

TTK Advisory Committee Meeting Summary

Tuesday, May 20th, 2014



Attendees

Josh Brosmer, IDEM, Charles Haney, Hoosier Energy, Bruce Marheine, WLRM, Trey Clark, WLRM, David Pirtle, stakeholder, John Hamm, stakeholder, Gabe Blevins, Integrated Forestry Surveying, Brad Smith, The Nature Conservancy, and Laura (Young) Demarest, WCIWA Watershed Coordinator

Introduction

A brief overview and explanation of the TTK 319 grant was given alongside a few visual aids demonstrated via Powerpoint. The smaller group in attendance was attributed to the sunny weather and probable farming of several folks who would normally be present.

QAPP (Quality Assurance Project Plan) Update

The QAPP is officially finished and approved! The 29 chosen monitoring points were discussed with a provided map. The first monitoring session was conducted in April. Weather conditions were favorable and the sites were easily accessible. Lab results are in and will be presented in a more readable format at a future meeting. This data can be used to help determine critical areas within the watershed.

The purpose of monitoring was reiterated and discussed. These tests will be used to help determine critical areas within the watershed. Cost-share funding must treat a 'critical' resource concern; for instance, planting cover crops helps to prevent sediment and nutrient run-off, but does not really address E. Coli. A producer wishing to plant cover crops for the cost-share program must be within an area that has been designated critical for either sediment or nutrients.

Some questions were asked regarding the cost-share program development. It was explained that this process will be conducted by the Advisory Committee after the Watershed Management Plan has been completed, sometime this fall. We can use the Busseron cost-share program as a template or determine new parameters. Some of the best management practices that we choose to offer may depend on the resource concerns we pinpoint during planning.

2014 Outlook

Continued stakeholder recruitment is critical, especially at this stage of the grant. Event planning was not discussed much, though planning for the application of an additional round of funding for TTK Implementation was brought up and explained. The committee was in favor of pursuing additional 319 funding for cost-share in the TTK area and believed that there was a great need for help in this area. TTK Implementation, if awarded, would be scheduled to run from 2016-2018. Dollar amounts have not yet been determined. The application is due at the end of the summer.

WMP (Watershed Management Plan) Updates

Ongoing work on the WMP is being done by the watershed coordinator, which includes all of the compiled input from the advisory committee. This three year grant (2013-2016) allows 2 full years for the completion of the WMP and one year for cost-share implementation. However, the goal is to finish the WMP this fall, which will mean that the cost-share implementation stage can begin earlier. Working ahead on the WMP will also help when it comes to applying for the next round of TTK Implementation funding. There are several producers currently on the 'TTK Wait List' and it is anticipated that there will be a great interest in assistance. In addition, the current 'TTK Resource Concerns' list was reviewed by committee members, though no new items were added.

Windshield surveys were discussed again. Several committee members reported log jams and tree clearing that have impacted streams in the area. To conduct windshield surveys, a person would not have

to leave the car, but rather make notes of any resource concerns that are visible from the road where a stream is visible. Additional input provided by anyone who is able to view other areas of concern (i.e. off-road) is welcome! Photos and descriptions can help when it comes to identifying these issues within the watershed. It is likely that the watershed coordinator will conduct most of the surveys this month, though a template will be created and emailed to committee members. This template can be used by anyone wishing to identify a resource concern within the watershed. Brad Smith, TNC volunteered to conduct a windshield survey of the Kelley Bayou area next month. These windshield surveys, combined with data water monitoring will be used when writing the WMP and determining critical areas.

It was pointed out that at the time of applying for additional grant funding and writing the WMP, we will only have completed about half of the planned water monitoring. However, it was discussed that this data will be used as a tool to help us ascertain the most critical areas. Water monitoring data combined with windshield survey information combined with resource concern list items will corroborate assumptions that many of the streams within the TTK watersheds are impaired in some way.

County legal drains were discussed without much consensus on whether or not they exist 'officially' within the county. The general consensus being that they likely don't. The watershed coordinator will continue looking for additional information regarding legal drains in the area.

Potential partners for our upcoming TTK Implementation project were discussed. The Merom Improvement Association was suggested; the coordinator will follow up on this at the annual Merom Chautauqua Festival (June 6th-8th) while conducting outreach. The Levee Associations (Island Levee Association and Gill Township Levee Association) could also be approached for support in the future. Other Wabash River-related groups were also suggested as well as partnering with the Crawford County SWCD in Illinois.

The next TWO MEETINGS for TTK Advisory Committee have been determined. The haste of these meetings is due to upcoming deadlines for our grant application and the final WMP draft. Advisory Committee input is crucial at this stage! Please consider attending these next two important meetings!

Tuesday July 22nd 6:30

Tuesday August 19th 6:30

(Same time, same place: 6:30 pm at the Hoosier Energy Environmental Education Center)

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15pm

Summary prepared by Laura Demarest, WCIWA Coordinator