

TTK Advisory Committee Meeting Summary

Tuesday, March 11th, 2014



Attendees

Josh Brosmer, IDEM, Charles Haney, Hoosier Energy, Bruce Marheine, WLRM, Trey Clark, WLRM, Paul Gettinger, stakeholder, John “Jack” Gettinger, stakeholder, Ray McCammon, Sullivan County Commissioner and stakeholder, Travis McKinney, stakeholder, Bill Coulson, Sullivan SWCD Chairman and stakeholder, David Pirtle, stakeholder, Darin Cox, stakeholder and seed dealer, Gabe Blevins, Integrated Forestry Surveying, and Laura (Young) Demarest, WCIWA Watershed Coordinator

QAPP (Quality Assurance Project Plan) Update

The first draft of the QAPP document has been reviewed by IDEM and returned with comments. The draft will be revised and resubmitted to IDEM within the month. Monitoring is anticipated to begin in late April. The 29 chosen monitoring points were discussed with provided map; it was suggested that a more extensive map including both streams and roads should be provided during the next meeting. The watershed coordinator will also working on getting this information up on the website so that interested individuals can review this data at home. It is available upon request for Google Earth and ArcMap users. Additionally, it was suggested that one of the pesticide/herbicide test sites should be moved (or schedule additional tests, if budget allows) to the outlet of the reservoir dam in order to determine how much pollution the reservoir is potentially maintaining. This option will be discussed with Hoosier Energy representatives and was generally perceived as a good idea.

The purpose of the monitoring plan was discussed, based on some recent comments heard by the watershed coordinator regarding potential distress among landowners suspecting regulation. It was reiterated that these tests will be used to make some determinations for critical areas when it comes to prioritizing cost-share funds during the next phase of the grant. Thorough testing has never been conducted throughout the watershed, and this information will be very helpful when it comes to determining the scope of problems in the region. It will also help when applying for continued implementation funds in the future.

2014 Outlook

Continued stakeholder recruitment was discussed. A question was posed to the group as to which means they thought was best for reaching landowners. Most attendees reported having read the announcement in the newspaper. Additional committee members had been emailed, texted, or heard by word-of-mouth. (Note: the watershed coordinator had spoken with several individuals at the Sullivan County Ag Day the Saturday before the meeting. Several other individuals conveyed interest but were not able to attend due to scheduling conflicts). Mailings and phone trees were discussed but would require a lot of extra time. Radio ads may be effective depending on the preference of music and may not reach the intended landowners directly enough. In addition, the previously-used Partnership for Turtle Creek signs may be beneficial, though they would need to be located. It is thought that they are currently being stored at Hoosier Energy; they would need to be redesigned and permission would need to be obtained when posting, but this would be a great way to raise awareness and garner local interest in the project.

The ‘Scope of Work’ for the TTK grant was handed out and discussed. Each Task was explained and the budget for each item was noted. Task E (Education and Outreach) was highlighted, showing required workshops, events, etc. that were needed for the completion of the grant. The group had many helpful suggestions for how to fulfill the Education goals. “Nature’s Classroom” in Merom could be used to reach children during summer camps and the layout of the town of Merom would make for an ideal ‘model watershed.’ The new FFA Facility in Sullivan would make a good meeting place, with cover crop test plots being used for a field day. The Sullivan 8th Grade Annual Raft Trip could possibly be used to fulfill this requirement or used for match, as it has been for the Busseron 319 grant. An adult raft trip was also suggested, though there was some discussion about the feasibility of using the same rafts from the Sullivan County SWCD 8th Grade Annual Raft Trip for this purpose due to cost, rental time, and

management. It was suggested that canoes could be rented for a fee from the Merom Conference Center or attendees could bring their own. A ‘sandbar’ field day was also suggested with an optional canoe float (BYOC “Bring Your Own Canoe”) afterwards.

For the regional water quality-related workshop requirement, the new Wabash River access site in Fairbanks was mentioned as a potential opportunity to partner with DNR. Speakers could include fishery biologists, local historians, and conservation officers. It was stressed that water quality should be the main focus of such an event; litter, turbidity, invasive species, and nutrient run-off could be potential topics. Something of this scale could be slated for summer 2015, in the midst of the TTK cost-share program.

WMP (Watershed Management Plan) Development

The first three elements of the WMP have been submitted and approved by IDEM. Ongoing work on the WMP is being done by the watershed coordinator, which includes all of the compiled input from the advisory committee. The current ‘TTK Resource Concerns’ list was reviewed by committee members. Some additional concerns were mentioned that will be added to the list, including a landowner noting flying ash in an area of the watershed. The need for better nutrient management was also brought up and emphasized, especially concerning the reduction of pesticide and fertilizer inputs. (Additional post-meeting input: reducing erosion in woodlands/field edges from concentrated tile run-off).

When it comes to land use in the watershed and its impact on water quality, it was suggested that an ideal way to obtain more information on this topic (which will be addressed in the writing of the WMP) would be through windshield surveys. Routes will need to be determined along with a template for documenting findings. The watershed coordinator will prepare this information for the next meeting. Several committee members volunteered to help with these efforts. These windshield surveys, combined with the planned water monitoring will help obtain data needed to write the WMP and assess overall conditions in the watershed.

Other relevant planning efforts that could have an impact on water quality were considered. Island Levee Association and Wellhead Protection plans could be consulted, along with any land-management planning done around the Turtle Creek Reservoir by Hoosier Energy. It was also mentioned that a pipeline will soon be installed by Marathon through a portion of the watershed. Potential impacts from this project could include erosion and spills/leaks.

As always, continued input on the TTK 319 Grant project is welcome and encouraged. Interested parties can submit additional concerns via email, phone, or office visit any time.

*The meeting was adjourned at 8:00pm
Summary prepared by Laura Demarest, WCIWA Coordinator*