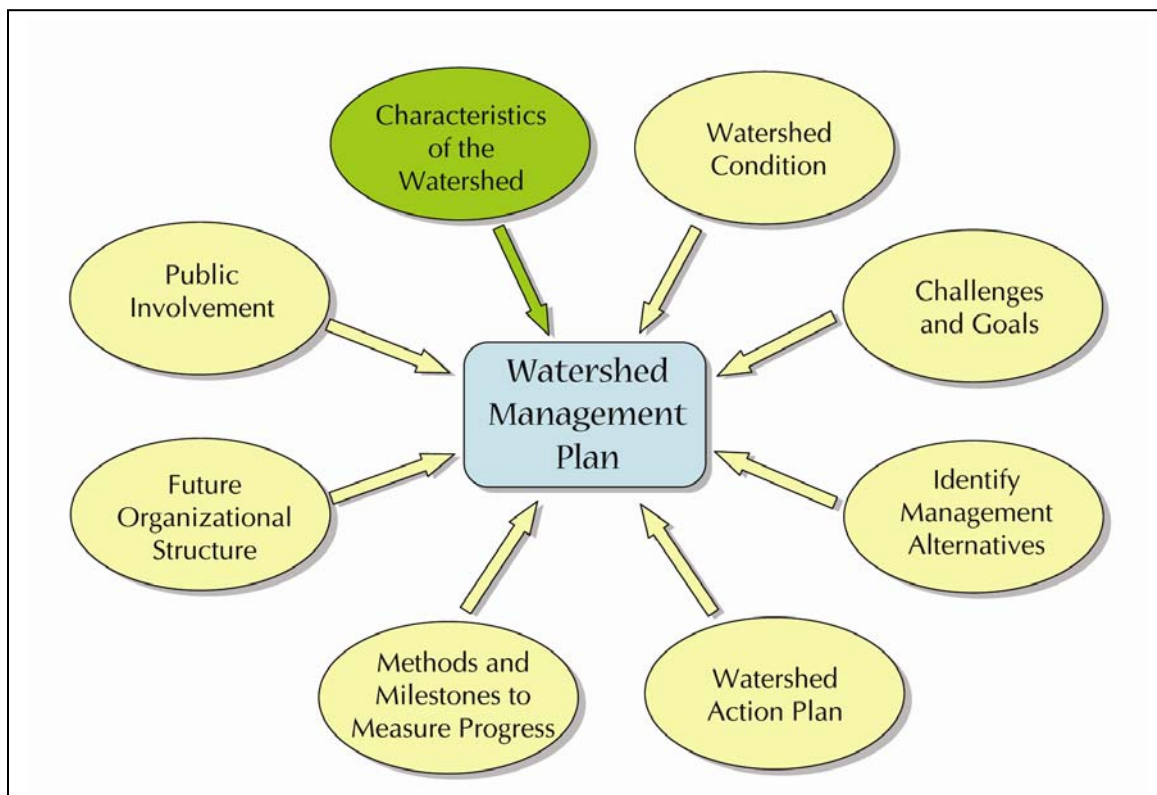


**Ecorse Creek and Combined Downriver Watersheds
Public Information Meeting #3 Summary
September 22, 2005 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm
Westfield Center in Trenton
Hosted by the Friends of the Detroit River**

The third and final public information meeting was held in conjunction with the Friends of the Detroit River Annual Meeting.

1) Welcome and Introductions

- Approximately 52 people were in attendance (42 signed in on attached sign-in sheet)
- After a short business meeting by the Friends of the Detroit River, presentations were made by two speakers. The first presentation was by Andrea Kline, East Michigan Conservation Director, of the Michigan Chapter of The Nature Conservancy. Ms. Kline spoke about the Nature Conservancy program, and highlighted several examples from around Michigan. Following Ms. Kline's presentation and a short break, Mr. Robert Burns, The Detroit Riverkeeper, introduced Greg Weeks, of Wade Trim. Mr. Weeks provided approximately a 25 minute presentation, followed by a 10-15 question and answer period.
- Greg Weeks, WTA, gave a brief introduction of the goals for the public meeting, as well as an overview of the Watershed Management planning efforts for both the Ecorse Creek and Combined Downriver watersheds. The goals for the meeting were to: provide an overview of the WMP process; review the designated and desired uses; review the major goals of the watersheds; proposed action items; measurements of progress; and to invite continued involvement. Greg indicated that the communities are working together to develop the federally-mandated watershed management plans. Greg also reviewed what a watershed is, the location of the two watersheds that were being discussed tonight, and gave a brief overview of the various elements that go into developing a Watershed Management Plan (WMP). The Table of Contents for the WMPs was also briefly reviewed.



2) **Designated Uses and Desired Uses**

Designated and Desired uses for both watersheds were reviewed and discussed. Impaired designated uses in the Ecorse Creek Watershed include “other indigenous aquatic life and wildlife” and “total body contact recreation”. Threatened uses in the Ecorse Creek Watershed include “partial body contact recreation” and “warmwater fishery”. Impaired uses in the Combined Downriver Watershed include “other indigenous aquatic life and wildlife” and it’s suspected that “total body contact recreation” is also impaired, however there is a lack of sufficient water quality data to confirm. “Partial body contact recreation” and “warmwater fishery” are both threatened in the Combined Downriver Watershed.

The Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for Aquatic Life was reviewed. The TMDL applies to the Ecorse Creek and uses Total Suspended Solid concentrations as a measurement of success. The goal is reduce TSS by 50% and to restore a viable warm water aquatic community. A similar TMDL is anticipated for the Combined Downriver Watershed in 2007.

3) **Priority Pollutants and Issues**

Pollutants and issues in both watersheds include: lack of stable flow/excessive surface runoff; lack of habitat; nutrients; low dissolved oxygen; e. coli, other pathogens; sediment; and, inadequate protective measures.

4) **Goals**

The primary goals for the watersheds were reviewed.

Ecorse Creek and Combined Downriver Watershed Goals

- Reduce Stream Flow Variability
- Reduce Flooding
- Increase public education, understanding, and participation regarding watershed issues
- Improve Water Quality
- Protect Public Health
- Preserve, Increase, & Enhance Recreational Opportunities
- Protect, Enhance, & Restore Riparian & In-Stream Habitat
- Watershed Management Sustainability
- *Preserve and Protect Agricultural Lands (CDR only)*
- *Protect Groundwater (CDR only)*

Overarching Goals for Both Watersheds

- Attain compliance with TMDL
- Restore/Protect Designated & Desired Uses
- Multiple, Simultaneous Actions-Goals Addressed
- Involve & Educate Public Throughout
- Improved Water Quality/Public Health Impacts

5) **Management Alternatives (Action Items)**

An overview of how the management alternatives and action items were developed and selected was presented. The information gathering process included committee meetings with both watersheds, two joint workshops, and individual community meetings where existing codes and ordinances, existing critical problem areas, and potential action items were discussed.

An overview of the actions and best management practices was given that will be done within the watersheds as part of the Phase II permit (short-term) as well as the numerous potential projects (long-term) that have been identified by the watershed committees. Example action items specifically mentioned included the storm drain marker program; entering watershed signage;

stream team monitoring; mapping of the natural resources; inventory and stabilization of eroding stream banks, revising the drain maintenance procedures, and compiling a "State of the Watershed" report.

6) Related Initiatives and Efforts

Besides the efforts of the Watershed Committees, there are many other groups, initiatives, and efforts that are taking place in the immediate area that are related to the Watershed Management Plans. Greg noted some of these groups/efforts, including the North Branch Ecorse Creek Study, the International Wildlife Refuge, the Friends of the Detroit River / Riverkeeper Program, the Downriver Stream Team, and the regional "Ours to Protect" campaign. The Watershed Committees should continue to work with, and share ideas and resources with, the variety of initiatives and special interest groups that are working toward similar goals.

7) Measuring Progress and Updating the Plan

The WMPs include discussion on how the watershed groups will measure progress once they adopt the Watershed Management Plans and begin to implement various action items and best management practices. The watershed committees will utilize both qualitative and quantitative techniques to measure progress. Qualitative examples include public surveys, visual stream surveys, and public participation at programs and activities. Quantitative examples include in-stream measurements of total suspended solids concentrations, bacteria sampling, and flow measurements.

In addition, it is recommended that the Watershed Management Plans be reviewed and updated every 5 years to recognize various action items that have been initiated or completed, to alter the desired action items based on results of the various measurement techniques, etc.

8) Next Steps and How to Stay Involved

- The primary next steps include:
 - PDF of draft plans are on the project websites for public review
 - Draft plan was submitted to MDEQ in early August for their review
 - Incorporate input received from MDEQ, public, and the ECIC/CDWIC Committees
 - Final plan will be submitted by November 1st.
- Greg then reviewed the committees' desire to ensure open communication and continued participation throughout the development of the Watershed Management Plan. Each Committee has set up project web sites that include information on upcoming meetings, contacts, drafts of the plan, press releases, meeting materials, etc. The web site addresses are:
 - www.ecorsecreek.com
 - www.combineddownriver.com
- It was also noted that the Chair of the committees, the local community representatives, and project staff from Wade Trim or OHM can be called or emailed with questions or input. Contact information was included with the agenda and is also on the project web site.

9) Public Input and Question and Answer Session

- The meeting was then opened up for general questions and comments regarding what was presented and/or general comments regarding the watersheds and the planning process.
 - ***How are the public participation meetings published or advertised?***
Communities publicize the upcoming meetings through their websites, cable TV, and by distributing flyers at their offices. Press releases are also published in major

newspapers. Each watershed has an email list, and notifications are sent out to everyone on the list. Anyone can be added to the email list at any time. Each watershed has its own website on which the meeting dates are posted.

○ **What provisions do communities have for implementing the Watershed Management Plans?**

The Watershed Management Plans (WMP) are developed proactively by the communities within the watershed. After the WMP is approved by the MDEQ, each community is required to develop a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Initiative (SWPPI). The SWPPI includes the actions each community commits to from the WMP, and it is enforceable by law.

○ **The Drain Code only allows \$2500/mile of drain for improvements, but most improvements cost more than that. In such a case, homeowners have to pay the remaining cost for improvements. Is the Code going to be revised?** (Ms. Kelly Cave, Wayne County DOE was present, and provided the following answer to this question):

Wayne County has been trying to have the Drain Code revised state-wide to be more applicable to urban areas in addition to its current focus on rural areas. In addition, the County has been working to improve drain maintenance, is a permittee and participant in both the Ecorse Creek and Combined Downriver Watersheds, and will actively work to implement the Watershed Management Plan.

○ **Can two communities petition to change the Drain Code?** (Answer provided by Ms. Cave): This may be confused with the fact that two communities can petition to perform a drain project. The Drain Code is a state law, however, Wayne County can notify the communities and citizens if the subject comes up during legislative review next year.

○ **Did the consultants walk the streams to see what is getting into the rivers?**

The consultant team has evaluated several road stream crossings to get a general evaluation of the streams. Some limited monitoring was done to determine pH, conductivity, etc., but most of the information used in evaluating the stream condition was existing data.

○ (Comment given by one attendee): **It takes a lot of energy for non-engineers to read emails, documents, etc. that are distributed. How is this important to residents? Will their property value increase? Will their water become unsafe to drink? If we can show why this is important, then people will have more interest, and it will be easier to demand more money for funding.**

It was agreed that it's important to find a way to get people interested and involved.