

South Fork Kent Creek Watershed Stakeholder Planning Meeting #6

Meeting Minutes

February 27, 2020

6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Webbs Norman Center, Boardroom

South Main Street, Rockford, IL.

Agenda

1. Review selected, prioritized best management practices
2. Review feedback from Technical Advisors
3. Discuss educational topics to focus on
4. Consider landowners investment contribution
5. Brainstorm outreach efforts for residential, commercial/industrial, and agricultural.
6. Adjourn

Attending

Lou Ann Johnson, Dick Rundall, Dennis Bragelman, Matt Martin, Ann Marie Cain, Curtis and Cathleen Countryman, Larry McFall, Allen Mills, Sean Von Bergen, Darryl Jones, Michael Leick, Leonard Humpal, Dustin Kaap, Rebecca Olson (OES), and Alyssa Robinson (OES)

Minutes

1. Rebecca started off the meeting with an introduction of the project and progress we have made so far.
2. We went around the room with each person introducing themselves.
3. Alyssa discussed the watershed planning process and reviewed the top six BMPs that the technical advisors agreed were the most effective at reducing pollutants, feasible to implement in the watershed, and capable of being funded. The top BMPs that we plan to give highest priority are listed below:
 - a. Vegetated filter strips
 - b. Vegetated swales
 - c. Grassed waterways
 - d. Stormwater wetlands
 - e. Conversion to natural areas
 - f. Streambank stabilization
4. Next, we discussed feedback that we received from the technical advisors.
 - a. Technical advisors and OES consultants are working on creating objectives for each of the eight goals.
 - b. Technical advisors requested that the goals for the watershed be reordered by placing the flood mitigation goal below the water quality specific goals. All eight goals are equal in importance and not ranked by order, but the technical advisors

still believed it was important to not have flood mitigation as Goal 1, since this watershed is funded by the EPA Water Quality grant. See the PowerPoint for meeting 6, slide #22.

- c. The technical advisors also wanted to make sure stakeholders and planning participants know that this plan will only reflect water quality projects. Flood mitigation can be paired with water quality projects if certain practices address both water quality and flood mitigation; however, the scope of the plan does not include the tools necessary to inventory and plan for a more complete flood mitigation. FEMA offers funding for flood mitigation projects, and we will explore the potential for FEMA funding of projects recommended in this plan.
5. Alyssa reviewed selected education topics that we should include in the plan and asked stakeholders to think about which education topics they think should be included in the plan. Education topics were divided into four categories: residential, agricultural, commercial/industrial, and future land use. Two residential education topics that will be in the plan per an earlier suggestion of the technical advisors include septic system maintenance and lawn care. To read about septic system maintenance and lawn care tips see slides 24-28 in the Meeting 6 PowerPoint.
6. OES asked the stakeholders to consider if and how much time and or money they would be willing to contribute to BMP projects on their property and be prepared to share their thoughts at a future meeting. Contribution could be expressed in percent of project cost. There is funding assistance and technical guidance available for the implementation of BMPs on stakeholder land. There will be a chapter reviewing these funding and technical resources in the plan.
7. For the remainder of the meeting, we broke out into small groups to brainstorm which education topics to focus on and how, when, and what frequency to reach out to the stakeholders in the watershed. We split up into three groups: residential, commercial/industrial, and agricultural. A fourth group, future land use, will be discussed during a future meeting. Education/Outreach ideas are listed for each group below:
 - a. Residential:
 - i. Topics
 1. Fertilizer (lawn care) education
 2. Native plant/swale education-why are native plants so beneficial?
 - a. What to buy
 - b. Where to buy
 - c. Are there discounts or funding incentives?
 3. Inform landowners about the homeowner benefits of action (increase in property value?) and discuss the risks of inaction
 4. Communicate a persuasive “story” or reasons why improving the water quality benefits not just the watershed but also each individual resident
 - a. Why is bacteria bad? Why is fecal coliform bad? How can it harm humans? Pets?
 - b. Can leaky septic tanks end up in wells?
 - c. Make it personal
 - d. Quantify how poor water quality affects individuals, e.g. well water, recreation, can it hurt property value?

5. Proper maintenance of private retention/detention ponds with focused mailings to known sites of these ponds
 - a. Identify who is responsible and accountable for private pond evaluation
 - b. Funding options for private pond maintenance
6. Does the County Health Department have educational materials on septic systems that we can use?
7. Education on cost of septic system check and cleaning vs. cost of replacing leaking septic system (\$15,000-\$20,000)
8. Can Realtors Associations educate potential buyers on septic systems when they are buying a home serviced by septic system?
9. County Health department role in septic system maintenance and enforcing septic system cleaning and pumping
 - a. Currently the health department inspects septic systems when they are initially installed. Residents with septic systems are required to self-report that they have had their septic system checked by a professional plumber every 5 years. However, there is no enforcement by the Health Department if people do not self-report.
 - b. Stakeholders believed that the Health Department should enlist more stringent requirements for septic system maintenance and eliminate the “self-reporting” aspect to ensure leaky or faulty septic tanks are fixed.
 - c. Two stakeholders in attendance at the meeting have septic tanks and agreed that enforcing more stringent septic maintenance requirements is a good thing and should be included in the plan since it is for the betterment of all people.
 - d. One stakeholder acknowledged that this petition for the Health Department to enact and enforce more requirements could be controversial to some residents in areas serviced by septic systems. Another stakeholder argued that this plan is a tool to **advocate** for the health of the watershed, the health of the people living in it, and for change to make things better. Therefore, we should be able to petition the Health Department to advocate for the greater good by ensuring septic tanks are operating properly and not leaking into surrounding waters.
 - e. Please note: We will continue discussion on the topic of how to best address septic system maintenance, as this plan is intended to be voluntary, not regulatory. If any regulatory based recommendations are included in the plan it will be something the stakeholders as a whole decide is something they believe is very important to include.

ii. Medium

1. Effective marketing plan using proven channels

2. Utilize social media (Facebook, Nextdoor, etc.) to educate above plan, importance of BMP implementation, and above topics.
 3. Newsletters
 4. Community/neighborhood groups (e.g. Homeowner Associations)
- b. Agricultural Ideas:
- i. Topics
 1. Best Management Practice options for smaller fields
 2. Funding education for restoration, grassed waterways, saturation buffers, etc.
 3. Opportunities for non-tillable/ "wastelands" adjoining the fields (filter strips)
 4. Restore grass waterways
 5. Reach the absentee landowner: outreach on importance of BMPs or conservation practices
 6. Improve existing woodlands
 - ii. Medium
 1. Communications via mailings, webinars, recording, podcasts, seminars, articles, social media
 2. Partner with U of I Extension, Winnebago County SWCD and Farm Bureau
 3. Education about partnerships possibilities of vested local municipal/private organizations who are willing to help fund BMP projects
- c. Commercial/Industrial
- i. Acknowledged that these areas already have heavy regulation via stormwater permitting
 - ii. Education on trading or off-site mitigation, i.e. if commercial or industrial group cannot implement certain BMPs on their land, they could invest in projects in the watershed that improve water quality. This idea could also help with positive public relations within the community.
 - iii. Provide training for commercial or industrial business/organizations to be in better compliance with stormwater BMPs
 - iv. Control anything coming off parking lot (permeable pavers, etc.)
 - v. One participant acknowledged that their group wants to be good stewards for the natural resources, but regulation for their operations (dairy) requires them to have mowed turf in order to not attract raccoons, mice, etc. They would not be allowed to implement a BMP with vegetation other than turf, but they could consider implementing underground storm sewer, receptors, mechanical separators, permeable pavers etc. where appropriate.