

Big Pine Creek Watershed Management Plan Steering Committee Meeting Summary
January 28th, 2015 4 pm Benton County Government Annex Building

Attendees: Jason Carlile, Angela Sturdevant, Sara Peel, Mani Phengrasmy, Ben Lambeck, Jon Charlesworth, Kent Wamsley, Macy Fawns, Deb Lane, Chad Watts, Denny Dispennett, Mike Murr, Bob Brutus.

Next Steering Committee Meeting will be held on February 26th, 2015 from 4-6 p.m. at the Benton Co. Govt. Annex Building in Fowler, IN.

Cost Share on Conservation Practices (Round 2):

We have \$50,583.42 remaining to spend on conservation cost share by May 1st, 2015. We have 15 applications to consider for this funding. We received applications for a wide array of practices including grassed waterway reconstructions, forest restorations, stream bank stabilization projects, tree plantings, a 2-stage ditch construction, invasive species removals, and a drainage water management project. At this point we have ranked these applications to determine which are the most deserving of funding and now need to follow up with the top ranked applicants to gather additional information. All applicants will be notified by mid-February as to whether or not they will be offered funding. Applications that do not receive funding will be held over and considered for later funding periods. In addition to these holdovers, we have already received three new applications for the next round of funding.

IDNR Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) grant applications:

These applications are due on 1/31/2015. We have put together separate applications for White, Warren and Benton Counties (and they were successfully submitted on 1/30/15). In total, we are seeking \$94,000 to be used primarily for cost-sharing on conservation practices. We should know by late March/early April if our applications are being seriously considered as they will ask us to make revisions. IDNR/LARE will make final decisions by August 1st as to which groups will be funded.

Watershed Management Plan:

Angela has compiled a list of edits requested by IDEM and EPA and the group has been working to address these concerns. The tentative deadline for making the needed edits has been set as the end of February. Angela and Sara have put considerable time and effort into this so far and Kent and Chad have also contributed heavily. So far, I (Jon) have attempted to fly under the radar and have avoided having my name assigned to many of the edits. In a recent conference call, in a fit of insanity, I volunteered to work on more of the edits.

Publicity and Getting out the message:

The success of this watershed project will be largely contingent on our ability to get the message out to the public about what we are doing and why we are doing it. With this in mind, we set aside a block of time at our meeting to discuss how to accomplish this. Some of the ideas that came from this discussion:

- Submit regular press releases to the local newspapers, including the Lafayette Journal & Courier and Indiana Prairie Farmer. Jon is going to begin submitting regular articles to the Benton Review. The likely schedule of these submissions will be once every two months. As these articles are completed, we will attempt to have them published in the Warren and White county papers (the Monon News & Review, The Herald Journal) as well.
- Bob Brutus suggested that we work together with the local co-ops and certified crop advisors to encourage the adoption of some of the targeted best management practices. Macy agreed and

feels we can partner with the Cooperative Extension Service to offer training sessions where PARP credits will be available.

- A large number of the landowners in the watershed are absentee landlords and many of these landlords are female. We need to figure out ways to reach these people with our message.
- The Friends of Big Pine Creek will be holding a creek clean up day towards the end of April. Mike Murr suggested we work to publicize this effort.
- Field days are an important means of getting out the message. Chad talked about how the Indian Creek group has found that spring field days need to be held in late March to very early April. If you try to go earlier, the chances of getting a very cold day are greater. If you go later, farmers may be in the field planting or at least working to get ready to go the field. Denny mentioned the possibility of doing a spring field day including a soil pit at a field that was planted late to cereal rye. This would be an opportunity to show that even though the cover crop did not look like much in the fall, it survived the winter and is thriving in the spring. We may be able to do this in conjunction with the Jasper/Newton county soil dig in the spring. Sara mentioned that there is a denitrifying bioreactor being constructed in southern Tippecanoe county this spring and that may fit in with a field day.
- Kent, Chad and Jon have been making the rounds and attending SWCD board meetings for each of the counties in the watershed to talk about our watershed project and answer questions. They attended the January meeting in Warren County and the February meetings in White, Benton and Tippecanoe counties.
- The Benton County SWCD has agreed to pay for one year's subscription with square space so that we can develop a website and have it hosted for the next 12 months. The initial plan is for the Big Pine Creek watershed group's website to be a part of the Benton SWCD site. Deb Lane suggested that we set up a facebook page for the BPC group.
- Chad Watts talked about discussions he has had with Jim Moseley and AGree. They are a group that is trying to figure out how to connect great national plans with the local boots on the ground. Jim Moseley attended our bus tour in November and apparently he is still interested in working with us, so that's good news.
- Deb Lane will update the BPC pamphlet to include the NRCS disclaimer.
- Jon will talk for 5-10 minutes at the Benton County SWCD annual meeting about the Big Pine Creek watershed project.
- The folks at Ceres Solutions in Templeton allowed us to have our table top display set up in their lobby for several weeks after our bus tour. We will have that same display set up at the Benton County health fair in April, as well as at the various county fairs this summer.

Meeting Adjourned