

Technical Advisory Committee for the Raccoon Creek Partnership

Meeting Minutes – 9/26/2012

Action Items are Underlined

In Attendance: Jerry Iles (OSU Extension), Ben McCament (ODNR-DMRM), Jackie Haynal (Ohio University MSES student), Mary Ann Borch (ODNR-DMRM), Barb Flowers (ODNR-DMRM), Mike McAvoy (ODNR-DMRM), Alan Rees (NRCS – Jackson, OH) Sarah Landers (Ohio Valley RC&D/RCP), Amy Mackey (OU Voinovich School/RCP), Natalie Kruse (OU Voinovich School/RCP), Kaabe Shaw (ODNR-DMRM)

The meeting was called to order at 9:10am. Meeting location: Voinovich School, The Ridges, Bldg 22

Agenda Item Number 1: Begin Meeting, Welcome, Introductions

Agenda Item Number 2: Review/Approve June Minutes

Agenda Item Numbers 3 & 4: Watershed Coordinator Updates & 2012 Biological Sampling Update – Amy Mackey

Amy Mackey has been working under the 2010-2012 Watershed Coordinator grant and is in the process of writing the next grant. The Coordinator grants for Raccoon Creek and Monday Creek (Nate Schlater) are the only two in the state up this year. Amy has the grant written and is waiting for a recommendation letter from Jen Bowman (OU Voinovich School, Environmental Project Manager) and then she can submit her grant. Ben McCament added that he is writing a letter for Amy. Amy requested that the letter be sent to her so she can submit her grant when she gets back from shocking fish at the end of the day on Friday. Amy mentioned that Kaabe Shaw sent her the 3 year project construction plan for the Raccoon Creek Watershed which contained the when and where for projects and that information is included in her coordinator grant.

A little while back Amy wrote a letter of support for Eric Boyda for his purple loosestrife mapping project. Eric works with the Appalachian Ohio Weed Control Partnership cooperative weed management area which is made up of 16 southeastern Ohio counties. Amy has not seen purple loosestrife in the Raccoon Creek watershed and announced that if anyone sees any then to map it and send the information to Amy and she will forward it to Eric. Amy mentioned that other southeast Ohio watersheds are participating in the purple loosestrife project as well.

Macroinvertebrate sampling is mostly complete for 2012. All planned sites have been complete except for the mouth of West Branch. This site was dipped but not kicked due to a lack of riffles and it is now getting too late in the season to finish the site.

The electrofishing boat sites have all been complete this year and small mouth bass were collected in Raccoon Creek, which are not often found. 30 species of fish were found in Raccoon Creek below the confluence with Little Raccoon Creek. In 1995 there were 17 species found and now there are 30 and there are species of fish in the creek that weren't there in the 1990's. Sand darters were found in the watershed this year, and it was not previously known that they existed in the Raccoon Creek Watershed. Amy and others agreed that Raccoon Creek offers sand darters a perfect habitat with all the sand and sandbars. This has been an exciting biological monitoring year for fish and there is an increase in the

number of sensitive fish species being collected. There are two more days of electrofishing wading sites and the second pass of fish sampling will be complete for 2012.

The Office of Surface Mining (OSM) grant was submitted for the Lake Morrow project. Dave Agnor emailed Amy the other day to let her know that the project was unofficially approved.

Amy, Jen Bowman and Sarah Landers are going to get together and order equipment (need a new pygmy and rod). Jen is not at the TAC meeting today because she is attending Science Alliance in Piketon with the Raccoon Creek AmeriCorps members.

The 2011 NPS report is complete and available online at www.watersheddata.com. Amy passed around a paper copy of the NPS report and copies had already been sent to ODNR-DMRM.

Agenda Item Number 9: Current and Upcoming AMD Project updates – ODNR/ALL

Mike McAvoy needed to leave the meeting by 10:00 to get to a project site, so project updates were moved to the top of the agenda and thus Items 5-8 will be returned to following this portion.

Harble-Griffith (West Branch RC)

Mike McAvoy began by mentioning that the Harble-Griffith 319 project turned over after the steady rainfall the last 2 months and has greened up nicely. There will be just a little frost seeding this year and then the contract will expire and if more seeding is needed then a small maintenance contract will be bid. Lots of the trees survived the drought and the rain came at the last minute. Mike expressed his concern at this being a very expensive project and requested from Raccoon Creek partners to collect data on flow coming off the project site. Mike checked with Amy Mackey that there was data collected on the flow and acidity in the trib coming off the site before construction and wants to know the improvement at the confluence of West Branch of Raccoon Creek. Mike wants to figure out a cost per acre for recovery and check at the next West Branch site down from the project area and document the impact of the reclamation. Ben McCament brought up that even though this type of large reclamation project has a large upfront cost, there is no maintenance cost associated with this type of reclamation project. For the next West Branch project (Ilesboro Rd) Mike doesn't want to do a wholesale reclamation, siting the expense and difficulty to find borrow. Physically, Mike doesn't think we need to do what we did before with Harble Griffith. More data will be needed to be collected by Raccoon Creek Partners by next fall 2013 for design phase of an Ilesboro Rd project. This data would include locating hotspots and targets. Amy brought up to the group the option of doing a post construction tour for Harble Griffith in the fall or spring. A post construction tour is required by the 319 grant. Amy mentioned that there isn't much post construction data collected yet and waiting until spring would allow water quality data to be collected and for the wetland to grow. Amy was asked when the grant is required to be complete and Amy will check, but it is due around June or July 2013. The group agreed to wait until spring for the post construction tour.

FLINT RUN (Little Raccoon subwatershed)

Kaabe Shaw arrived at the meeting as Mike McAvoy was leaving to begin his Flint Run update. The modifications to the Flint Run East outlets are complete and the alkalinity is now going down to the unnamed trib. Amy interjected that she has noticed pH's in the 6 range down at the installed flume in the unnamed trib and the water no longer looks like tomato soup and the precipitates settle out now. Kaabe lamented that he wished we could control the water flow through the system on the Flint Run

East side and mentioned that we need to keep in-check the alkalinity coming from the discharge. We need to think about how we can physically extend the life of Flint Run. Since we don't have a valve to control Flint Run discharge it is a head situation. Kaabe suggested that we could slow down Lake Milton {since we can control it} and noted that Flint Run has been running all summer, while Lake Milton has not been running. A comment was made that Lake Milton and Flint Run are designed to treat two different areas. Mike McAvoy brought up that there is a valve to adjust the amount of water that goes from the fresh water to the steel slag bed and that could be used instead of the standpipes to regulate water level. The Flint Run East storage pond has a high amount of storage capacity. Moving on to Lake Milton, the valve needs exercised 2-3x per year or every 3 months or so. Sarah Landers added that currently the valve is all the way shut and that she shut it a few weeks ago since the water level was not high enough to go down the siphon and they will open it back up after we have had some significant rain accumulation. Mike McAvoy also added that the safety grate should NEVER be opened and NEVER should anyone go down into it.

JMAR (Mulga) (Little Raccoon subwatershed)

Since the maintenance project was completed Kaabe Shaw mentioned that we haven't checked how it is doing, but that there have been no complaints about beavers. Sarah Landers mentioned that she was last out there in early spring, just about maintenance was complete and only samples there 1x per year.

Orland Gob Pile (West Branch RC)

Kaabe Shaw noted that the vegetation is doing fine and that they can work with the contractor in the future to determine whether more needs to be done with the vegetation. Amy Mackey asked if the project sign had been fixed (had incorrect names on the sign). Barb Flowers replied that they didn't know. Sarah Landers will follow-up on this with ODNR.

Pierce Run (Middle Basin RC)

Barb Flowers explained that the plan was redesigned in the field with the new contractor. The slurry wall will no longer be going through the center of the dam and will instead be pushed back away from the dam toward the pond. The contractor suggested getting rid of the stand pipes and instead filling with loose concrete. The risers are heavy and we don't know how they would settle. The entrance to the project site was improved and the double barrel risers will be gone. The redesign on the project will likely be a wash cost-wise since the intake to the SLB and the spillway will need evaluated. It will need to be determined whether or not to fill the holes in the spillway with concrete. Considering a 100 year rain event, if there were 1,000 cfs going over the spillway, then there would be lots of friction with the holes in the spillway and we would not want the whole thing to come apart. The entire project should be complete by the end of October and the slurry wall will be complete in 1 day. The contractor will contact ODNR when they plan to do the slurry wall. The contractor is King Environmental out of Findlay, Ohio. Another thing to note is that there is a permit for Waterloo Coal in the area for a sediment pond above the SLB source pond. The location of their pond will likely help keep sediment out of the SLB source pond.

Future Projects 2013 and Beyond (Kaabe Shaw and All)

Daniel's Run has been moved to 2014 and Middleton Run will continue to be in 2013 and can also be turned into a phased project if the funding gets tight. Daniel's Run project will likely not have limestone channels and if the site needs drainage then some geo-tech material with concrete would be used for less than ½ the cost of limestone.

The plans for Lake Morrow are almost complete and then will need to go to Dam Safety for review. The bid date for the Lake Morrow project is tentatively January 1st 2013. Due to funding constraints the scope of the project has been reduced significantly. A portion of the dam will be removed and drainage pipes will be installed for the water to pass through, the big difference is that there won't be a reclaim on the inside of the Lake. ODNR can go back and fix the inside of the Lake later if there are issues with it. Ben McCament brought up the point that we still don't know what is on the bottom of the Lake. It is the intention that pumping the discharge from the dam and installing a hole (rather than leaving the water to seep through the dam, as it presently does) that the water won't be too impaired since it will be bypassing the whole Flint Run system. Construction is expected to start in May 2013.

The Flint Run Wetland Berm project will be using some plastic sheet piling for the berms Kaabe Shaw informed the group. Originally limestone berms were planned but it has become expensive in the last year. Steel slag prices were brought up and the slag is free and ODNR pays for the trucking, which is about \$35 per ton presently. Lime at the Carbondale Doser has been running at a \$300 fuel surcharge. Back to the Flint Run Berms, the limestone is going to be eliminated (would have to also use it to bring trucks in) and using plastic sheet piling instead. There are AMD projects around Pittsburg that have been using the plastic sheet piling at \$4 to \$6 a square foot, half the cost of limestone and the limestone will be saved as an alternative. This will cut down on the cost of the project. The sheet piling will be 1 foot above to have shallow beaver ponds. This project is expected to be completed in the Fall of 2013, and has a bid date of January 1st 2013.

Amy Mackey inquired whether an OSM (Office of Surface Mining) grant should be written for any of these projects. Kaabe Shaw suggested that we close Orland/Harble Griffith projects since invoices should be coming soon and OSM grants typically do not take too long to write and get approved.

Agenda Item Number 5 & 6: RC Water Quality Specialist Updates & Little Raccoon Creek AMDAT revision update

Sarah Landers began by showing the TAC the spreadsheet for 2012 chemical water quality monitoring. Chemical sampling was on schedule for 2012 and some sites had to be put back because of a lack of water due to the drought conditions over the summer. Post construction chemical sampling for the newly completed projects and maintenance projects did not begin in the summer since there was a lack of water and sampling will begin in the late fall when there is water again. The water quality specialist semi-annual report was submitted to Ben McCament. Sarah asked Ben if she could make some changes to the dates of the reporting period before he reviews it and Sarah will revise and resend to Ben.

The Raccoon Creek ODNR intern Renee Reber is presently finishing her hours from Lebanon, Ohio, where she recently re-located. Renee has about 300 hours left and she is working on the Little Raccoon Creek AMDAT (Acid Mine Drainage Abatement and Treatment) Plan and she is doing the initial data crunching and chart-making for the AMDAT to show historical water quality trends and evaluate project performance. Sarah showed the group some of the graphs Renee created and got input regarding how to chart the metals and acidity that she will pass on to Renee.

Before Mike McAvoy left the meeting, Sarah asked when a good time would be to set up a meeting to go over potential treatment projects for the Little Raccoon Creek AMDAT and Mike suggested to have a meeting in November after the leaves have fallen and offered to go out into the field with Sarah to look at potential project areas.

Agenda Item Number 7: CCPI Grants in Raccoon Creek – Alan Rees NRCS

Alan Rees, NRCS, Jackson County addressed the TAC regarding CCPI (Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative) Grants. This is a program under the 2008 Farm Bill and could be in place in 2013, but there is a possibility that it could be eliminated under the new Farm Bill. This program was offered and funded last year in the Mississippi River Basin area only, but there is a possibility it could be expanded this year. If this program continues and is available in the Raccoon Creek Watershed, Alan thinks that it could be an important tool for Raccoon Creek Watershed residents that are interested in conservation programs. There would be funding to be used for Ohio Watershed groups by HUC #'s and the watershed group can help identify landowners in the watershed and rank them for funding. There could be \$250,000 with up to 4 years to spend it and there would be no administrative funding for RCP and all of the money would go to landowners. John Kellis, Ohio Valley RC&D is interested in helping with a proposal if one is made by Raccoon Creek to do this project. For a watershed landowner to be eligible to participate in this program they must have a grazing or forest management plan written by NRCS. A question was asked whether NRCS has the staff to write these reports and Alan informed the group that there are retired employees presently working for NRCS to write the grazing management plans and foresters are also working on the forest management plans. Cody Hacker, Vinton County SWCD, writes these in Vinton County. In the past programs like this were based on county boundaries and now are based on regions. This decreases competition and can help with non-point pollution in the watershed. Applications earmarked to the District Supervisor from watersheds would help with watershed outreach in a way that watersheds didn't have influence before. Alan continued that there is a second component, which is a WRP (Wetland Reserve Program), which is different from an EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentives Program). This is a program that has had a number of applicants, but has not received funding for the last several years. The program focuses on reclamation of wetlands and a few years ago land was paid at \$3,000 an acre and 90% of the restoration cost was paid. Ben McCament suggested this could be useful at the Daniel's Run project area. Ben went on to illustrate that the improvements in recovery that we are seeing in lower Raccoon Creek and Raccoon Creek mainstem can be documented and these are tools that could help to preserve riparian buffers. Now that we are seeing AMD improvements, we can put our attention toward some of the other issues impacting the watershed. Alan also pointed out that these are typically \$15,000 to \$20,000 contacts per CPPI project, so 10-15 farms would spend this total amount. Jerry Iles mentioned that there were programs up in Delaware County and the Upper Scioto Watershed has had meetings. Most of the farmers up there have super high value land due to development pressures. Alan will contact Sarah Landers to let her know if either program will be available in 2013 and if Raccoon Creek watershed would qualify. Alan left a packet of documents describing both programs with Amy Mackey and Sarah Landers.

Agenda Item Number 8: Vinton County Airport Mitigation & Mulga AML Updates – Ben McCament

Ben McCament began by summarizing the history of the Vinton County Airport project to bring all members up to speed on the present status of the project. ODNR-DMRM is helping advise the project engineer and do some on site AMD treatment. There really isn't anything new happening in the last few months. The plans are still being worked on and water samples need to be taken. Sarah Landers took water samples last spring and has been waiting for a post rain event to take additional samples and will do this late fall once we get rain.

Ben McCament also had an update regarding the Mulga AML (Abandoned Mine Land) project. This project would be at what Waterloo Coal calls their Dundas Stone Plant. This is where the JMAR tributary is located which is upstream of the Mulga wetland off SR 32 West. The property where the AML enhancement is being investigated was logged where 4 of the underground mine complexes are located in the area where the JMAR steel slag leach bed is located. There are two options available 1) Remining, 2) AML Enhancement. To do this there would be a direct negotiation with the operator and the removal of coal helps reduce the cost of the project. ODNR met with Waterloo Coal and asked for a proposal of what they think they would want to do for this project. Waterloo Coal wanted to do 1 of the 4 mine complexes. They would want to take out the underground mine complex which would give them room to store spoil and keep mining in that area. Then how it would work is that ODNR would pay them for the reclamation. ODNR hoped that they could do all 4 mine complexes and it could end up a no-cost operation. Ben brought up that the water is bad coming out of all of the mine complexes. This is not ODNR-DMRM's highest priority project, and it is not certain that this will solve our problems in the long term. Hollow fills might be hard to permit and remining the whole site would be ideal, but not sure this is a possibility at this point. Waterloo Coal owns both the surface and mineral rights and project cost would include the movement of spoil and the coal removal has to be taking into consideration for the cost. Ben lamented that these projects are good ideas, but hard to implement. This type of project has advantages for operators because ODNR does all the permitting and there is no NPDES permit and they are not responsible for water quality (just can't make water worse). There are lots of advantages for doing this whole area that was mined, but not just for one island. The other complexes that Waterloo doesn't want to do are the ones with the most water and are old complexes from the early 1900's.

(Agenda Item Number 9: Current and Upcoming AMD Project Updates was covered earlier)

Agenda Item Number 10: AEP Project Updates – Natalie Kruse

The Ohio University Voinovich School submitted a proposal to AEP for \$1,000,000 to support multiple environmental programs at Ohio University. Only one of the programs received funding, which was \$100,000 for student graduate assistants for the next 2-3 years to work on Voinovich School projects. There is work presently being done on a bio-restorability project and are presently waiting to schedule with Ed Rankin, who recently retired from Ohio University and is now working with MBI. Natalie informed the group that if there were any ideas for these topics, projects, papers, or technical guidance to let her know for student Masters in Environmental Studies projects.

Agenda Item Number 11: New Business/Announcements - All

Amy Mackey mentioned that the recent joint fundraiser (Pig Roast and Paddle at Uncle Buck's) between Raccoon Creek Partnership and the Athens Building Industries Association had 400 people in attendance. The two groups are splitting the profits from the event and RCP will find out soon how much they made from the event. Amy also reminded the group that the RCP annual dinner will be held Sunday, October 14th at 4:00 at the Waterloo Community Center in New Marshfield located across from the post office and the guest speaker this year will be Warren Taylor from Snowville Creamery.

Jerry Iles began by talking about the Clean Ohio program. The program is back a there is funding for fee simple conservation easements. The Athens Conservancy recently got a grant for bike path extensions. There are 1.4 million dollars available in Jerry's district that covers Hocking, Athens, and Meigs Counties.

The next district over contains Vinton, Jackson, and Gallia Counties and the office is located in Chillicothe. Jerry will send Amy Mackey the information for the Chillicothe office.

Jerry also brought up the OWLs conference. In 2012 it was held in Grand Lake St. Mary's with about 60 participants and there were requests to have the conference in Southeast Ohio in 2013. Jerry informed the group that there needs to be local support for this conference and wanted the idea proposed to RCP for assistance in planning a conference in southeast Ohio. One idea for a location is at the Lake Hope cabins and new lodge. Amy Mackey will bring this up with Raccoon Creek Partnership.

Ben McCament wanted to update the group regarding his work with legal staff to make revised code changes to the Federal AMD funding to account for a long term water treatment trust fund. The Chief has looked at the proposed changes and legislature changes need added. Interest is already collected on the AMD set-aside funds. The Operations and Maintenance cost of projects needs to be considered upfront for projects.

A discussion ensued about invasive plants and Jerry Iles mentioned that at the Hope Clay project there are all invasive plants now taking over the site and since Orland was recently complete, it might be of interest to study the vegetation over time. At the Hope School project they did spend money on seed mix and now the area has autumn olive and multiflora rose. This could be a potential masters project for someone to focus on the types of native plants that would do well on reclaim that would keep invasives from taking over.

Agenda Item Number 13: Wrap-up Review Action items - All

**End Meeting – Next meeting: Wednesday, January 16th 9:00 am, The Ridges,
Building 22 – Room 214**