

Meeting called to order by Steering Committee President, Armas Soorus.

Present: Lou Fitz, Barb Stenger, Shawn Middleton, Kayla Knoll, Greg Goudy, Wayne Anderson, Peggy Haverberg, Rob Carson, Chris Riley, Rose Soorus, Armas Soorus, Joyce Durdell, Ed Hoogterp, Jim Squire

The previous meetings minutes from were approved.

Armas introduced Ed Hoogterp, a journalist and representative for Networks Northwest with their proposal for developing a plan for the Little Manistee River Watershed. Scott Gest, also of Networks Northwest and working on the proposal with Ed, was not able to attend this meeting.

Ed explained that watershed management plans are long, somewhat drawn out and expensive processes. Of significance for the LMWRSC, our group has already done some items that take a lot of time, i.e., building partnerships, have begun defining the scope of what we want to do, started data collection, etc., that can help reduce the costs of developing a watershed plan.

The following is a synopsis of Ed's commentary about developing watershed management plans.

So why do we do this? What do we need to fix? Now you take time to really look at what is needed.

About costs, watershed plans have up to 40% of issues in common. We can save money there. What is going on in your area? What are the questions of shoreline education? What do people understand? What is the situation with habitat and erosion in the river? Is there a dam upstream that there is controversy about, is there an ORV trail? If so, you may deal with it through legislation, or connecting with the groups involved to resolve issues. All of that becomes part of the plan, Networks Northwest can write it but the steering committee needs to tell us what needs to address.

As soon as a contract is completed and signed, our approach is to put together interviews and chart data and come back with a questionnaire to be widely distributed to gather information on what is of concern about the watershed. How do people use the resource, how do they want to use it and what do they know? What are water quality issues that are visible? We will put all of that together. This group is really important to discuss what works and what doesn't. This will be your plan. What do we have to do to protect and restore? What about the lakes? We must include the whole watershed in the plan and make it happen at a reasonable cost. Volunteers can help gather information and collect samples or transport samples to a lab. That saves money.

EPA 9 Elements and DNR requirements must be included to get a plan approved. A public education plan is part of the requirement. We expected to do this within a year but we are getting started a little late so maybe a little more.

We need to establish goals, some preliminary goals are already established. Need to determine priorities for the watershed. We welcome comments by all involved.

Expect to work on a phase segment platform, where we bill for the work we do as we complete it.

A number of questions were fielded by Ed and some conversation about various projects like bank restoration and stream road crossings. Chris Riley suggests that road crossings and remedies to blocked fish passage should be included as part of the plan.

There were also some questions about drains/drain commissioners. Up north drains are not regulated as they are in the cities. Not even really well mapped, especially small streams/drains.

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Another question about mapping pipelines in watersheds was asked. Not included to date. Those records lie within the private sector and maybe should be included.

Identifying issues and partnering can help find solutions to problems in more than just one locality.

Watershed plans rely on data sharing between partners and agencies.

Networks Northwest looks at this project as something of a community effort, maybe creating a different model to be completed more efficiently and for a more reasonable cost.

Armas, still finalizing contract. Plan to move on this at July meeting of LMWCC on July 8, 2017.

Armas called for a vote from the LMRWSC to approve Networks Northwest as the hired consultants to develop our plan. Barb Stenger motioned to approve Networks Northwest to be hired as consultants to develop the Little Manistee River Watershed Plan. The motion was seconded by Shawn Middleton and Jim Squier. It received unanimous approval by the group.