

**White Oak Bayou Joint Technical Advisory Committee/Steering Committee Meeting**  
*Minutes for July 7th, 2011*

Call to Order/Attendance Sign-in (Scott Owen)

1. Refer to meeting agenda for Steering Committee discussion topics.
2. Meeting called to order by Scott Owen (WCI).
3. Jim Nary (City of Maumelle) then provided the project introductory information and background to the group.
  - a. The City of Maumelle previously received approval from the U.S. EPA (EPA) for project grant for this next project phase.
  - b. In June 2011, Jim Nary, WCI and Jacobs met with the EPA in Dallas to discuss the project and grant. The purpose of the meeting included obtaining EPA's concurrence for including Jacobs on the WCI project team. The City of Maumelle agreed to WCI's recommendation to include Jacobs on the team. During the meeting with the EPA, they commented that the White Oak Bayou Wetland Management Plan is a cutting edge plan in the U.S.
  - c. The project has received over \$400,000 in EPA funding to date, and an additional grant has been submitted to continue work on the project.

Introductions (Scott Owen/All)

1. Scott Owen initiated the Steering Committee introductions and each individual in attendance identified themselves and their affiliation.

Discussion of Project Delay (Scott Owen/Bill Richardson)

1. Scott Owen then provided an explanation of the project delays that have occurred since January 2011.
  - a. The Steering Committee conducted a meeting on 2/7/11 and the monthly Newsletter was also distributed.
  - b. A new EPA Project Officer was assigned to the project.
  - c. The project officer requested additional information from the City of Maumelle as related to the grant application. This process continued for awhile which resulted in a delay in being able to continue with the project.
  - d. Consequently, WCI became concerned about the future of the project and grant funding because of the delays and continuing information requests from the EPA. Not knowing the future of the project, both Sara Owen and Scott Owen decided to consider other employment opportunities in the western U.S. Sara and Scott will remain involved in the project for a period of time, however, they will be transitioning out of the project over time. In fact, Sara has accepted a position in Montana and Scott plans to depart for Montana sometime in September 2011. Sara will be working remotely for awhile in performing GIS activities.

- e. The addition of Jacobs to the WCI team provides additional resources to the team including technical biological evaluation capabilities, engineering resources (erosion control, hydraulics & hydrology, etc.), enhanced GIS capabilities and administrative support.
- f. An important step was to obtain EPA's concurrence on the addition of Jacobs to the team and this did occur during the June meeting with EPA.
- g. Jim Nary then added that the project was in jeopardy of losing the grant funding because of an EPA deadline/cut-off date for providing additional information for the grant application. It was very important to the City of Maumelle to continue with WCI's approach for the Wetland Management Plan development.
- h. Marion Scott then commented about how the project "has a lot of eyes on it".
- i. Jim Nary explained further about the project delays and that the team will make up for this lost time in the coming months.
- j. Jim Nary then commented how the residents of the City of Maumelle are environmentally conscious and this will be helpful to the plan development.
- k. Scott Owen commented that it will be important to get the landowners introduced to the expanded team.
- l. Scott Owen explained that although there have been project delays, some work has been occurring.
- m. Rick Scott asked where the water is coming from in the middle portion of the bayou where there is flow during the low stream flow conditions.
- n. Bill Richardson commented that the bayou level is extremely low right now; the lowest that Bill has seen it.
- o. Rick Scott commented that the water flow could be from the wetlands holding and releasing the water – doing what wetlands do.
- p. Scott Owen said the Steering Committee will need to consider flooding concerns to the extent possible as part of the plan development because Maumelle citizens have expressed these concerns.

#### Update on HGM Progress and Other Activities (Scott Owen/Allyn Fuell)

1. Allyn Fuell provided updates on the HGM activities and Litter Decomposition study.
  - a. Continuing to collect leaves to better understand the decomposition process.
  - b. Also collecting data on microbes to help determine what is driving the decomposition process.
  - c. Continuing to work on the HGM sites (10 total) and have completed about half of the sites.
  - d. Allyn also provided a presentation on her work at a professional conference in Providence, Rhode Island.
2. Brandon Peoples then provided an update on the ADEQ water quality sampling activities.
  - a. ADEQ's work has been proceeding with no delays.
  - b. Bi-monthly water quality monitoring is occurring. Also, ADEQ is performing more comprehensive laboratory analysis.

- c. Continuing to compile laboratory data.
  - d. Some low Ph and dissolved oxygen levels, but additional monitoring will continue for more complete data.
  - e. ADEQ is monitoring a total of four sites.
  - f. ADEQ is also conducting macroinvertebrate sampling at sites during the Springtime.
  - g. ADEQ will conduct fish sampling in late July.
  - h. ADEQ will conduct another macroinvertebrate sample in the Fall 2011.
  - i. ADEQ will continue will water quality monitoring for approximately one more year.
  - j. Brandon commented that he'll be leaving ADEQ in August to pursue a PhD. Degree. Ed Kluender will then be the ADEQ contact for ADEQ's work on the project.
  - k. The ADEQ data will provide a very good baseline for the existing water quality conditions within the bayou.
3. Scott Owen provided an update on the vegetation survey.
- a. Theo Whitsell, Tom Foti, Sara Owen, and Scott Owen conduct an initial vegetation survey to become familiar with the study area conditions.
  - b. Theo will continue to conduct vegetation surveys of the area.
  - c. Joe Gubanski then inquired about the folklore status of the area. Scott Owen commented that Dr. Phil Frana with UCA plans on continuing work on an Oral History project for the area.

### Gearing Back Up (Scott Owen)

1. The work plan has not changed.
2. During the EPA meeting in June, an EPA representative commented at the end of the meeting that the EPA Solicitation for the next grant cycle was being advertised and the proposal was due by 6/27/11. Jacobs assisted WCI in preparing the grant application response and the application was transmitted to the EPA on 6/24/11.
3. There are five primary components of the work plan.
4. Allyn Fuell has some photos and other data for the severe inundation period within the study area and bayou that occurred in late April 2011.
5. Rick Scott commented that he observed the water retreated within a very quick time period.
6. The HGM work will continue.
7. The GIS products will be refined.
8. Relative to the Educational Outreach component of the work plan, the team will need to increase public involvement/outreach and familiarize property owners with new team members.
9. Rick Scott commented that it will be important to understand the changes that have occurred within the watershed over the years to better understand the landscape and interactions.
10. Brandon said that there would also be an opportunity to utilize historic surveys to understand the conditions and what has occurred in the past.

11. Kevin Mullinax stated that the new grant application includes a historic component to aid in gaining a better understanding of the bayou using GIS, state archives, and USGS soils maps.
12. Joe Gubanski commented that 1927 and 1943 were the last time floods of this magnitude had been seen.
13. Scott Owen said that come this Fall, it will be important to schedule the first public meeting.
14. Scott Owen explained that Sally Horsey will be involved now in preparing the Newsletter.
15. Scott Owen said that the capstone of the current grant is to prepare a draft Wetland Management Plan. The team will continue to work on the work plan as presented to the City of Maumelle and EPA.
16. Relative to the project dissemination of results, it will be important to continue to share information with others and this includes the local population (i.e. Lions Club, etc.).
17. Scott Owen said that Steering Committee meetings will continue and there will be a meeting with the USACE Little Rock District in the near future to discuss a Regional General Permit for the watershed.
18. Scott Owen said that he will be performing information/knowledge transfer with Jacobs' staff and will be getting out to meet property owners with the Jacobs' staff.
19. Rick Scott then asked if the Aldermen are being kept apprised of the project progress. Scott Owen said that he provides updates to the City Council every six months. Rick Scott then asked how the City Council is accepting the project. Scott Owen said there were some questions regarding flooding. A comment was then made that it would be important to get the City Council out into the field to help them better understand the program. It will be important to re-visit with the City Council to help them better understand what is occurring with the plan.
20. Jim Nary commented that it will be important to have the City Council conduct a site visit at some point, perhaps when the weather conditions are more tolerable.
21. Property ownership is also a topic that has come up from the citizens. Scott Owen commented that property owner interaction/dialogue is an important factor to the process and needs to be addressed. The education component of the plan is a very important aspect that needs to continue and increase (i.e. workshops).

#### Set Next Steering Committee Meeting Date (All)

1. Steering Committee Chairman, Mr. Rick Scott, via coordination with Scott Owen proposed that the next steering committee meeting occur on 8/15/11 at 3:00 p.m.
2. Jim Nary commented that this is also the date when the City Council will meet and it would be good to see if an update on the project can be provided to the Council. Scott Owen commented that he would plan to provide this update to the City Council when they meet the evening of 8/15/11.
3. Scott Owen then said that other Agencies have expressed an interest in participating in the plan development, including the NRCS, Arkansas Forestry Service, etc. Also, three additional property owners indicated they would like the team to visit their property.

4. Rick Scott commented that the Steering Committee should explore a Land Trust approach to help in continuing with the Wetland Management Plan. Rick was concerned that we are running out of time.
5. Scott Owen discussed the fact that the last Steering Committee meeting discussed the development of categories for wetlands and it will be important to continue that discussion during the next meeting.

In closing the Steering Committee Meeting, Brandon Peoples won the raffle for the dozen eggs.

Meeting adjourned