

Arcadia-Pierport Watershed Plan

Minutes from the Leadership Team meeting of October 8, 2014

Location: Pleasant Valley Community Center in Arcadia, 11am to 1pm

Attendees: Sharon Goble (Co-chair), John Iacoangeli (Beckett&Raeder), Nate Winkler (Conservation Resource Alliance), Don Oswell, Chris Sullivan (GTRLC), Josh Shields (Forester, Manistee Conservation District), Mary Reed, Susan Spencer (Manistee Conservation District), John Steben, Kirsten Sheffield (Manistee County Planning Department).

Agenda: 1) Welcome and Introductions

- 2) Josh Shields, new Forester for Manistee Conservation District
- 3) CZM Grant update and survey
- 4) SAW Grant update
- 5) Watershed plan development, next steps
- 6) Fund-raising
- 7) Posters

Discussion:

- 1) Welcome and introductions
- 2) Josh Shield, new Forester for the Manistee Conservation District provided a brief overview of his background, goals and responsibilities in his new position. He previously worked for 4 years in Indiana, focusing on invasive species, some of which are also found in Michigan including multi-flora rose, autumn olive and honeysuckle (there are 3 species of honeysuckle that are of concern with *Lonicera amur* being a particularly invasive species). Josh's primary responsibilities focus on outreach and education to landowners, watershed groups and the community at large. His emphasis is ethical forestry and his goal is putting education on the ground.
- 3) A minor grant change is being sought to the Coastal Zone Management grant. The grant tasks originally included two community visioning sessions, however the Lakes to Land Regional Initiative has already conducted at least 2 visioning sessions with all communities participating in the Initiative, and it was felt that watershed visioning sessions would be perceived as redundant by the communities in the watershed and result in low turnout for the time and money invested. Fortunately, as part of our communication and education strategy, a newsletter was sent out to all watershed property owners this summer, to notify everyone of our watershed planning efforts, and to encourage participation in a survey prepared by Beckett&Raeder. Therefore, it made better fiscal sense to collect community input through the survey, and then provide a public forum to present the draft watershed plan in person to the community and answer questions, in lieu of the 2 community visioning sessions. However, survey participation has plateaued, so Leadership Team members were asked encourage family and friends to take the survey online at the Lakes to Land website: www.lakestoland.org/arcadia-pierportwatershed. The survey button is located in the right-hand column. John Steben suggested that it might be helpful to have hard copies of

the survey available, to put in the Arcadia Post Office and other locations such as PVCC and the Arcadia Branch Library. John Iacoangeli suggested putting another notice about the watershed plan in with the winter tax bills. Sharon updated the in-kind match to the CZM grant after our Grant manager at DEQ suggested that we use professional rates. This boosted our in-kind match considerably, however significant fund-raising is still needed to meet the \$30,000 match required by the grant.

- 4) In an unexpected and unfortunate turn of events, our SAW grant application has been denied for funding by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. Tim Ervin and Brad Hopwood recently met with DEQ staff in Lansing to persuade them to reconsider their decision, however their efforts were unsuccessful. This means that the watershed plan document will need to be scaled back since there is not enough money to collect the quantitative data needed to obtain federal certification of our watershed plan.
- 5) The next steps for our watershed plan will involve scaling it back to within budget. Sharon and John will work closely with Greg Goudy, MDEQ Cadillac District Office to try to prepare a plan that will be approvable by the State. This will be a very challenging task since the estimated cost of a state approved watershed plan was estimated to be higher than the CZM grant amount. As a result, more fund-raising is urgently needed. John explained the need to identify potential threats and issues and brought a map for Leadership Team members to identify areas of impairment or concern. There is some data gathered by LRBOI prior to and after the Arcadia Marsh restoration project, and Michigan DNR has conducted fisheries studies of Arcadia Lake and Bowens Creek and its tributaries, however the water quality parameters measured were limited. Nate Winkler reported that based on his experience working in watersheds in Northern Michigan, including this watershed, sediment is a primary pollutant in rivers and streams and enters into Bowens Creek tributaries, resulting in raising the bed of the creek channel as it meanders through the Arcadia marsh. In particular, sediment at road crossings and where culverts were replaced beneath roads, and roadside ditches all potentially carry sediment into the tributaries. A number of other potential impacts to water quality were discussed including critical slopes, land use practices, nutrient enrichment and invasive species. Chris informed the Leadership Team that the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians recently submitted their full proposal for a grant under the RCPP, a program recently funded by the Farm Bill. The project is called the Lake Michigan Fruit Belt Conservation Partnership and plans to work with a number of partners to address water quality concerns for Michigan fruit and vegetable growers and enhance fish and wildlife habitat. Chris suggested some of the project work might help inform our watershed plan (although work in this watershed is not specifically addressed), however funding is not anticipated to begin until 2015. The Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy is a partner to the RCPP grant and hopes to use the money to purchase farm and agricultural easements. The timing of this grant work is not a good match for our watershed plan as the due date for the watershed plan under our CZM grant is March 31, 2015. Chris is awaiting notification of the RCPP grant kickoff meeting and will forward the information to John and Sharon. Susan suggested hiring someone to conduct more water quality testing, however there may not be enough funding to pursue this. Mary suggested that the Michigan Lakes and Streams organization holds classes to train volunteers to collect water quality samples for testing and is familiar with this program as it has been used in the Portage Lake Forever watershed plan implementation. Don reported that as far as desired uses of the watershed, many use it for unique bird watching opportunities, and the Manistee Audubon Society has developed a bird sighting list for Arcadia Marsh. Don also commented that the Marsh provides important filtering effects

before water reaches Lake Michigan. John Steben suggested that sources of pollutants to the watershed may include mercury, solvents, paint and lead from the former furniture manufacturing site along Arcadia Lake.

- 6) There was some discussion on fund-raising, and Leadership Team members were asked to bring ideas, suggestions and strategies to the next meeting, on November 12, 2014. The meeting will be held as usual at the Pleasant Valley Community Center in Arcadia, from 11am to 1pm.
- 7) Extra posters of the newsletter were handed out to Leadership Team members to post throughout the watershed and county to inform the public and encourage survey participation.
- 8) The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:20pm