

Great Lakes Water Resources Regional Committee Meeting Minutes
Erie County Conservation District
August 9, 2005

Administrative Items:

Finalize February/May Meeting Summaries

No corrections. There was no quorum, so the minutes were not approved.

Update Statewide Committee Meeting Summary

Public Meetings and Hearings on Act 220 were held in May. Attendance was approximately 30 people per meeting. A Draft Summary was provided for committee members. A more formal document will be coming in November.

CDM is developing a methodology to project water use until 2020. The Susquehanna River Basin Commission is converting DMR data into electronic format.

CWPA Criteria and Process document merged into one document. Will be published as final interim document. Will have a usable form shortly.

The regulations are currently going through committees and they are slated to go to the EHB later this year or the beginning of 2006.

Erie County Department of Planning

Water resources are recognized as vitally important and worth protecting in Erie County. County planning – much of the authority is at the state or municipal level. Went over Watershed, Future Land Use Plan, and Public Water Systems maps that were distributed. Conservation areas include lake bluff and sensitive surface waters. Need to limit development to minimize impacts to streams and other water resources. Preserving natural resources and water resources encourages BMP's. PLEWA developed a Strategic Action Plan to implement what they want to do. PLEWA would establish effective watershed protocol. Erie County developed the Lake Erie Area Watershed Act 167 Stormwater Management Plan in 1996. There is no Stormwater Management Plan for the Ohio River Watershed. Most municipalities have adopted Act 167. Only those portions of a municipality located within the Lake Erie watershed are required to be covered by the Stormwater Management ordinance. Springfield and Conneaut have not yet adopted Act 167. Some municipalities are required to adopt Act 167 ordinances but have not done so because DEP is not enforcing the requirement. 76% of respondents to the Citizen Survey listed stormwater management as a major or minor problem. Are there any critical water resource issues in the county? Availability of drinking water is not a problem. Some rural areas have seasonal water table issues. There do not appear to be any areas in Erie County with a water problem. Older, rural towns with dense development have experienced groundwater contamination from old sewage systems.

Water systems may need to be constructed in these rural areas. Cannot transfer water across the Continental Divide. Getting adequate water to high, densely populated areas will become more of an issue.

What happens if wells run dry? Who enforces – DEP, federal government? This issue needs to be addressed in the regional plan – may be a violation of federal law. Matt Wolford feels it should be a prominent component of our plan. The City and its systems take water directly from the Lake. 59% of citizens polled in the Citizen Survey supported some form of consolidation of the water and sewer systems. Another issue is lake bluff recession and encroachment upon the bluffs. It is potentially dangerous to residents, visitors, and property. There is also potential ecological damage to Lake Erie and the shoreline. The issue is to minimize the recession of the bluff.

Bluff setback revisions – did it go to EHB? Is there still an opportunity for public comment? Lori Boughton said not many comments were received.

Did individual municipalities contact the homeowners? Lori Boughton didn't know if homeowners had been contacted.

Other Resources

Other water resource issues are invasive species – purple hogwart, zebra mussels, and brown gobies. Zebra mussels have been found in Edinboro Lake. Lake Erie and French Creek have problems with invasive species. Much of French Creek's ecosystem is similar to the Great Lakes. It is still relatively pristinine – unique and worth preserving. French Creek is recognized as a globally significant resource. Older, poorly planned stormwater management is causing problems in some municipalities due to poor construction and design – ineffective. It was put in place prior to new development and now it is ineffective. Expensive and difficult to correct.

Technical Reports and Model Ordinances

Erie County developed a model stormwater management ordinance for municipalities to implement the Lake Erie Area stormwater management plan. The model ordinance was used by all of the municipalities that have adopted Act167-compliant stormwater management ordinances.

Identified Needs and Priorities

Recognize the value of Lake Erie and French Creek and work to minimize negative impacts on them. Groundwater is a big issue. Protect groundwater for clean water by minimizing non-point source pollution. Encourage BMP's in agriculture, industry and land development to minimize chemical and erosion runoff and streambank degradation. Enforcement of riparian buffer ordinances is difficult. Bluff hazard ordinances have been adopted by the Lake Erie shoreline municipalities. Bluff hazard ordinances will likely be revised. Regional priorities have been well considered. They address local needs and priorities. No objection or need to change any regional priorities.

Questions/Discussion

Are county economic development people suggesting BMP's when they talk to potential new businesses? Stormwater – MSA requirements must be enforced in urbanized areas.

County should consider updating stormwater management plan so municipalities can get funding.

Municipality does not have a way to stop someone from building on a lot. Townships and municipalities do not have a tool to stop this from occurring. Dave Skellie – Pennsylvania's planning is very poor. If we had a statute, we could make standards to achieve. Dave Skellie – There is a need for well monitoring before a well permit can be issued. Should come from our committee. We need to do something about wells. There are no construction standards on how wells should be done. Wells constructed for new homes – there is no guarantee that the well is good or will last any length of time. Should have construction standards relating to quantity/quality. There is a need for well monitoring.

Under CWA, households that are polluting into the Lake (discharging into Lake) can be sued. DEP can enforce against pollution into Lake Erie, Health Department can enforce against discharges to Lake.

Regional Plan Component Outline and Work Assignments

Looking for people to take the lead on issue paper for Regional Planning Component. Must be finalized and submitted to DEP Secretary by March 2008. Possibly utilize GLIN for money to support possibly hiring someone to gather information and write the component.

Estimated cost is approximately \$50,000. Discussion ensued re: hiring a consultant to pull information for the first three bullets for August 2005 – November 2005 timeline. Matt Wolford proposed a scope of work be done and investigate potential organizations who may be willing to fund some or all of the work. A vote was taken and the vote was unanimous. There were no descending votes, motion was carried. Lori Boughton suggested having a Plan B in place in case monies are not available. Cathy Myers stated there may be possible funding through Growing Greener at a later date. Matt Wolford agreed with Lori's suggestion of Plan B. Have someone on adhoc committee to update us in a month. Lori Mohr – September 15th is the deadline for an update on progress of scope of work.

Great Lakes Annex Documents

Cathy Myers gave a presentation on the Great Lakes Basin.

- Went over the history of the Great Lakes Basin.
- Talked about past actions taken and challenges facing the Great Lakes.
- Annex implementation.
- Details of the revised Draft Agreement.
- Diversions.
- Consumptive Use.
- Conservation – very serious conservation measures have been beefed up.
- Resource improvements.
- Additional issues.

Next Steps

Public comment period is underway – ends August 29th.

Next meeting will be held on November 18th at the Erie County Conservation District.
Motion to adjourn meeting, motion seconded.