

**Muskegon River Watershed Assembly
Education Committee Meeting Minutes
September 17, 2014
FSU Johnson Hall, Room 322**

*****These minutes are not official until approved at the next regular meeting.*****

LaLonde convened the meeting at 4:18 p.m. Those participating were:

Jean LaLonde, Chair
Bill Burmeister, FSU
Nancy Burmeister, retired teacher
Cindy Fitzwilliams-Heck, FSU

Jessica Wagenmaker, Holton Schools
Vicki Sawicki, USFS
Erica Johnson, MAISD
Terry Stilson, Program Director

Agenda and Minutes – Fitzwilliams-Heck added: Sturgeon Update.

N. Burmeister motioned to accept the agenda as amended, along with the June 17 meeting minutes. Fitzwilliams-Heck supported the motion. Motion passed.

Old Business

Rain Barrel Workshop in Mecosta County –

- June 19 workshop went well with 23 attending.
- Fitzwilliams-Heck stated that she has 15 barrels. She will arrange delivery with Burmeisters.
- Stilson reported that an Osceola County person inquired about a rain barrel workshop so perhaps one could be done there next spring. The person said she would help publicize it.

Natural Shoreline Workshop –

- July 27 workshop went well but there was low attendance.
- Number of plants ordered was disappointing.

Survey results – results were distributed.

- LaLonde stated there was much about swimmers' itch in it so maybe some educational material could be distributed about it.
 - Fitzwilliams-Heck said there is much information in the Higgins Lake area about the subject.
 - Stilson added that MSU is completing a research project there about swimmers' itch and an article is supposed to be written soon.
- LaLonde asked each member to state what they found interesting about the results:
 - B. Burmeister stated he was surprised that Roscommon and Newaygo Counties had the top percentage of surveys returned with Muskegon County having a low number.
 - N. Burmeister was interested in the number of people concerned about contaminated drinking water.
 - Fitzwilliams-Heck noted the answer in question 4, "These are all legitimate concerns, but are they a problem or not?" That is what we need to determine.
 - Sawicki stated that since she works with invasive species, those items stick out to her. It was also listed as the top concern in question 4. She wondered about the concern for lower property values.
 - Stilson responded that many people in Roscommon County are concerned their property values are going to be lowered if the dam structure is removed.
 - Johnson inquired about the Bridgeton oil pipeline.
 - Stilson responded that an old pipeline was discovered under the river at Bridgeton this summer. It was leaking but she hasn't heard about how it was resolved.

- Stilson stated that waterfowl droppings were the second highest scored results under “Sources of pollution in your area.” She furthered that one of her projects will be putting signs on Houghton Lake beaches to deter people from feeding the waterfowl.
- LaLonde noted that “scenic beauty” was the highest ranked “very good” under “rating activities of the watershed.”
- Wagenmaker noted that a big percentage of people want to be kept informed but do not want to join the MRWA.
- Discussion –
 - Fitzwilliams-Heck thought we should prioritize tasks and then determine how to reach those involved. Maybe a kiosk at boat launches for outreach. Looking at where people get their information – Conservation Districts, DEQ, DNR – partnerships could be developed to get the word out. We need to tie it all together.
 - B. Burmeister asked about working with road commissions to prevent runoff and erosion.
 - Stilson reported about two MRWA projects – one is completing road/stream inventories in the watershed and the other is completing one road end project on Houghton Lake. The Roscommon County Road Commission is using this as a demonstration project and will try to get funding to do similar projects on other road ends.
 - Stilson reported there will be a MRWA Resource Committee meeting on October 9 in Cadillac where some of these projects will be discussed.
 - LaLonde responded that the Education Committee wants to do some things to fulfill the needs specified in the survey. Perhaps one or two items in each of our newsletters would serve a good purpose.
 - **In the October newsletter –**
 - **An item about how the Bridgeton pipeline issue was resolved.**
 - **Note the survey results said 76% of respondents thought scenic beauty was “very good”.**
 - **Feature one invasive in each newsletter. Sawicki will provide an invasive picture and a short description of it.**
 - **Education Committee will decide the items that need to go into each newsletter.**

Teacher Workshop discussion –

- Will be held on March 12 at Holton High School/Middle School from 5:30-8:00 pm.
- Will consist of a progressive dinner. Each course will be on tables outside of the session rooms and educators will pick the course up as they enter the room. Courses will be an appetizer, salad, dinner, and dessert. (Wagenmaker is in charge of dinner)
- Four – 30 minute sessions will be conducted.
- RSVPs by March 9.
- October newsletter will have a “Save the Date” section.
- Publicizing –
 - Copies to ISDs for distribution to schools.
 - Postcard to schools and flyers later – turtle on the flyer.
 - MSTA – flyer in guest bags. Copies will be given to Fitzwilliams-Heck.
 - MAEOE conference in October. Copies will be given to Fitzwilliams-Heck.
 - Fitzwilliams-Heck will let Stilson know how many copies are needed.
- Title – “Splash into Spring” on first line and on second line, “Progressive Dinner and MRWA Water Workshop for Educators”.
- Sessions –
 - “Practical lessons to take with you”.
 - Need more than four lessons – maybe topics.
 - Two presenters per room

- Place-based education
- Have general topics for each session, i.e. invasive species.
- “Eat, Learn, and Do”
- Contact information of people and website where teachers can get more information.
- Schedule –
 - October and November – bring Aquatic WILD books and ideas
 - December – solidify workshop tasks and activities
 - January – compile information
 - February – practice
 - March – workshop

Other

Sturgeon Update – Fitzwilliams-Heck reported attending the Manistee Sturgeon Release sponsored by the Little River Band Ottawa Indians. She said she talked with DNR Fisheries Biologists who don't feel the Muskegon River is a good candidate for a sturgeon rearing facility. They said the Muskegon has a slowly recovering population. Habitat restoration is perhaps needed. They are willing to work with us on outreach and education.

- Stilson reported that the DNR is still planning to submit a proposal this winter/spring for a facility. Reports are on the MRWA website for justification for the project.

Next Meeting – the next meeting will be held on Thursday, October 23, at 4:15 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Terry Stilson
Program Director