



**Final Public Meeting
for planning how to manage
the lower Huron River Watershed**

September 28, 2005 7:00 - 8:30 PM
Flat Rock Community Center

SUMMARY

Attendance (from sign-in sheet)

Name	Community/Agency
Carl Brooks	Romulus
Tom Burke	Huron Township
George Ferraro	METCO Engineering for Sumpter
Terence Filipiak	Flat Rock
Brent Florek	Charles Raines for Gibraltar, Flat Rock Hennessey Engineers for South Rockwood, Berlin,
Mark Gaworecki	Woodhaven
Carolyn Grapentine	Flat Rock High School
Bruce Hammond	Flat Rock
Tricia Huddas	MDEQ, Water Bureau
Lois Johnson	Huron Township
Harold Kott	Huron
Noel Mullett	Wayne County Department of Environment
Elizabeth Riggs	HRWC
Jack Rychlicki	Woodhaven-Brownstown School District
Bob and Deeda Stanczak	Huron Township
Greg Weeks	Wade-Trim
Bob Wittersheim	HCMA
Bob Zilka	New Boston

1) Welcome

- Bruce Hammond, Director of Public Works for Flat Rock, opened the public meeting shortly after 7:00 PM with a welcome to the Flat Rock Community Center. Approximately 16 people attended the final public meeting. Elizabeth Riggs, Huron River Watershed Council, reviewed the meeting agenda and introduced the first speaker, Bob Wittersheim, Park Interpreter with the Huron-Clinton Metropark Authority.

2) Treasures of the Watershed (Why Protect It?)

- Bob Wittersheim spoke about the natural treasures present in the Metroparks in the lower Huron River Watershed. His talk highlighted why the natural features of the watershed are worth protecting. Lake Erie Metropark has a great natural area off of Haggarty Road that can be accessed from a fishermans' trail. The Bobwhite Trail at Lower Huron Metropark should not be missed for a show of complete native spring flora. A small patch of native prairie remains at Willow Metropark, and HCMA is recreating native prairie at Oakwoods Metropark. He also addressed a few management strategies employed by HCMA to preserve and restore the native ecosystems in the Metroparks. For a complete assessment of the natural features and management options in the Metroparks see the reports from the Michigan Natural Features Inventory available from the MNFI website.

3) The Plan to Protect the Watershed

- Elizabeth Riggs, HRWC, provided an approximately 25 minute presentation in which she presented the draft Watershed Management Plan and gave directions on how the public can comment on the plan. *See attached PowerPoint slides from the talk.* The presentation defined what a watershed is and the values associated with healthy watersheds. Elizabeth briefly described the steps of watershed management planning and the planning effort underway in the lower Huron River Watershed by the community and agency partners that comprise the Inter-Municipality Committee. Attendees reviewed the Table of Contents and Executive Summary sections of the plan.
- Designated uses and desired uses for the watershed were reviewed. Threatened designated uses in the watershed are warmwater fishery and indigenous aquatic life and wildlife. Partial body contact recreation is impaired. A TMDL for *E. coli* has been established in Wagner-Pink Drain, and measures to solve the problem are being taken. The MDEQ recommended in 2004 that Port Creek be evaluated further to determine whether a TMDL for poor biota needs to be established.
- The sources of information that were used in developing the plan were reviewed and information gaps were identified. The information was used to generate the prioritized list of pollutants in the watershed. The top three problems in descending order are altered hydrology, sediment, and excess nutrients. The methodology for determining the critical areas was presented as well.
- The prioritized goals for the watershed were reviewed:
 - 1) Information and education to raise watershed awareness
 - 2) Protect and mitigate loss of natural features
 - 3) Support plan implementation
 - 4) Reduce flow variability and stabilize flows
 - 5) Reduce soil erosion and sedimentation
 - 6) Reduce nutrient loading
 - 7) Reduce pathogen (*E. coli*) loading
 - 8) Increase use of Low Impact Development principles
 - 9) Increase monitoring of water quality, water quantity, and aquatic biology
 - 10) Increase recreational opportunities
- An overview of the management alternatives, or actions planned to meet the goals, was presented. The alternatives were developed and selected through committee meetings that evaluated existing codes and ordinances and identified problem areas, presentations, discussions and handout materials about managerial, vegetative and structural alternatives, and two workshops held jointly with the Combined Downriver and Ecorse Creek watersheds. Elizabeth presented examples of actions that committee members plan to take in the short-term and long-term, and highlighted the Action Plan (Table 5.5) as being the heart of the watershed management plan.
- The plan identifies qualitative and quantitative methods that the communities and agencies will employ to measure progress once they adopt the plan and begin to implement management alternatives. Qualitative methods measure effectiveness of the programs or projects, and may include public surveys, stream surveys, visual documentation, and participation tracking for events. Quantitative methods measures long-term progress in meeting watershed goals through data and monitoring, and may include monitoring for environmental indicators such as stream temperature, fish communities, and sediment contamination. The plan should be reviewed and updated

every five years to incorporate action items that have been initiated or completed, and to revise the management alternatives based on the results of any monitoring.

- The next steps for the Plan and Committee are:
 - 1) For the public to review the plan either by viewing a paper copy at their local government office or by downloading the electronic file from the committee's website at www.lowerhuronriver.net. Comments are accepted until Oct. 12, 2005.
 - 2) Comments received from the public and committee members will be incorporated into the final version in mid-October
 - 3) Final plan will be submitted to MDEQ by Nov. 1, 2005
 - 4) Committee members will develop individual Storm Water Pollution Prevention Initiatives (SWPPI) and submit them to MDEQ by May 2006
 - 5) Committee will decide on future meetings schedule and increase coordination with other watersheds, interested organizations and individuals to seek more efficient implementation of action items described in the watershed plan

4) State's Perspective on Planning for Watershed Protection

- Following Elizabeth's presentation, she introduced Tricia Huddas, MDEQ, Water Bureau, Southeast Michigan District who spoke for approximately 15 minutes about the elements of a successful watershed management plan, and requirements of the federal stormwater permit program.

5) A Local Watershed Protection Example

- Carolyn Grapentine, the Environmental Science teacher at Flat Rock Community High School, was the last speaker of the meeting and was introduced by Elizabeth Riggs. She described the High School's Huron River Monitoring Project, funded through a grant from Auto Alliance.
- The following text is excerpted from her report: The project is designed to teach students scientific study of local waterways and connect their results to community decisions. The program provides methods used in scientific river study, an enjoyable experience that encourages students to become life-long river stewards, and assistance to the Flat Rock community in decisions that affect their river and its streams. We evaluated the data we collected with the data collected from the past several years to see if the health of the river has changed and if so, how. As the students work with the current and past data we hope to make suggestions on how to improve the river health. We hope to be able to continue to report to [the committee] and our local governmental agencies on our results. The grant allowed us to purchase equipment to continue our monitoring for many years and we hope to be able to continue this program and improve it as we are able.
- Carolyn's plans for the project include honing her aquatic bug identifying skills, creating a timeline to organize the project for subsequent years, and to meet with other teachers who do work on rivers. She is getting ready for trips to the river this year with a new group of students.

6) Public Input and Question and Answer Session

- The session began close to 8:30 PM when the meeting was scheduled to conclude so the session was brief unfortunately. Moreover, few members of the public remained by that time to ask questions of the speakers and committee.
- Members of the public were encouraged to contact the committee members from their area with questions or comments. Committee members introduced themselves by name and affiliation.

- Attendees were asked to complete a 1-page evaluation about the public meeting. The results of the evaluation are provided below.



Evaluation Summary

10 surveys completed

1. Please evaluate the following elements:

	Poor					Excellent		
	1	2	3	4	5			
Meeting time	1	2	3	4	5			AVG: 4.2
Visuals	1	2	3	4	5			AVG: 3.2 technical difficulty
Format	1	2	3	4	5			AVG: 4.0
Value of discussions	1	2	3	4	5			AVG: 3.7 low turnout
Length of event	1	2	3	4	5			AVG: 4.0
Handouts	1	2	3	4	5			AVG: 4.2

2. Please check the appropriate column for each part of the event:

	Too much detail	Right amount of information	Not enough information
Local Treasures: Huron River/Metroparks		100%	
Highlights of Watershed Mgmt Plan		100%	
State Perspectives		70%	30%
Students Read the River		90%	10%
Q&A		67%	33%

3. How did you hear about this public meeting?

On the LHRWIC (4); meeting notice (2); cable TV

4. Do you have any concerns or comments regarding the information presented and discussed at this event?

No comments received