

Thursday, January 6, 2005

Western Wayne tackles pollution

The city of Taylor hosts brainstorming session to keep toxins from area waterways.

By Karen Bouffard / The Detroit News

DEARBORN HEIGHTS -- David Hull cares about the environment, so he recycles, uses organic fertilizer and takes whatever steps he can to protect the area around his Dearborn Heights home.

Twenty-two western Wayne County communities will host a public information meeting aimed at residents like Hull to get more ideas on how to keep polluted storm water from getting into rivers, streams and other waterways.

The meeting will take place from 7-8 p.m. Jan. 20, at the city of Taylor Municipal Offices, 23555 Goddard.

The communities are looking for ideas to include in long-term Watershed Management Plans that they must complete by Nov. 1 to meet requirements of the federal Clean Water Act.

The law requires every community in the state to find out how much polluted storm water it produces -- and to come up with ways to stop that from occurring. Communities that don't comply with the act can face a fine of up to \$25,000 a day.

The Watershed Management Plans will outline each community's goals for improving the cleanliness of its water, and how they plan to identify and fix sources of water pollution in their areas.

The public meeting represents an effort among the communities to work together.

Downriver communities in the Ecorse Creek Watershed -- including Allen Park, Dearborn Heights, Ecorse, Inkster, Lincoln Park, Melvindale, Romulus, Southgate, Taylor, Westland, and Wyandotte -- banded together come up with a joint plan for their watershed.

Communities in the Combined Downriver Watershed -- which includes Brownstown, Grosse Ile and Huron townships, and the cities of Gibraltar, Riverview, Romulus, Southgate, Taylor, Woodhaven and Wyandotte -- did the same.

Each group will develop its own plan to identify sources of pollution and solutions for their own watersheds. Hull of Dearborn Heights said individual communities need to make sure their residents are informed about the issues so that they can come to the meeting prepared.

"Communication is key, however most people don't really seem to be up on the issues," Hull said. "They should discuss it (at the local level) first so people can be aware of what the impact will be."

You can reach Karen Bouffard at (734) 462-2206 or kbouffard@detnews.com.