

Western Lake Erie Basin – Urban Waters Federal Partnership

29 April 2014 at Wildwood Metropark, 1-3 pm

Meeting Notes

I. Opening Presentation

A. Welcome and Introductions

- Approximately 45 participants per sign-in sheet

B. Purpose of Meeting

- Focus on ideas / topics / themes from first two meetings (Nov 2013, Feb 2014)
- How federal agencies can help locals with their priority water projects

C. Review of Last UW Meeting – Themes / Issues

- People need to experience their waters to appreciate
- Algal problems (drinking water, recreation, etc.)
- Climate change / extreme weather considerations
- Load assessments / TMDL needed for nutrients
- Sediment control
- Open lake dumping issues
- Failing small WWTPs, septic systems, CSOs, SSOs
- Need to increase stakeholder base – engage, educate, empower
- Water should be integral to business, recreation, and economics
- Things people can do in homes / neighborhoods to protect waterways
- Utilize great local news station and radio spots
- Need more riparian buffers to filter Phosphorus
- Need more areas with public access to waters for boating
- Education – lack of understanding from general citizens
- Find people we are not already reaching / not current constituents
- Earth week celebrations, volunteer monitoring, teacher workshops

II. Examples from Other Urban Waters Locations

- Workplans from different locations were presented (NW Indiana, LA, Philly)
- NW Indiana breaks down into four workgroups by sub-watershed. (Three watershed workgroups have CWA 319 funding, and one is a Great Lakes AOC.)
- Each UW location can choose to focus as they would like, form committees, to meet their issues / needs / goals.

III. How Do We Want to Structure Ourselves? Brainstorming...

- Suggestion to define urban area, our geographical zone

- Need more community folks and local groups represented, including EJ and underserved residents (evening meetings suggested sometimes)
- Wellness focus, use green space, develop trails (Health Dept, Forestry, DOT funds potentially for these types of projects; zoo and Metroparks has green space development)
- People want to connect to water that is nice / clean... thus ecosystems are important as they help provide clean water, and land acquisition important to restore more land (Middlegrounds project is a good example)
- Can UW can help with land acquisition? – should we work on high quality lands, or low quality ones that need work?
- TNC working on template - how increase use of natural areas by urban/ EJ communities
- Urban gardening groups, reach out to them (Toledo Grows)
- Lucas County Land Bank – how to use abandoned properties
- Try to get Trust for Public Land involved (office in Cleveland)
- How to make Lake Erie a destination for fishing, swimming, economic development?
- Have a public outreach booth at shows to talk about water quality and how it affects everyone.
- Lake Erie Protection Fund – count some of their work as match for other projects? (funds are from license plate fees)
- Get people down to use the water and offer watershed information (boat rides, naturalist talk, DW source)
- Sandpiper would welcome speakers from UW partners – 20 minute presentations (for example, naturalist from Metroparks speaks once a month)
- Hard to get funding for education and outreach materials; need DW source information.
- Get people to help with river and stream clean-ups, then they appreciate and understand better where their drinking water comes from
- Sustainability plan
- Public education and outreach – understanding and awareness needed / social change;
- Know the message we want to share, know how to measure if effective, need social science! (MI recent study of behavior change after outreach – future topic?)
- Sediment issues at Cullen Park – coming from rural upstream, WWTP, etc.?
- Dredging issues – open lake dumping vs place in islands
- Social media campaign, how to change behaviors
- Map the EJ areas, natural areas, and social survey results to see where to focus efforts
- Start educational components first, then programs will follow

- Program workgroups preferred (not sub-watersheds) – potentially Urban Stormwater / GI / BMP Team; and Land Planning / Mapping & baseline conditions; and Economic Development Teams
- Check other plans for top three topics that need help

IV. Missing Partners or Resources

- Community groups and residents
- Toledo Grows
- Lucas County Land Bank
- Trust for Public Lands
- Green space funding – Forestry or DOT
- Health and Wellness funding – Dept of Health
- Social Science / Social Change – need info and data (find MI study report)

V. Wrap Up and Next Steps

- Will consolidate ideas and consider workgroups to focus on specific programs
- Schedule next meeting for mid-summer?
- Doodle poll will be sent