

ST. JOSEPH RIVER BASIN COMMISSION

MINUTES

September 6, 2016

The third quarterly meeting of the St. Joseph River Basin Commission was held on September 6, 2016, in the Elkhart County Public Services Building, in Goshen, Indiana. Jon Roberts, President, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Roll call was taken and it was noted a quorum was present with the following members in attendance:

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jon Roberts – Kosciusko County
Dona Hunter – Governor’s Appointee
Bill Hartsuff – Elkhart County
Daragh Deegan – City of Elkhart
Martin Franke – LaGrange County
Jerrod Nisley – LaGrange County
David Abbott – Noble County
Jason Pippenger – Noble County
Paula Reinhold – St. Joseph County
Karl Kopec – City of Mishawaka
Kris Thomas – Steuben County
Craig Williams – City of Angola

OTHERS PRESENT: Joseph Zakas – Legal Representative, Thorne Grodnik LLP
Tim Lathrop – Hydrologist, U.S. Geological Survey
Jason Kauffman – City of Goshen
James Turnwald – MACOG
Jeremy Reiman – MACOG
Lori Ratliff – MACOG
Shirley Czerna – MACOG

MINUTES OF JUNE 7, 2016

There were no corrections or additions to the minutes of the June 7, 2016 meetings. The following action was taken.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JUNE 7,
2016 MEETING WAS MADE BY MARTIN FRANKE AND
SECONDED BY DARAGH DEEGAN. THE MOTION CARRIED.

FINANCIALS

Financial Report

Lori Ratliff reviewed the SJRBC Financial Report for the period ending June 30, 2016 and then asked for any questions. There being none, Lori asked for the Basin Commission’s approval of the Financial Reports.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE FINANCIAL REPORTS AS PRESENTED WAS MADE BY CRAIG WILLIAMS AND SECONDED BY DONA HUNTER. THE MOTION CARRIED.

Approval of Claims

A list of the quarterly SJRBC claims and a description of the bills paid by MACOG were distributed to the Commission members for their review. Lori asked for the Commission's approval of the Claims.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE SJRBC CLAIMS FOR THE APRIL, MAY AND JUNE 2016 MACOG REIMBURSEMENTS AND FOR THE SEPTEMBER 2016 ATTORNEY FEE WAS MADE BY CRAIG WILLIAMS AND SECONDED BY DARAGH DEEGAN. THE MOTION CARRIED.

OLD BUSINESS

Basin Updates – Basin Commission Members

Martin Franke informed the Basin Commission the LaGrange County SWCD received official approval of a nutrient and sediment reduction grant for the north branch of the Elkhart River, through the Great Lakes Commission. The \$200,000 cost share grant will primarily concentrate on agricultural activities, such as cover crops, erosion control, filter strips, and fencing.

St. Joseph River Basin Filter Strip Initiative

A draft copy of the updated St. Joseph River Basin Filter Strip Initiative brochure was distributed to the Basin Commission. It has been redesigned to be more concise and financially informative and is currently being reviewed by the steering committee. Jeremy requested high quality, high resolution filter strip pictures to be sent to him for display on the front cover. The finalized brochure will be printed and distributed to SWCDs, NRCS, FSA and local Farm Bureau offices.

Joe Zakas asked if the one dollar (\$1.00) per acre tax benefit would be enough incentive for landowners to use filter strips. Jeremy said the program would probably work best through peer pressure, starting with larger landowners and trickling down to smaller farmers. Joe also asked if the complicated application process would be a deterrent. Jeremy said most of the paperwork is transferred from the surveyor, auditor, and other county organizations without the landowner's involvement.

Indiana Watershed Leadership Academy Scholarship

Jeremy reported the application period is now open for the SJRBC to sponsor a member to attend the 2017 Indiana Watershed Leadership Academy. The application will be e-mailed to the Commission members today. All applications submitted will be reviewed by the SJRBC's Indiana Watershed Leadership Academy sub-committee, which includes Daragh Deegan, Paula Reinhold, and Martin Franke. The applications are due by September 30th, with a final candidate being selected by mid-October. The SJRBC will then work with the selected candidate to get fully enrolled with the Academy.

Cobus Creek Watershed Diagnostic Study

The Cobus Creek Watershed Diagnostic Study is midstream through the activities. The historical watershed data and in-field data collection are completed. The study is now moving into analyzing and modeling the data, which should be completed in the next couple of months, followed by developing recommendations. The draft copy should be available by January, with the final document approval by March of 2017.

A recap of the results from the study thus far was presented to the SJRBC. The results indicate that Cobus Creek watershed resembles a very flashy stream with some serious runoff concerns and limited habitat. This is due to the fact that Cobus Creek is primarily a cool water stream, until you get into the upper reaches. Martin Franke asked what the primary water source is. Daragh said mostly groundwater and tile, but in the upper reaches it is more surface water and wetlands. Martin asked what the average summertime temperature is in the Cobus Creek watershed. Daragh said 50 degrees Fahrenheit in the cool water areas and 75 degrees in the upper reaches.

Water Monitoring Program Update

Phase 3 of the water monitoring program began in April of 2016. Thus far, there have been 4 samples pulled from the 20 sites selected in Baugo Creek, Turkey Creek, and Branywine Creek located in Elkhart and St. Joseph Counties. Most of the sites looked very good with regard to all of the parameters being analyzed, with the exception of some spikes in E. coli and nitrates on site 42. Daragh asked if data was collected after the big rainfall this summer. Jeremy said one sample was taken after the large rain event, which was when site 42 showed high spikes in E. coli and nitrates. Paula Reinhold asked if wet and dry samples are taken at each site location. Jeremy said there is a requirement to pull one wet weather sample every quarter.

Before the 3-year sampling period ends in March of 2017, it will be necessary to send out a new Request for Proposal (RFP) for Water Quality Assessment activities for the next cycle period, April 2017 through March 2020. A similar scope of work will be required, and a SJRBC review committee will be assigned to evaluate and choose the contractor for services.

Elkhart River Conservation Initiative

The Elkhart River Conservation Initiative is a steering committee of stakeholders composed of local, state, and federal officials in the Elkhart River watershed. The first meeting, held last November, discussed major environmental concerns in the watershed. At the workshop in March, stakeholders focused mainly on identifying water quality and drainage projects currently in a watershed management plan or feasibility study that could be linked to a problematic location. In August, the steering committee began assessing information gathered at the workshop and prioritizing potential projects for implementation. The program will move forward with discussions on the type of funding alternatives that would be most effective for each project chosen and who would be responsible for completing each project.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no New Business.

PRESENTATION

Real-Time, Continuous Monitoring of Suspended Sediments and Nutrients in Streams and Rivers – Tim Lathrop, Hydrologist, U.S. Geological Survey

Tim Lathrop, Hydrologist for the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), explained that water resource managers in Indiana are looking to watershed management measures such as the installation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) on the landscape to improve water quality. Continuous water-quality monitoring provides a mechanism for detecting changes in water quality that are related to intensive BMP implementation. In order to assess the impact of these management practices, long-term water quality data are needed. Scientists at USGS gather the required information by installing super gages. A super gage is a large array of electronic equipment that provides remote sensing of several water quality parameters that are transmitted via satellite and can be viewed in real time. Not only is real time data available, but data is archived so that historical values and trends can easily be accessed.

The objective of the Super Gage Program is to quantify annual and seasonal loads of suspended sediment and nutrients in rivers and streams. Sediment monitoring is essential to informed solutions to sediment-related issues. By using the stream flow data collected from the program, it can be determined the amount of sediment that is moving downstream and what time of the year there are high amounts of nutrients and suspended sediments in the river.

The USGS is operating 11 super gage sites in Indiana. The average cost of the super gage equipment can range anywhere from \$60,000 to \$80,000 per year to operate a nutrient monitor, a little less to operate a sediment gage. The USGS works with a cooperator on many projects, occasionally 30% - 40% match money becomes available for a project. Dave Abbott asked what determines the placement of gages in a stream. Tim said most equipment placement is decided by discussions with the cooperators about what best meets their goals. Tim answered additional questions and was thanked for the presentation.

ITEMS FROM THE FLOOR

Jeremy Reiman announced that he will be leaving his position with MACOG, by the end of year. He will be attending school full time, at Louisiana State University, to study hydrology. Jon Roberts thanked Jeremy for his service to the SJRBC and wished him good luck.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Basin Commission, the following action was taken.

MOTION TO ADJOURN WAS MADE BY DARAGH DEEGAN AND SECONDED BY PAULA REINHOLD. THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED.



Jon Roberts, President