

Silver Creek / Sleepy Hollow Creek Watershed Action Planning

Meeting Notes

Tuesday, July 20, 2011 ♦ 1:30 – 3:30 PM

Crystal Lake Park District, 1 East Crystal Lake Avenue, Crystal Lake, IL

1. Welcome & Introductions

Ann Viger, Park Planner with Crystal Lake Park District, welcomed attendees. The attendance list can be downloaded at <http://foxriverecosystem.org/silver-sleepy.htm> .

2. Green Infrastructure Planning Update

Dawn Thompson and Nancy Schietzelt shared results from the green infrastructure committee meeting held before the regular planning meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to review and refine the proposed SC/SHC green infrastructure network map. A map and description of areas included in the network is posted at <http://foxriverecosystem.org/silver-sleepy.htm> under the plan documents section. Revisions to the network include integration of currently proposed county green infrastructure planning considerations as previously requested by participants. Attendees provided feedback on the draft network map and discuss outstanding considerations. Currently, some smaller oak stands are identified on the map but are not connected to the green infrastructure network. Discussion included determining if these areas should be integrated into the network or removed. Consensus was that these areas should be included within the network. Areas with steep slopes and Sensitive Aquifer Recharge Areas will be considered to help connect isolated oak stands. There was discussion on strategies to protect oak stands within the watersheds including savannah restoration, replacement programs, soil considerations, preservation ordinances, incentives, etc. Future planned open spaces/natural areas from community comprehensive plans will also be included in the green infrastructure plan.

3. Project Recommendations / Draft Plan Recommendations Chapter

Dawn discussed how water quality modeling will help estimate pollutant load reductions associated with each project recommendation. She reviewed a draft list of project recommendations submitted by participants to date. Dawn presented a proposed set of criteria to consider to support development of a 5 year project implementation plan. It was noted this criteria can be adjusted based on participant input. There was a question about how “critical areas” are determined. Dawn explained that these areas will be determined from water quality modeling including subwatersheds and stream assessment results. Participants made the following additional recommendations to include as criteria: areas that significantly contribute sediment, support protections for groundwater quality or quantity, high traffic areas or areas close to public view for education/outreach projects, upstream areas, and areas associated with fens. Participants should submit additional comments on the proposed criteria to watershedinfo@mcdefenders.net. Dawn also noted that in addition to the specific project recommendations, a suite of stormwater BMPs addressing nonpoint source pollution in the watersheds will be included in the plan.

4. Policy, Ordinances, and Planning Recommendations Discussion

Dawn provided a brief review of the codes and ordinances worksheet and green practices survey results presented in March. There was a discussion about how Nunda Township results were considered in the survey. Townships have a limited role to play related to codes and ordinances relative to communities so their results seem too low. A suggestion was provided to not include individual community results in the plan but make them available to communities to share with their boards to help guide development of future ordinances and planning initiatives. There was a suggestion to emphasize the more exemplary results. Noting overall trends in the watershed communities instead of individual results is another possibility. The results of the survey helped to identify where some additional policy considerations could be beneficial to support the watershed planning goals and management objectives. These considerations

include: oak stand protections, long-term protection/ management/restoration of natural areas, promoting the use of rain barrels, permeable paving, organic weed killers, native landscaping, and water conservation. Dawn proposed some policy and planning recommendations based on the results of worksheets, surveys, and participant input. These recommendations include adopting: provisions of the CMAP Regional Water Use Conservation Ordinance and the water conservation recommendations in McHenry County's Water Resources Action Plan, oak stand preservation policies and protections for high quality fens, conservation design principles, and wellhead protection programs. Some additional recommendations from the McHenry County Water Resources Action Plan were highlighted including, delineation of five-year capture zones around pumping wells, chloride management programs, utilizing the Class III groundwater protection tool to support protections for groundwater dependant natural areas, providing pharmaceutical drop off sites, and expand groundwater quality and quantity monitoring. Some education recommendations discussed included programs to promote water conservation, rain barrel use, rain garden installation, and reduced use of phosphorus fertilizer. Participants emphasized the importance of policies to address coal tar sealants, chloride management programs and associated outreach to residents, public education to encourage rain garden installation and xeriscaping, and using the county Sensitive Aquifer Recharge Area map to help inform policy decisions related to groundwater protections. There was a recommendation to support provisions in subdivision ordinances and zoning codes that encourage permeable pavement and other BMPs. It was noted that pharmaceutical collections should be coordinated with local police departments. Send any additional comments to watershedinfo@mcdefenders.net .

Cory Horton, Chief Stormwater Engineer for McHenry County, provided an overview of some provisions in current county ordinances relevant to watershed planning. Cory discussed conservation design standards that were adopted as an amendment to the 1991 subdivision ordinance and discussed the current Stormwater Management Ordinance and considerations for future updates. The county is currently developing a unified development ordinance (UDO). This ordinance will update and combine the zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations, and other various county ordinances that deal with land use in unincorporated McHenry County. The UDO will help implement the County's 2030 Comprehensive Plan and Water Resources Action Plan. More information is available at <http://www.camiros.com/mchenrycoUDO/> .

Erik Morimoto, Director of Engineering & Building for the City of Crystal Lake, presented information on the Crystal Lake Watershed Ordinance including a summary of the Watershed Design Manual provisions and application of BMPs. Erik's presentation can be downloaded at <http://foxriverecosystem.org/silver-sleepy.htm> under "Presentations"

5. Agricultural Best Management Practices and Policies

Erika Turner, District Conservationist with the Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS), and Ed Weskerna, Resource Conservationist with the McHenry County Soil and Water Conservation District (MCSWCD), provided an overview of some agricultural BMPs. They also discussed assistance and incentive programs and some of the challenges faced to increase participation in these programs including landowners that do not live on or near the properties. Recommendations to consider for the watershed plan include educating landowners - both local and absent, promoting BMPs, promoting available programs, and support for the Farm Bill. For more information, visit <http://www.mchenryswcd.org/> and www.il.nrcs.usda.gov .

6. Education and Outreach Discussion

Lynn introduced discussion of possible education and outreach recommendations for the watershed plan. She presented information on outreach activities accomplished to date for the planning effort, priority water resource concerns expressed by community members, a breakdown of possible target audiences, some approaches to help connect with community members, recommendations for residents, outreach and

education tools, and possible partnerships to assist with future watershed outreach activities. Participant comments included an emphasis on support for natural resource management, workshops for homeowners associations and public works departments, and developing outreach partnerships with communities. The presentation is available at <http://foxriverecosystem.org/silver-sleepy.htm> under “Presentations”

7. **Announcements, Next Meeting**

Silver Creek Watershed Tour: The Fox River Ecosystem Partnership, Village of Oakwood Hills, and EDMC will host a Noon Network event on Wednesday, August 17, Noon – 1:30p.m., Oakwood Hills Park, Oakwood Hills. Kerry Leigh will share information on her work with the Village of Oakwood Hills to restore 20 acres of savanna habitat in the community park adjacent to Oakwood Hills Fen Nature Preserve. Kerry and Steve Byers of the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission will lead a tour of the restoration area and nearby nature preserve. Visit <http://foxriverecosystem.org/news.htm> for more information.

Sleepy Hollow Creek Watershed Weekend Tour: Beginning on Sunday, August 28 at 12:30p.m. , the Defenders will host a hike at two Crystal Lake Park District preserves, Sterne’s Fen and Wingate Prairie. These unique natural areas are dedicated Illinois Nature Preserves. The tours are lead by Steve Byers and Wingate Prairie Steward, Jim Wigman. For more information, call 815-338-0393 or send an e-mail to watershedinfo@mcdefenders.net .

The next meeting will be on Monday, August 22, 1:00p.m.- 3:00 p.m. at Prairieview Education Center, 2112 Behan Road, Crystal Lake. Discussion topics will include policy recommendations, technical and financial assistance, and education and outreach recommendations. As part of that discussion, Dr. Joan Brehm, Associate Sociology Professor at Illinois State University, will present findings of a study she did for the Nippersink Watershed Association to gauge public perceptions of the value of the nearby Nippersink Creek watershed. We will consider how this information can help guide recommendations for watershed planning efforts in the Silver Creek and Sleepy Hollow Creek watersheds. For more information on the study, visit <http://nippersink.org/> .