



Ferson-Otter Creek Watershed Coalition
Meeting Notes
Tuesday, October 23, 2012

Hosted by the Village of South Elgin
10 N. Water Street
South Elgin, IL 60177

1. Attendance
 - Nancy Cox -Citizen
 - Jayne Holley -Lake Campton Property Owners Association
 - Fred Houdek -Sierra Club
 - Julie Long -Wild Rose Homeowner
 - Dan Lobbes -The Conservation Foundation (TCF)
 - Tim Loftus -Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP)
 - Marc McLaughlin -Village of South Elgin
 - Marc Mylott -City of Elgin
 - Tara Neff -The Conservation Foundation (TCF)
 - Scott Randall -Wills Burke Kelsey
 - Jim Reuter -Village of South Elgin
 - Jack Shouba -Campton Township and Deer Run East HOA

Tara Neff, The Conservation Foundation, thanked the Village of South Elgin for hosting the meeting and providing snacks and refreshments.

2. Updates
 - a. Staff and Organizational changes at CMAP and TCF

Tim Loftus provided an update on the staff and funding changes at CMAP. Amy Talbot, our former Ferson-Otter Creek watershed coordinator from CMAP, accepted a position at the Regional Water Authority in California. Hala Ahmed, the former watershed coordinator for the Blackberry Creek Watershed, accepted a planning position in Abu Dhabi. The Environment and Natural Resources Group at CMAP has been disbanded due to loss of funding related to transportation-based contracts.

Current Local Technical Assistance (LTA) contracts through CMAP, which currently can be focused on water, are funded through a separate HUD grant which expires January 2014. Future LTA grants will need to be centered on comprehensive planning issues.

Dan Lobbes provided information on the strategic direction TCF is implementing. The current staffing structure at TCF revolves around specialized expertise (land, water, sustainability, education, outreach). The new structure will include county directors, who

will manage and serve as the point person for all activities within one of our four core counties: Kane, Kendall, DuPage and Will. TCF can continue to work outside the four core counties, but will no longer solicit these engagements. John Church recently completed an open space mapping project in Kendall County and transitioned to the director role this fall. Dan Lobbes will transition to the director role for Kane County this July. TCF is pursuing this change to make more impact locally, shifting from planning to implementation.

b. Plan Approval

- i. Received from the City of Elgin, Village of South Elgin and Kane County
- ii. Are others interested? (St. Charles, Lily Lake, Campton Hills, Campton Township)

A template for a resolution of support is available to organizations that are interested in formally supporting the Watershed Plan. Staff may also be available to help make presentations to your elected officials or board of directors. This process can help elevate the profile of the plan and reiterate the grant opportunities that become available by having an IEPA approved watershed plan.

Jayne Holley and Jack Shouba will work with Campton Hills and Campton Township to investigate plan adoption and other opportunities for education and outreach efforts. Nancy Cox will approach the St. Charles Park District Board of Directors with help from Dan Lobbes.

c. Education and Outreach Recommendations

- i. Conservation@Home for municipal and private landowners

TCF received funding to recognize property owners in the Fox River basin that incorporate native plants, water conservation efforts and/or wildlife habitat restoration. Landowners can receive technical assistance by way of site visits for planning and presentations about the program's objectives. Jim Kleinwachter has already certified a number of properties in the Ferson-Otter Creek watershed: South Elgin's rain gardens, The Windings HOA, Deer Run East HOA, City of Batavia, St. Charles Park District, City of Geneva, and is working with private landowners and a business (Conservation@Work). If you are interested in having a property certified, Jim can be reached at Jkleinwachter@theconservationfoundation.org or 630-553-0687 X302.

- ii. Kane Riverboat Grant Application

Dan Lobbes presented information on an opportunity to implement some education and outreach efforts outlined in the Ferson-Otter Creek Watershed Plan, Kane County's 2040 Plan, and NPDES reporting. He is looking for at least 5 municipal partners in Kane County that would like to improve local stormwater management by changing the way homeowners associations, residential and commercial property owners think about and treat rain water on their properties.

This would be accomplished by providing presentations and staffing exhibit opportunities, site visits to provide recommendations to property owners, and participating in a “no hassle” rain barrel sale project. There would be no cost to participate in the program, as TCF staff and activities would be the local match. If you are interested in participating, contact Dan Lobbes at dlobbes@theconservationfoundation.org or 630-428-4500 X25.

- iii. Elgin is considering a pilot program for Mighty Acorns®
The City of Elgin approved the pilot program! The City of Elgin’s Sustainability Plan includes educational goals. The **Mighty Acorns®** program introduces 4th through 6th graders to nature and conservation stewardship through activities based on education, restoration, and exploration. This is quite a commitment on the City’s part and we look forward to hearing an update.
- iv. The Morton Arboretum program on Emerald Ash Borer (EAB)
Andi Dierich, Illinois Forest Pest Outreach Coordinator at The Morton Arboretum, is available to provide a free presentation to groups on the EAB. The program covers the impacts of EAB, the removal and/or treatment options landowners should consider. The presentation was also suggested in the context of the decision to replant trees and the impact on our watershed. A brochure was distributed at the meeting. If your group is interested, please contact Andi at adierich@mortonarb.org.

The group had some lively discussion about local efforts to manage EAB and the summer drought’s impact. Communities deciding which trees will be planted to replace those lost to EAB (or just which trees to plant) may want to contact The Morton Arboretum directly and/or consult a list of native trees that quantifies the number of butterfly/moth species it supports (Dr. Doug Tallamy). Dr. Tallamy is the author of “Bringing Nature Home,” and will be giving a lecture on Saturday, October 20th in Bolingbrook. He makes the case for incorporating native plants in your property and the reasons not to plant non-native species. A link to the event can be found on The Conservation Foundation’s website at www.theconservationfoundation.org.

d. Community Updates

- i. Elgin received an Illinois Green Infrastructure Grant for bioswales
The project will install 24-38 bioswales at three or more modular bio-retention basins and one-to-two permeable paver alleyways in Elgin’s SWAN neighborhood. The project focuses on sections of the neighborhood that will not see actual combined sewer pipe separation for several years.
- ii. CMAP awarded an LTA grant to the City of Elgin. Marc Mylott submitted an application on behalf of Elgin for an ordinance review of land development regulations with regard to the watershed plan recommendations. All watershed

municipalities supported this application. Technical Assistance will start in January 2013 and is available through December 2013.

iii. South Elgin's 319 grant application

South Elgin submitted their 319 grant application at the end of July. Their first attempt was made 2 years ago. With the benefit of having a watershed plan and Village's commitment of money to the creek, they feel they have a really good chance. They expect to know the outcome of their grant application in January or February. The application includes \$500K for Otter Creek, which includes projects 2-13 in short term list of projects in the Ferson-Otter Creek Watershed Plan. The grant would be for restoration, stabilization, and vegetation. South Elgin approved \$35K for stream maintenance on Otter Creek for brush removal/peak flow/etc. this fall/winter.

iv. CMAP awarded LTA to the Village of South Elgin

South Elgin was awarded LTA to develop a bike/pedestrian mobility plan, which emerged from their comprehensive plan recommendations.

Jayne Holley submitted a 319 grant application for Lake Campton Property Owners Association to implement Pizzo and Associates' plan for Lake Campton buffers. The project area includes 30 property owners and 2 access parks. They are looking at which plants are there and how to enhance the quality of buffers, including their depth, and benefits to stormwater runoff. Jayne received a letter from IEPA and wondered if others had, too? The letter indicated that IEPA received 32-36 applications and that recipients should hear from them by April.

The value of education is big. Jodie at Kane County met with The Windings and Lake Campton Property Owners Association. As a homeowner, how do you know what resources are available out there?

Campton Township - Jack Shouba stated that they are working on a small open space project and Rob Linke received a small grant for a little tributary to Ferson Creek on Tucker Run to clear out debris (concrete, erosion). In order to get equipment to creek they will have to cut down native and nonnative trees. The Eagle Scouts will clear large areas as a project.

Julie Long – They have a new president at their association and would like to have Jim Kleinwachter out. There is no community land – all creek-side property is private land.

Nancy Cox – They have three detention ponds with white rock around them. The nitrogen turns it scummy, then they pour in chemicals to deal with the algae. She would like to get plants instead of white rock. They have a new board, however, their president does not want buckthorn to be cut down – it's green.

Jack Shouba is updating his presentation on “the good, the bad, and the ugly” (on wetland, woodland, and prairie areas) for a conference in Chicago in February. A picture is worth a thousand words!

Jim Reuter – Education and outreach through the press for their project, but they will wait a few weeks for the leaves to fall before conducting field recon.

Free Technical Workshop on Gross Solids is Wednesday, November 7 from 8:30-12:30 PM at DePaul University’s Naperville Campus in the auditorium. A flyer was provided.

March 6, 2012: *Beyond the Basics* stormwater conference in Woodridge– what works and doesn’t work how to and what to do after. Investigating stormwater utilities is becoming a hot topic. Tim Loftus stated that it is important to state that it is a fee, not a tax.

Tim Loftus stated that he attended an urban water sustainability leadership conference, hosted by the U.S. Water Alliance, earlier this month in Cincinnati. The conference spotlighted several cities across the country that are addressing stormwater and combined sewer issues, wastewater disposal practices, and water supply enhancement projects. Tim stated that using green infrastructure to complement the traditional gray infrastructure generates many co-benefits such as neighborhood beautification, local jobs creation, transportation-related improvements (e.g. traffic calming devices) in addition to water quality protection and community development. Unlike gray infrastructure that is traditionally buried and out-of-sight, green infrastructure is highly visible and instructive for residents to connect their water and sewer bills, including rate increases, to the infrastructure and services necessary to manage stormwater and water quality in the 21st century. Closer to home, Elgin just voted to study water/sewer rates and the feasibility of developing and implementing a stormwater utility / fee program.

As part of their 40th Anniversary celebrations, The Conservation Foundation is recognizing their “Fab 40” partners. The event will be held at The Abbington in Glen Ellyn on Thursday, November 8 from 5:30-8:15. Tickets are \$50 each.

e. Monitoring

- i. IEPA and IDNR are conducting surveys in the Fox River Basin this year, including two sites in the Ferson-Otter Creek Watershed.
- ii. What other monitoring opportunities are we able to pursue?

Rob Linke provided a map with some recommended sampling points. He has had discussion with the City of Elgin and we could potentially have a minimum of 3 (maximum of 7) samples run each month. We would need a group of dedicated volunteers and would like to coordinate the drop off with the Tyler

Creek samples. Samples must be collected on the Monday before the third Tuesday and delivered to the City of Elgin's Water Department within 6 hours. Stakeholders viewed the map with sampling locations and there were some questions. Holly Hudson, CMAP, is available to help support development of a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP), which is necessary for a monitoring program's data collection to be usable by Illinois EPA. South Elgin needs to discuss the costs for hiring a consultant to collect and deliver samples. A separate meeting will be scheduled to look at volunteer participation, training, delivery and analysis.

f. Organization

- i. Local partners Elgin and South Elgin have agreed to continue hosting bi-annual meetings. Are others interested in providing direction to the group?
Our next meeting date is Tuesday, April 23 from 2:00-4:00PM and the City of Elgin will coordinate.
- ii. How to incorporate Fox River Ecosystem Partnership and/or Fox River Study Group (FRSG) into overall watershed approach?
The FRSG's annual meeting is Thursday, October 25 at the Batavia City Hall.
- iii. Listserv: How and when to use it.
We are trying out "Big Tent" as a method to keep in touch between meetings. Please be sure to check your "junk" or "spam" folders for the invitation to join the Ferson-Otter Creek Watershed Coalition on Big Tent. Jack Shouba will send Tara information on i-neighborhoods.

3. Meeting adjournment