

White Oak Bayou Steering Committee

Minutes for February 7th, 2010

Call to order

-Chairman Rick Scott could not attend, Scott Owen started the meeting

Goals for 2011

The timeline for the 2011/2012 grant period was reviewed to familiarize SC members with proposed months for significant task completions. It was pointed out that 2 slightly different timelines were inadvertently e-mailed to SC members. The correct timeline is the one showing alpha/numeric categories (eg. Component 1 Task B) for each task.

The 5 components of the workplan were reviewed with a brief description of each. The components are:

- 1) Additional HGM Assessment Work
- 2) Continue Refinement of GIS
- 3) Educational Outreach
- 4) Develop Draft Wetland Management Plan
- 5) Dissemination of Results

A flowchart demonstrating some of the integral parts of the Wetland Management Plan was discussed.

John Turner discussed a wetland identification class that will be offered September 6th for anyone interested. He is currently putting together an agenda and will forward that when available.

The 2011 Regional Chapter meeting for the Society of Wetland Scientists (SWS) Meeting in Little Rock was mentioned. *(note* Due to a miscommunication from SWS, this meeting is now scheduled to be held in Lafayette, LA. Our sincere apologies for the confusion.)*

Rick Scott mentioned that he had a 1991 Marche Interchange Feasibility Study and a Pulaski County PATS Plan for any who are interested in looking at them.

Rosemary Rodibaugh discussed the possibility of a wetland tour for the local 4H group.

A more effective approach for getting the word out for the project, including public presentations and media advertisement, was once again discussed. There was some discussion about actively canvassing public areas with informational handouts. Sara discussed being contacted by Ethan Nahté with the Arkansas Wildlife Federation about interest in using the current White Oak Bayou guidance document as a resource for developing similar plans in other parts of Arkansas. Copies of the document were mailed to Ethan, and he was directed to Maumelle's website for pdf copies of the guidance document and other information related to the project

Some discussion was held regarding options for local landowners regarding conservation easements, becoming part of a watershed mitigation bank, and wetland/stream restoration was

discussed. John Turner with the Arkansas Natural Resources Commission mentioned a conservation easement tax credit that is now available. Scott and Sara also pointed out that the current workplan calls for setting up a meeting with an agency panel and inviting landowners so they could see what some of the options available to them are. John mentioned a willingness to sit in on such a panel.

Sara made a renewed request for SC member profiles.

SC Member input on WMP

The main areas of focus for the WMP that was mailed as part of the homework assignment Sara had e-mailed were discussed.

Much discussion was held on incorporating some form of history into the WMP. The general consensus from those at the meeting was that history is an important component. It was agreed that it would most likely be incorporated as part of the educational component of the WMP. It was also pointed out that the current grant does not directly fund work pertaining to history of the watershed. However, this would not preclude ongoing work such as the Oral History project, which has been an important side project to developing the WMP.

Other topics included developing trails and possibly canoe trails with some associated tri-fold brochures.

Sara kicked off discussions on the need for categorizing wetlands based on prioritizing them and mentioned some examples of things that may come into play in the prioritization process. Some of the items included distance from schools, wildlife and habitat potential, HGM results, fragmentation/connectivity, etc.

Jim Narey pointed out the importance of making good progress this year. Jim discussed the usefulness of a mitigation bank (if landowners would be on board), more citizens becoming aware and supportive of the project, public education about wetland losses, management of resources at the watershed level, and getting information before legislative bodies that will be necessary for approving ordinances, etc. He reiterated that this is a very important year for the project.

The issue of flooding was discussed and how people could often relate to the economic importance of wetlands when relating it to flood control.

Sara will be e-mailing a list for comments from the SC on possible wetland categories and scientific, social, and economic prioritization factors that may be useful in developing wetland categories such as preservation, restoration, filling for development, etc.

Next Meeting

The meeting ran over and we did not determine the next meeting date. This will be done via e-mail.

Meeting Adjourned