

Lower Fox Basin Partner Team Meeting Minutes

January 25, 2007

1-4 p.m.

Green Bay Metropolitan Sewerage District

Attending: Kendra Axness, Michael Finney, Greg Baneck, Mike Liebman, Gary Van Vreede, Bill Hafs, Ron VanderLoop, John Kennedy, Vicky Harris, Bud Harris, Angela Pierce, Chuck Larscheid, Judy Coenen, Betsy Galbraith,

Welcome, Introductions, Agenda Review

Judy's and Chuck's presentations were switched since Judy was running a little late. Bud added an announcement related to the Great Lakes Compact.

Door County Invasive Species Team and Phragmites Management Efforts – Mary Gansberg, DNR

Mary provided an overview of phragmites, an invasive species also known as "giant reed" or "common reed." This invasive plant is a very big problem in northeastern Wisconsin. Large-scale aerial chemical applications are being tried in certain areas (Seagull Bar, Peshtigo Harbor, and several State Natural Areas in Door County) to knock down populations. Other areas are managed with hand-cutting and hand-applied chemicals. Burning, mowing, and black plastic are other methods that are used to control phragmites. Gary V. contributed some insights from his work in managing this invasive. The protection of native plant populations is a consideration when selecting a management strategy. It was noted that the DNR is protecting native reed grass in Lake Poygan, where it has provided nesting sites for terns. Bud noted that the invasion starts with disturbance, for example where ditches have been scraped, and also with lower water levels. Mary mentioned some of the regulations that pertain to phragmites management – NR 109, NR 107, Chapter 30. Permits are needed for certain activities.

A group of natural resource managers from northeastern Wisconsin participated in a phragmites control and management workshop in October 2006. Kendra asked the partners about the value of a future phragmites symposium and partners agreed this would be useful. The study of phragmites management is fairly new and it would be good to have the opportunity to learn about the latest research and experiences. It was also suggested that this type of event could start discussions about hiring a coordinator, similar to the position that has been funded in Door County through an Aquatic Invasive Species grant (The Door County Invasive Species Team hired a coordinator for 3 years with funds from this grant). Bud suggested a "one-stop shop" web site for phragmites – this type of site currently doesn't exist.

Pharmwaste: description of Brown County collection event and challenges to hosting future events – Chuck Larscheid

Chuck shared information from studies showing the presence of pharmaceuticals in waterbodies and their impact on fish and wildlife. Brown County sponsored a pharmaceutical collection event. The event was paid for through their own funds (i.e., no grant funds were used). They collected 272 pounds of pharmaceuticals with an estimated value over \$230,000. Volunteer pharmacists were present, as well as 1 to 2 officers from the sheriff's department. Law enforcement must be present because of the potential to collect controlled substances. Chuck said that his staff felt like the event required a lot of coordination and they didn't collect as much waste as they'd hoped, but they felt there was educational value in having sponsored and promoted the event. They got phone calls for weeks after the event from residents wishing to properly dispose of pharmaceuticals.

Michael Finney suggested that it would be best if pharmacies could collect unwanted medicines but that would require a law change. John Kennedy said that the Water Environment Federation has established a committee that may decide to advocate for a change in the law. Ron Vanderloop said that the Wisconsin Conservation Congress's Air Waste Water Committee is also looking at this issue.

Partners discussed other options for keeping pharmaceuticals out of the water supply. Two suggestions were avoiding the distribution of excess pills and encouraging doctors to fine-tune the dose so that less is excreted.

Sharing Experiences from the Chesapeake Bay Watershed – Judy Coenen

Judy discussed the development of the Severn River Watershed Management Master Plan Study. Through her position as head of the information services department in Ann Arundel County, Maryland, Judy was able to play a role in convening the plan development group and in encouraging participants to think strategically about data

collection and application. She described the Watershed Management Tool, which is a web-based tool that allows users to retrieve information for a particular point in the watershed. The tool has four major components, including a database repository, modeling, management, and visualization. For more information, visit <http://www.aacounty.org/LandUse/OECR/Watersheds/SevernRiver/WMT.cfm> This tool provides maps that show environmental concerns so that developers/property owners can see what they need to do (obtain permits, etc.) to conduct land development activities on the property. Judy stated that this tool was not well received by the developers. Bud commented that such a project is unlikely to be completed here because of differences in the political will (to over-ride the developers' influence) and the amount of federal funding available. Judy offered support to the LF Partners' efforts as far as this support fits within the scope of her work in Brown County.

Checking in with Partners about meeting format and schedule – Kendra Axness

Kendra asked the group if meeting format and schedule (3 hour meetings, approximately every other month) were acceptable. Partners agreed that the current format is good. Bud emphasized the need for some flexibility in meeting frequency and content, especially with the Lower Fox TMDL work underway. Meetings may be needed on special topics. Michael Finney said that it works well to piggyback with STAC meetings every so often. Partners agreed that special events – tours, etc. – are appreciated and should be part of the meetings when opportunities arise.

Kendra asked if the group would like to meet in Appleton for the next meeting. Greg had kindly offered to host at his Outagamie County office. Partners thought that it would be good to meet there in spring or summer and to hear from Sue Olson with City of Appleton regarding use of SLAMM (stormwater model), or to hear from someone in planning regarding the redevelopment of downtown riverfront properties and development of parks and trails. The April meeting will remain in the greater Green Bay area.

Updates and Announcements

Lower Fox River TMDL

The phase 1 report (cost-effectiveness study) for the TMDL will be finished by the end of summer. Phase 2 (TMDL development) will be occurring this year as well.

Great Lakes Compact (aka Annex 2001)

<http://www.cglg.org/projects/water/CompactImplementation.asp>

Bud stated that public input on the Compact is being collected through February. This is a very politically-charged issue, since it affects water withdrawals. Cities such as Waukesha will be affected by the compact's provisions, and bottled water becomes an issue. Bud encouraged Partners to contact their legislators to express support for the Compact, since it is promoting a system-wide view of the Great Lakes.

Natural Resources Damage Assessment

Betsy announced that the Trustees are working on a report to document NRDA projects that have been implemented.

UW-Sea Grant Update

Vicky announced that UW-Sea Grant is sponsoring a series of seminars on climate change and the first of these is scheduled to be held at the end of the first day of the FWWA Stormwater Conference. The presentation, entitled "Climate Change Impacts on Stormwater," will be given at 4 p.m. on March 13, 2007. Sea Grant is also sponsoring a day-long workshop on harmful algal blooms at the KI Center on March 20 for health care providers, beach managers, and wastewater treatment plant representatives. Also, the Lake Michigan Forum is hosting a 1-day round-table for port managers on pollution prevention.

State Wildlife Grants will soon be available; check <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/er/swg/index.htm> in early February for additional information. Government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and individuals are eligible to apply.

Upcoming Events

Fox Wolf Watershed Alliance Stormwater Conference, March 13-14, 2007, UW-Green Bay, www.FWWA.org

Growing Wisconsin: A Workshop on How to Sustain our Working Lands, February 27, Liberty Hall, Kimberly, <http://datcp.state.wi.us/registration/landuse.jsp>

Storm Water Phase 2 WisLine Web Programs, 9-noon, <http://runoffinfo.uwex.edu/January07.htm>

March 7, 2007 Implementing a Storm Water Management Program

April 25, 2007 Public Engagement

Storm Water Post-Construction WisLine Webs – more information to be available soon; *there will be a fee for these programs*; March 27 and May 9, 9 - noon

(note that an April 11 date that was proposed has now been cancelled)

The next meeting of the Lower Fox Partners is scheduled for Thursday, April 12, 2007, from 1-4 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Kendra Axness.