

**Portage/Arcadia Creek 319 Watershed Planning Steering Committee
Meeting Summary: August 22, 2001**

Meeting was held at the Kalamazoo Conservation District Offices on Centre Street

Attendees: Kathy Buckham (Kalamazoo Conservation District), Larry Leach (MI Conservation District), George Heffner (NRCS), Don Brown (Kalamazoo Environmental Coalition), Jenny Molloy (MDEQ-SWQD), Jeff Rikerts (Kalamazoo County Human Services Department), John Olech (Kalamazoo River Watershed Council), Pat Holton (Western Michigan University), Pete Maas (Pharmacia), Tom Small (Kalamazoo Environmental Concerns Committee & The Wild Ones), Bill Reed (The Forum - Administrator of the Project), Mark Kieser (Kieser & Associates - Technical Consultants for the Project), Mike Tenenbaum (Kieser & Associates).

Bill Reed, Administrator for the Project, provided greetings. Participants then introduced themselves and their respective affiliations. It was noted that due to the intense rainstorms taking place it would be unlikely that the stormwater representatives from Portage or Kalamazoo would be attending.

A brief discussion took place on a press release, a non-agenda item, which will soon be released through the Forum. The period of the grant covering this project will be from July 2001 to June 2003. While this effort is a planning grant, there may be implementation funds, available through another grant, when this project is over.

Mark Kieser presented the intent of the project and a brief project overview. A prepared map of the sub-watersheds was handed out. Current status, positives and negatives and the challenges ahead were briefly discussed. Known ongoing activities of some of the partners were mentioned.

A review of the initial list of Project Partners and the framework that brought us to this point today was offered. We are looking to develop a watershed management plan within two years that will address water quality concerns and build upon ongoing efforts. While cross-jurisdictional elements will create challenges, we also recognize that some 27 to 30 cross-jurisdictional watershed plans have already been completed in Michigan.

A two-year schedule/timeline was handed out and reviewed. Work Plan Tasks were also distributed and given a cursory review. Greater detail was provided for the elements within Task 9, since this Task will result in the content of the Management Plan to be reported to the State. The group decided that storm water ordinances should also be considered as a means of institutionalizing water protection.

A question arose with regard to the level of cooperation required to accomplish all the items reviewed and whether or not that level of cooperation is there. Most expressed that there are growing examples of such cooperation, that manifests itself with project-specific, common-goal approaches. Keeping this type of focus on efforts related to this project will be one of our main tasks as a Steering Committee.

Proper coverage by the *Kalamazoo Gazette* is to be welcome and very important. Would it be possible to invite their participation as an educational partner? This would be a “learning curve” opportunity for the newspaper to gain experience in dealing with larger watershed issues. Perhaps they would provide some type of on-going column or feature that might appear every other week, or with some other frequency. Contacts will be made and explored.

Attention then returned to the three years of 319 funding for implementation that are typically available after the planning process. Most likely, a grant would need to be written before the end of this project for the best timing. In fact, such preparations may begin within the coming year to establish needed documentation.

Other potential partners were considered. USGS, where Mr. Steve Blumer and Ms. J. Lunsford have expressed interest was one partner discussed. Conversations have already begun toward their input. The quality and amount of information now available on the USGS website was spoken of very highly by several attendees. A question was raised about us being able to be linked to their site. While that may be possible, it was noted that this project does have a trial website already up that is hot-linked to the USGS site.

A point of clarification was made with regard to the data generated during this project or in other projects. In many cases, grantors restrict release of data until peer reviewed or the grant ends. This can have obvious impact on the information included in and conclusions reached within any project.

The next item discussed was the need/desire for operating and decision making procedures. With a diverse make up of participants these both help provide a level of comfort in being able to move forward. In the simplest of terms, the intent of a “Steering Committee” is to have a diverse “core group” of participants, committed to making sure there is a plan produced. We recognize the need for various groups within these watersheds, likely to have specific and focused interests, to be brought in and out of involvement on a more limited basis and we welcome that level of participation too.

Attendees do not need to represent a specific group to be present at a meeting. The Operational Guidelines distributed to those present were for review and consideration. No action is expected on these for one or two more meetings. During discussion on these points, it was suggested that the group may want to appoint a specific spokesperson some time in the future. Several slight modifications were agreed to for these guidelines. The updated Guidelines can be found on the project website.

All participants are encouraged to present problems and challenges facing their particular sub-watershed either at a meeting, through the website or directly to K&A. Participants briefly identified his or her personal area of interest with regard to this project

Our attention next was directed to the existing website at www.kalamazooriver.net. To register once you reach the site:

1. Click on the Online Discussion Forum
2. If you are a **First time visitor**, click on either Please Register or the Log In icon and follow the instructions
3. Complete the form and submit.

Once registered, every time you hit “log in” you will be kept updated whenever anything new has been added to the site since your last visit. The site will now undergo several modifications, suggested during the meeting, to make it more user-friendly and comfortable. All agreed with the educational and administrative value of such a site. Meeting summaries, handout materials and many other types of information can all be made readily available to anyone with access to the website.

Mark Kieser next used provide a presentation using overhead graphics on current work plan elements in progress, their status and what is to be accomplished.

Remaining discussions involved mostly housekeeping items. The In-Kind Services form, developed by Bill Reed, will be posted on the website and made interactive. How to use this form was described as well as its importance for participants to use, particularly for the benefit of project funding.

It was reported that newspaper and radio have been found to be the best sources of information for citizens.

Our press release will include the names of those individuals or agencies that had agreed to partner when the grant was being written.

The next meeting will be September 19, 2001 at the Kalamazoo Conservation District, from 9-11 a.m. The October meeting is scheduled for the 17th of that month at a time and location to be determined at the September meeting.

Since the November meeting would occur the day before Thanksgiving, we are asking for a response on whether the 19th or 20th (Monday and Tuesday respectively) would work best for participants.

For the Steering Committee
Michael Tenenbaum