

**LITTLE MANISTEE RIVER WATERSHED STEERING COMMITTEE/LMWCC
2020 03 06 Meeting Minutes**

LITTLE MANISTEE RIVER WATERSHED SUMMIT MEETING

Elk Township Hall, Irons, MI

Present: Armas Soorus-LMWCC, Joyce Durdell-LMWCC, Josh Shields-Manistee and Mason/Lake Conservation Districts, Sharon Marie-Portage Lake Watershed Forever, Mary Reed-Portage Lake Watershed Forever, John Gouker-Gouker Fly Fishing, Dan Sernick-LMWCC, Lucas Richardson-Spicer Group, Inc, Jerry Kass-Mason Lake Conservation District, Barb Stenger-USEDA/Lake County, Alex Svoboda-Osceola/Lake Conservation District, Zack Prause-Little River Band of Ottawa Indians, Mark Sweppenheiser-Osceola/Lake Conservation District, Melissa Jacobs-LMWCC, Joe Neumann-LMWCC, Jim Squier-LMWCC.

Purpose of Meeting: This meeting was scheduled as the next step in implementing the Little Manistee River Watershed Management Plan. It is the third meeting in the series to review progress and understand the status of the tasks identified in the watershed management plan and identify and plan specific tasks for the coming year.

Agenda:

- 1) Introductions** – everyone present introduced themselves and, if connected to an organization, identified the organization they represented.
- 2) Approve Meeting Minutes of 8/1/19 Meeting** – There were no revisions requested to the minutes as published and they were approved.
- 3) For those for at the meeting and new to the group we had a brief discussion about the purpose of the meeting and the purpose and content of the watershed management plan itself.**

The creation of a watershed management plan was initially driven by roadblocks the LMWCC was running into qualifying for grants for work on the river. Several other rivers in the area have watershed management plans and we are finding it very difficult to compete for grants from major funding without a state and federal approved watershed management plan. Over time we have found that the plan gives us a work plan that can give our efforts structure, continuity, clarity and help prioritize tasks. It also gives us credibility as an organization that has a plan approved by state and federal authorities. When we submit grant applications for items in the plan our request will have much greater impact as part of the approved plan.

The plan is ultimately submitted for approval to both state and federal authorities and both have requirements for specific topics the plan must address. They do not tell us how to address these topics. It is an outline - the plan must fill in the details. The job of the steering committee has been to determine specifically how the watershed community wants to address each of these topics in the plan. The tasks identified by the steering committee and put in the plan are listed on the attached spread sheet and were categorized and then given general priorities and target dates.

- 4) Ed Hoogterp gave the group an update on the status of the Little Manistee River Watershed Management Plan.**

The document creation is in its final stages. It was submitted to MDEQ (now MI EGLE) for informal review on April 19, 2019. We received an exceptionally detailed review of the document on February 27, 2020 from MI EGLE. They found no major deficiencies that will cost us significant time in the process. They requested more data be included from the USGS monitoring and other government agencies as well as the LMWCC and others on Flow, Temperature and other parameters. We have limited data from USGS Monitoring from the 1950's to 1970's as

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well as intermittent data from MDNR, NFS and LMWCC we can include. This lack of data is one of the Tasks we have included in the plan to remedy.

EGLE also requested a more detailed summary of the process we used to include a diverse set of stakeholders in the plan creation and who the stakeholders were.

Other comments were mainly layout and format revisions to make the plan more logical in flow.

We expect to resubmit the plan for formal review by the end of March 2020.

- 5) Vote on Funding the TU Monitoring Station** – The Funding Committee, consisting of Barb Stenger, Joyce Durdal and Armas Soorus present at the meeting voted unanimously to approve a resolution to:

“Request the Manistee County Community Foundation to transfer \$1,000 from the Little Manistee River Plan Implementation Fund at Manistee County Community Foundation to the Little Manistee Watershed Conservation Council to purchase and implement a Trout Unlimited Mayfly based Water Conductivity, Temperature and Depth monitoring station for the Little Manistee River.”

The resolution was offered by Armas Soorus and seconded by Barb Stenger.

Armas Soorus will forward these minutes to the Manistee County Community Foundation to initiate transfer of the funds.

6) Identify specific task objectives and who will lead their completion.

The group then proceeded to review the attached spread sheet. We discussed and completed the Current Tasks sections on the righthand side for Tabs E, G and J. Results of our discussions are detailed on the spread sheet.

CATEGORY	SUBJECT DESCRIPTOIN
Cat E	Land Protection and Management
Cat G	Recreation, Safety, Navigation and Human Health
Cat J	Invasive Species

All the other Tabs were addressed at the previous meetings in February and August of 2019 and the details are listed on the spread sheet.

- 7) Identify Priority Items For 2020** – The group then identified what our priority items should be for 2020 and identified the following:

- a. **Natural Rivers Program** – We discussed the next steps in determining the local community's interest in having the Little Manistee designated as a Natural River. The LMWCC membership was polled at the 2019 Annual Meeting and was in favor of the Natural Rivers Designation by about a 2/3 majority. The LMWCC Board has sent two letters to MI DNR requesting they work to designate the Little Manistee as a Natural River.
 - i. Armas, Joyce and Dan to speak to Brian Bury to understand next steps and understand what threshold the state needs to see to do this.
 - ii. We need to understand the overall desire in the watershed to have a natural rivers program.

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- iii. Townships can take responsibility for zoning withing the Natural Rivers program.
 - iv. Barb Stenger will see if there are some meetings of the Pine River area residents, we can attend to understand what they think of the program.
 - v. The group suggested we reach out to stakeholders including Individuals, Businesses, Michigan Citizens Groups, kayaking Groups, Fishing Groups and others with a Form Letter on the LMWCC web site.
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- b. **TU Monitoring Stations**-We agreed to continue work to install and maintain the monitoring stations. Armas Soorus will continue build and install of the first station this spring.
 - c. **Resources** – We did not get the time to talk about resources to implement the plan.
 - d. **Work with Lake Groups** – We will work with lake groups to address issues with invasive species, monitoring, and other issues.
 - e. **Septic** – We will continue to work to distribute the septic educational information and encourage inspect on sale rules.
 - f. **Invasive Species** - Continue work with Conservation Districts, river and lake groups to stop invasive species.
 - g. **Landowner's Packet** – We will continue our work to develop and distribute the land owners educational packet.

Adjourned 4:00 PM

The minutes and spread sheet will be on the LMWCC web site also.

I would like to thank everyone for their time and effort. This was a very good meeting, we covered a lot of ground and got some really good input for the plan.

Respectfully submitted,

Armas Soorus
LMRWSC/LMWCC