

Big Pine Creek Watershed Management Plan Steering Committee Meeting Summary
December 3rd, 2014 4 pm Benton County Government Annex Building

Attendees: Sharon Watson, Larry Killmer, Sara Peel, Mani Phengrasmy, Denny Dispennett, Sarah Wolf, Bob Sondgeroth, Jon Charlesworth, Mike Murr, Leanne Whitesell, Kent Wamsley

Next Steering Committee Meeting will be held on January 28th, 2015 from 4-6 p.m. at the Benton Co. Government Annex Bldg. 410 S. Adeway in Fowler, IN 47944.

Recap and Discussion of our November 24th Bus Tour:

The weather was horrible with rain, sleet and high winds but we still managed to have 28 people join us on the bus with numerous others following in vehicles and joining us for some of the stops. Although the cover crop fields and soil pits were a muddy mess, the bright side is that the two-stage ditch stop was actually really instructive as we could see the ditch flowing at near capacity and functioning as it is intended. The lunch catered by Crabby Mike's and sponsored by Ceres Solutions of Templeton was tremendous. After lunch we had brief presentations from Paul Pence (the Pence Group) and Evan Click (Performance Farm Solutions). We then had presentations from Ceres Solutions personnel. Rob McFatridge discussed their seed operation, Tom Stein presented on soil fertility and variable rate technology and we finished up with an opportunity to check out some of the latest application equipment being used by Ceres. We received some good feedback from attendees. Gwen Erwood especially liked the information packet that was handed out. Robert Sondgeroth reported that although he was not able to attend, he had heard from attendees that it was well done and informative.

Leanne Whitesell, NPS Grant Project Outreach Coordinator with IDEM attended our meeting and we discussed our watershed management plan and our 319 grant application. The highlights of her comments are presented below.

Watershed Management Plan (WMP):

- Our WMP is decent but does not yet fully satisfy the IDEM checklist.
- We need a more clear explanation of how we determined our critical areas.
- EPA has read the WMP, they have comments but have not sent them to Leanne.
- A full compilation of IDEM and EPA comments will be sent to Angela and Jon.
- We can address all WMP comments at once or one section at a time. Angela anticipates beginning to correct and edit to address IDEM's comments in early January.

319 Grant Application:

IDEM received 30 total applications. 11 of those applications were recommended to EPA for funding. Our group's application was not one of those funded.

- Our group did not seem quite ready to receive funding. One of our apparent weaknesses is that we have not demonstrated that we have enough community support from key groups.
- The amount of money we asked for was high (at least for a newly formed group).
- Future steps should include developing more community support and integrating our successes into next year's application. Support letters from farmers and landowners stating that they are ready to implement practices will go a long way towards making our next application a success.
- Leanne encouraged us to continue this work and to stay in contact with her.

We then discussed what we can do to build community support for our efforts. It was an easy consensus to reach that in order to build support we must get our message out and make certain that the community knows that we exist and what we plan to accomplish.

- We will need to publicize our successes. Not only the successes of our watershed group, but also the successes of the NRCS and SWCDs within the watershed. To this end we will put together a press release to be printed in the local papers in January. Chad is working on getting numbers together to show how much sediment and nutrient loading was prevented by our cover crop cost share efforts this fall. He will also work on getting our press release published by Indiana Prairie Farmer.
- Jon is going to contact the Benton Review and discuss the possibility of submitting regular news articles to highlight our watershed project. We will also work on getting these articles published in the local White and Warren County newspapers.
- Denny mentioned that the Ceres website is very popular with their customers. Our plan for a Big Pine Creek watershed website is to initially build it as a part of the Benton County SWCD website and then to post a link to the BPC site on White County's website as well as the Warren Co. SWCD facebook page.
- Chad, Kent and Jon will plan to get on the SWCD meeting agendas for each of the 4 counties within the watershed to visit with the boards, answer questions and attempt to build more support for our project.

Best Management Practices (BMP) Fact Sheets:

Kent assembled packets that were handed out to attendees at our bus tour. The packet contained fact sheets for most of the BMPs that we seek to encourage. The fact sheets are a one to two page highlight and summary of each practice. All of these fact sheets will need to be updated over time but some of them are in more urgent need of edits and improvement than others. I'm not going to mention anyone by name but someone's work was incomplete.

Second Round of Cost-Share Funding:

In August we set a January 1st deadline as the date when applications for second round cost share funding need to be submitted. We decided to keep this deadline at January 1st. (These are minutes from our meeting and I am only reporting the proceedings of that meeting, but it has subsequently become obvious that we will need to be flexible with this date. The current plan is to have applications ready to review at our January 28th meeting.)

- We still have in excess of \$50,000 to spend on cost-sharing for various practices that will improve the quality of our surface waters. This money needs to be spent by the end of May, 2015.
- We have several applications on hand so far and numerous others that intend to apply. We should easily be able to spend the money, but should consider seeking additional applications so that we can fund the best of the best.

Other Funding Sources:

Although we did not receive funding through the 319 Grant program, there are other possible funding sources. Our group is planning to apply for funding through IDNR's Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) program. The deadline for this application is January 31st, 2015.

Meeting was adjourned: