

Indian/ Howard's Creek LWP Stakeholder Meeting
Sept. 16, 2008 – Lincoln Senior Center

Attendees

Mike Herrmann – NC EEP (Raleigh)
Hal Bryson – NC EEP (Asheville)
Paul Wiesner – NC EEP (Asheville)
Tom Yocum - NCDENR-DWQ (Winston-Salem)
Jay Frick-NCDENR - Public Water Supply Section - Source Water Protection (Raleigh)
Patty Hall - City of Cherryville
Rick McSwain - Lincoln Co. SWCD
Roxanne Miller - Catawba Lands Conservancy
Deano Parker - Gaston Co. Natural Resources
Debbie Maner – NC Rural Water Association
Robert Carson – Lincoln County
Steve Gurley – Lincoln Planning Department
Dan McClure – Carolina Land & Lakes RC&D

1:00: Welcome and Introductions

1:10 – 1:40: Mike Herrmann presented the *Indian-Howard's Creek Local Watershed Plan (LWP) Phase I findings and recommendations.*

Mike presented preliminary results of his Phase I work. Although the Indian Creek is listed as the impaired stream in the LWP, Phase I functional indicators being examined show more stressors in Howard's Creek than Indian. Howard's Creek has good bug (benthic macroinvertebrate) communities and is not impaired. Rick McSwain asked if there were any hypotheses for causes of Indian Creek's impairment. Jay Frick inquired if agricultural activities are implicated in water quality impacts to the downstream section of Indian Creek. Tom Yocum responded that water quality monitoring has shown that water quality is worse below the Cherryville WWTP. The Cherryville WWTP **may** be the main source of water quality impacts; however, he noted that a dairy farm operation, directly upstream of the WWTP, may also be impacting water quality.

Rick McSwain suggested the possibility that some of the water quality impacts may have been coming from two NCDOT road projects that were taking place in the watershed area at the time of the testing, but is not sure.

Hal Bryson emphasized that the Phase I results will help us select priority subwatersheds for the various project types that will be identified and ranked by the end of the LWP process, and that subwatersheds (approximately 3 to 5 sq. miles in area) represent the scale at which we want to be able to measure (through monitoring) long-term benefits to water quality from the implemented projects.

Rick McSwain requested an electric copy of the PowerPoint presentation. Mike Herrmann indicated that **presentations will be posted to the project website after the meeting (Available on-line at: http://www.nceep.net/services/lwps/Indian_Howards_Creek/INDIAN_HOWARD_CREEKS.html)**

1:40 to 2:00 : Jay Frick presented- *Linking EEP's Watershed Planning effort to Source Water Protection Planning.*

Jay outlined the Source Water Protection Program and his interest in joining their planning process with the current EEP process. He indicated that he was looking for 2 to 4 volunteers to help elaborate more on the source drinking water issue for the planning area. The end product will be a Source Water Protection (SWP) plan for the Cherryville drinking water supply. This would qualify Cherryville for incentives to help pay for SWP initiatives which would ultimately assist in EEP's efforts.

This subgroup would likely meet 30 minutes prior to or after the EEP LWP stakeholder meetings and will: define focus areas and action items; develop a contingency plan; create an implementation schedule; and submit the plan for approval. Jay additionally indicated that much like EEP, it would be a local and voluntary planning effort in conjunction with EEP's efforts in the watershed.

Hal Bryson noted that this seemed to dovetail well with EEP's LWP initiative, and asked volunteers to see Jay at the break and/or at the end of the meeting.

2:00 – 2:15: Break

2:15 – 3:05: Hal Bryson presented- *Watershed Discussion Issues*

Hal reviewed the discussion of watershed issues from the previous meeting and his summary of stakeholder input. Clarification was requested of the number of WWTPs in the planning area and their setting (rural or urban). Tom Yocum indicated that there are two WWTPs in the planning area: the Cherryville WWTP and a smaller WWTP at a school. Both are in a rural setting.

Hal Bryson asked the stakeholders if the presentation missed any major watershed stressors that were listed in the presentation. The stakeholders did not mention any additional stressors.

Jay Frick indicated that an additional funding source for non-EEP watershed projects could be the Community Conservation Assistance Program (CCAP), administered through the county Soil & Water Conservation Districts.

Dean Parker asked about timelines and when he would be able to request funding (319, CWMTF, etc.) and reference this EEP LWP. Hal indicated that local stakeholders could begin referencing this LWP effort in any of their grant applications at any time... but that the *final* Plan documents wouldn't be available until about 12 months from now (Sept. 2009). Mike, Hal and Paul also clarified that the overall timeline for EEP staff to approach landowners and get LWP-identified projects in the ground was generally over a one- to two-year period beginning towards the end of the LWP process. It should be emphasized that the actual quantity and timing of EEP projects depends primarily on the mitigation needs being reported (and periodically updated) by the NC DOT. So the precise timing & strategy for implementation of EEP-funded stream and wetlands projects has to be flexible and adaptive, depending on the ever-changing 'mitigation landscape' (including the results of full delivery efforts within adjacent 8-digit CUs).

Hal Bryson asked the stakeholders if they were aware of any agricultural districts in the planning area. Rick McSwain indicated that there was a voluntary and an enhanced agricultural district. He indicated that a landowner could get out of the voluntary agricultural district at anytime and there was a 10-year minimum for the enhanced agricultural district. There is a GIS available layer showing these districts.

Hal Bryson stressed to the stakeholders that some of the long-term recommendations would require actions from the stakeholders *after* the formal LWP process ended next fall. He indicated that a core group of local stakeholders may want to form a long-range watershed advisory group (or 'watershed action team') for the future, whose primary mission would be to coordinate efforts to seek funding for various LWP-recommended projects or initiatives that *would not be fundable by EEP* (i.e., projects in the LWP area that EEP could not pursue for mitigation credit).

Rick McSwain asked what percent EEP pays for Best Management Practices (BMPs) on stream and wetland restoration sites. Paul Wiesner indicated that EEP pays 100% for fencing, watering structures, and water supply (well or municipal hookup) on EEP-funded stream and wetland restoration sites. He additionally indicated that there may be potential for additional types of BMPs on EEP project sites, depending on the amount of funding available and what BMPs are needed.

ACTION ITEM: Hal presented a '**homework assignment**' to the stakeholders, requesting that they review the possible LWP goals he presented (rural; urban; watershed-wide) and make any edits or additions to such goals as they see fit. **The proposed LWP goals are:**

Urban

U1 – Use this LWP process to identify the best subwatersheds and project sites for stormwater BMPs.

U2 – Adopt county and/or municipal stormwater ordinance(s), using the NC DWQ USMP model.

U3 – Seek funding for the construction & maintenance of strategically located stormwater BMPs through 319, CWMTF, CCAP, etc.

Rural

R1 – Work with rural landowners to fund & implement agricultural BMPs within priority subwatersheds. [Ideally, these would be implemented within the framework of custom-tailored farm management plans. Possible funding sources include EEP and Ag Cost Share.]

R2 – Work with local/regional Land Trust(s) to develop a farmland preservation strategy.

Watershed-wide

W1- Identify priority subwatersheds for various project types, and rank candidate sites/parcels within these. [Project categories include: ag BMPs, stormwater BMPs/retrofits, stream & buffer restoration, wetlands enhancement and habitat preservation.]

W2 – Evaluate the effectiveness of current local ordinances/rules related to watershed protection.

A. Establish new local ordinances as needed, e.g. buffer protection, tree protection, sediment/erosion control, stormwater management & LID, source water protection.

B. Provide for more effective enforcement of existing rules/ordinances.

W3 – Seek funding (e.g., 319) to establish a Local Watershed Coordinator position.

[Position could be established and administered through a county Soil & Water Conservation District.]

W4 – Develop & implement a collaborative Watershed Education Program. [Consider multiple 'target audiences', e.g., farmers, residential landowners, schools, local government officials, business & industry, the general public.]

W5 – Develop & implement a Source Water Protection Program for WSW areas and community water supply wells.

Please provide any edits, comments or additions to the proposed LWP goals by email to Hal by no later than October 10th. His email is hal.bryson@ncmail.net.

The stakeholders used a poster-size map of the LWP study area to identify the subwatersheds most likely to need stormwater BMPs and agricultural BMPs. [Yellow sticky notes represent potential *agricultural* BMP subwatersheds and the green sticky notes represent potential *stormwater* BMP subwatersheds.] The results of this exercise indicate that the primary subwatersheds suitable for **agricultural BMPs** are H-3, H-6 and H-8 in the Howards Creek watershed; and I-9, I-10, I-12, I-14 and I-16 in the Indian Creek watershed. The Beam Dairy Farm (*in subwatershed I-10?*) was highlighted as a good candidate site (with an 'open-minded' farmer) for ag BMP evaluation and modeling; this farm is directly upstream from the Cherryville drinking water intake. The subwatersheds noted as priorities for **stormwater BMPs** include: I-7 and (in the Cherryville area) I-12 and I-14.

3:05 – 3:20: Mike Hermann addressed the group on the topic of *outreach and public education on the LWP project.*

The stakeholders indicated that press releases and knocking on doors may be the best method for public outreach. The stakeholders additionally referenced Olin Erickson with the *Lincoln Times News*.

It was additionally noted that both Lincoln County and Gaston County have websites where press releases can be submitted. In addition, Gaston County has a public information channel that could be utilized.

ACTION ITEM: Mike will follow up on this by drafting a press release and/or talking with Mr. Erickson about a possible article in the local paper.

3:20-3:25: Updates from NC DWQ – WAT and EEP Project Management

Tom Yocum gave a brief update on NCDWQ – Watershed Assessment Team (WAT) activities. He indicated that DWQ has completed a wetland assessment on 68 sites. Of the 68 sites, approximately ½ were determined *not* to be jurisdictional wetlands. DWQ is working on a report that will include their wetland functional assessment findings.

DWQ completed benthic sampling at 12 locations in June. The benthic sampling showed that everything looked okay upstream of the Cherryville WWTP and the dairy farm on Indian Creek. Benthic macroinvertebrate indicators also looked okay on Howard’s Creek .

DWQ has completed water sampling two times at 19 locations for the following parameters: fecal coliform; turbidity; suspended solids; metals; and nutrients. The DWQ sampling results, including maps of the monitoring site locations, will be posted to the LWP project website when they become available.

During the remaining monitoring period, 4 locations will be sampled on a monthly basis and 4 additional sites will be sampled on a quarterly basis. Two sites (Indian Creek @ Laboratory Road and Howard’s Creek @ SR 1200) will be sampled during storm flow.

Paul Wiesner gave a brief update on EEP implementation activities. He indicated that there are no current projects in the planning area. In Catawba 02, EEP is currently studying wetlands from two former full delivery projects. Full delivery proposals were submitted to EEP for Catawba 03 and Catawba 01. These submittals are currently undergoing technical review. EEP will award the projects in the next 1-2 months.

3:30: Meeting adjourned.

THE NEXT MEETING WILL LIKELY BE HELD IN JANUARY 2009, AT THE SAME LOCATION. A meeting notice and proposed agenda will be sent out at least a few weeks in advance. In the meantime, please feel free to contact Mike, Hal or Paul with any questions or recommendations you may have regarding the LWP process and products.

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