

**Middle Cuyahoga Watershed Group Interim Steering Committee  
Meeting Discussion Summary  
January 14, 2009**

**Attendees:**

Russ	Kring	City of Cuyahoga Falls Engineering
Gene	Roberts	City of Kent Service Department
Jerry	Gubanich	City of Kent Storm water
Bob	Brown	City of Kent Water Reclamation
David	Merleno	City of Ravenna Water Dept.
Don	Brooker	City of Stow Engineering
Brad	Kosco	City of Stow Engineering
Tim	Gott	County of Summit Department of Environmental Services
Nick	Lautzenheiser	County of Summit Planning and Development
Eric	Akin	NEFCO
Maia	Peck	NEFCO
Claudia	James	Portage County Regional Planning Commission
Jennifer	White	Portage County Soil and Water Conservation District
Christine	Craycroft	Portage Parks/Breakneck Creek Coalition
Joan	Hug-Anderson	Summit County Soil and Water Conservation District

**Invited but Not Present:**

Frank	Larson	City of Munroe Falls
Harold	Huff	Portage County Water Resources
David	White	County of Summit Engineering

Maia started the meeting by noting the purpose of the meeting was to follow up on the discussions of December 12 and firm up a general structure for the watershed planning group, with the intent of having a full kick-off meeting in February. In the discussion that followed, there was a great deal of overlap between discussing the group structure and the list of additional participants.

**1. Group Structure**

During the discussions in December, the group agreed that the watershed planning effort should have a steering committee to direct the progress and implementation, in addition to participation from a broad range of interests. Maia had e-mailed participants with suggested language. (See attached Meeting Agenda) She commented that some of the most important characteristics of those steering the plan development should be their commitment to developing a plan that meets state requirements, recognizing the broader interest of the watershed, and being willing to seek official endorsement of it, with the intention of implementing it.

**Discussion points included:**

- Broad representation is needed in the process, including supporters and detractors

- In order to seek endorsement, organization staff must keep decision-makers in their organizations informed about the process, seek input from those who will be charged with implementing the plan. Maia will visit communities and organizations also.
- Steering committee membership will be by organization – alternates are not only allowed but encouraged, to make sure the organization is represented.
- Left undetermined was whether the steering committee should have a size limit and whether a certain amount of attendance at meetings is required for participation.

## 2. Mission Statement/Purpose of the Group

The group discussed, modified, and agreed on the following mission statement for the purposes of getting started. **Note: I've put a suggested addition in red.** This description was based on and modified from descriptions that NEFCO put together for the grant and for fact sheets describing the watershed planning project. This statement may be modified as the group evolves.

*To build a watershed management framework **and implement measures** that will improve, restore, and protect the middle Cuyahoga River, its tributaries, and watershed; and to help watershed communities and organizations cooperatively address issues related to water quality and quantity.*

The discussion raised some important points:

The middle Cuyahoga watershed participants do not constitute a watershed group *per se*. Right now it is a partnership that has come together to start the process of managing the middle Cuyahoga watershed. Among the tasks the group will undertake are:

- Developing, submitting, and endorsing an implementable Watershed Action Plan that meets state requirements and provides the regional perspective for water management
- Determining the most appropriate structure for managing the watershed over the long term. The group may be able to establish the long-term structure, depending on what the recommendations are.
- Starting to implement watershed management measures, preferably before the plan is completed.
- Developing public awareness within the watershed
- Provide assistance to existing groups, which need help. This will help forward the objectives of organizational development, implementation, and public awareness.

These items are each addressed to some extent in the work program.

## 3. Kickoff Meeting

The project kick-off meeting will be held at Tuesday, February 24, at 9:30 at the Lake Hodgson Lodge in Ravenna. The meetings so far have run about 2 hours.

The meeting will include an introduction to the watershed, the watershed planning process (Watershed Planning 101), and the structure and intent of the group. As at the December meeting, an important part of the discussion will be for the participants to share concerns, issues, priorities.

Maia will prepare project notebooks for the participants, which will include the grant application, work plan, and the appropriate information to begin the planning process.

Nick has agreed to put together a good base map with Claudia for the meeting.

Maia will send out letters inviting these additional stakeholders to participate, keeping records of who has been contacted and who has declined to participate. The following groups and individuals will be contacted. The consensus was that most of these people would be appropriate as advisory board members, but if an organization was willing to commit the time and effort to help develop, receive endorsement for, and implement the watershed action plan, they would be welcome on the steering committee.

Dr. Darren	Bade	Kent State University Biology Dept.
Dr. Laura	Leff	Kent State University Biology Dept.
Dr. Ferenc	DeSzalay	Kent State University Biology Dept.
Dr. Christopher	Woolverton	Kent State University Biology Dept.
Mr. Dennis	Bayden	Kent State University environmental compliance
Mr. Mike	Johnson	Metroparks, Serving Summit County
Mr. Pat	Gsellman	City of Akron
Mr. James	White	Cuyahoga River Remedial Action Plan
Mr. Roger	Lyons	City of Tallmadge
Mr. David	Herpy	Kent Environmental Council/Whitewater kayakers
Mr. Steve	Tuckerman	Ohio Environmental Protection Agency
Mr. Mark	Bergman	Ohio Environmental Protection Agency
Mr. Bill	Zawiski	Ohio Environmental Protection Agency
Mr. Nick	Kennedy	Portage County Farm Bureau
Mr. Bill	Hoover	Kent Area Chamber of Commerce
Dr. John	Peck	University of Akron Geology Dept.
Ms. Edith	Chase	
Mr. Claude	Custer	

Suggestions from the December and January meetings include the following additional organizations, to help address gaps in representation:

- Trust for Public Land
- Western Reserve Land conservancy
- Townships, municipalities
- NRCS
- Portage County Engineers
- Health Depts. – Summit Co. and Portage Co.
- Emergency management agencies
- Stark County and its municipalities
- Portage Co. Economic development director
- Chambers of Commerce/Main Street
- Homebuilders Association
- Property owners
- Isaac Walton League
- Friends of the Crooked River
- Silver Lake

While the educational community was noted as a stakeholder to include, the SWCD has staff who focus on the educational community.

#### 4. General - housekeeping and upcoming meetings (1, 3, 5)

- Sign in, check contact info, add more contacts if necessary
- Work plan & WAP development are the overall framework
- Will e-mail meeting notes after meetings; materials in advance for review, please also check website when it's functional
- Will keep running list of issues, suggested contacts, etc.
- Generally will meet every month
- Would it be useful to include occasional informational sessions on relevant topics? E.g., watersheds 101, physical/biological/chemical aspects, tour of nearby sites
- Draft text will be available for review/discussion

#### 5. Other work plan items:

- *Year of the River* – Organizing some interesting events & opportunities  
<http://www.crcpo.org/> e-mail [goodmanj@cuyahogariverrap.org](mailto:goodmanj@cuyahogariverrap.org) or call Jane Goodman at 216-241-2414 ext. 610. Recommend your community/organization adopts resolution/proclamation, and get on the YOTR website.
- *Potter Creek restoration* – easement purchase in progress (22 ac.), design of over-wide ditch in progress, coordinating with CRCPO for public workshop on watershed protection and wetlands of Breakneck Cr., possibly April

#### 6. Requests and other items from committee members

River Day along the Cuyahoga is May 16, 2009. **Breakneck Creek Assoc.** will be having Breakneck Creek Day in honor of River Day, with fish shocking demonstrations and other activities on a 66-acre parcel in Ravenna.

**Portage SWCD** – There will be a Cuyahoga Watershed IDEA (In-Depth Environmental Awareness) workshop aimed at educators on July 20-24 at Hiram College. There will be research presentations, breakout sessions, information stations, wetlands tours, etc. Gene Russell from ODNR Div. of Wildlife is putting together the agenda. Registration opens March 1.

April – there will be an Envirothon camp in Asbury. They will have an information table. Jennifer suggested developing a project sheet for the watershed planning project to hand out.

**7. Homework** – Maia is starting to compile existing reports concerning the watershed. If anyone has materials, please let Maia know. Also, please send photos of interesting locations in the watershed to Maia, so she can use them in presentations, websites, etc.