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**MEETING MINUTES**  
**Livingston County Phase II Watershed Planning**  
**South Branch Shiawassee River Subwatershed Break-Out Meeting**

Date: 10/13/04  
 Time: 7:45pm  
 Meeting Held: Genoa Township Hall Boardroom

HRC Job No. 20030566.26

**Introduction**

Jacy Paul of HRC welcomed the attendees and thanked them again for coming. The discussion began with a brief outline of the main points to be covered this evening:

- Geographic scope of the South Branch Shiawassee River Subwatershed
- Introduction to the watershed planning process
- Current status of water quality throughout the watershed
- Opportunity for residents to give feedback on local issues/concerns

**Geographic Scope of Watershed**

The partners involved in the South Branch Shiawassee watershed planning initiative include the following:

- Livingston County Drain Commissioner
- Road Commission for Livingston County
- Hartland Township
- Howell Township
- Marion Township
- Oceola Township
- Tyrone Township

Additional input will be sought from Genoa Township, Cohoctah Township and Deerfield Township in Livingston County throughout the planning process as they are also part of the geographic scope of the watershed. Small portions of Oakland, Genesee and Shiawassee Counties are also part of the geographic scope and will be included for input.

The South Branch Shiawassee Subwatershed, herein referred to as the South Branch Shiawassee River Watershed, is actually composed of seven (7) smaller subwatersheds:

- South Branch Shiawassee River Subwatershed

- Marion and Genoa Drain Subwatershed
- Bogue Creek Subwatershed
- Yellow River Drain Subwatershed
- Cranberry Creek Subwatershed
- North Ore Creek Subwatershed
- Denton Creek Subwatershed

All of these watercourses drain north and join the main branch Shiawassee River in both Shiawassee and Genesee Counties. Maps of the subwatersheds were shown to the group to get a visual representation of the boundaries. All lakes and their drainage pathways were also shown on the maps.

### **Watershed Planning Process**

The group was introduced to the various stages of the watershed planning process. The various stages often overlap, and are revisited often for revisions. The general process is like so:

- Organization of watershed planning committee
- Collection of relevant basin and water quality information
- Prioritization of concerns/issues
- Development of management strategies
- Preparation of draft plan
- Finalize plan and submit
- After approval by MDEQ, implement the plan

Throughout the planning process, a key component is public participation and input. The first step towards this was tonight's meeting. Before the final plan is submitted, there will be two more public meetings such as this one. Plus, all interested individuals were invited to attend the monthly progress meetings that the watershed groups hold on the second Friday of the month at Green Oak Township Hall at 9:00am. The next meeting is scheduled for November 12, 2004.

### **Current Water Quality**

The group was given a series of handouts with a synopsis of all water quality data found thus far throughout the watershed. One handout listed, per subwatershed, data regarding potential threats and known impairments to them—such as poor fish communities, PCB contamination and other nonpoint source pollutants. A comprehensive table was distributed with a compilation of all known and suspected pollutants, sources and causes that are impairing or threatening a “designated use” of water in the watershed. A number of powerpoint slides were shown that were taken at local road/stream crossings to give the group a visual representation of known water quality issues throughout the watershed.

The key pollutants/problems throughout the watershed are the following:

- Sedimentation (turbidity—reduced clarity—in many streams)
- Flashy, unstable hydrology (leads to turbidity, streambank erosion, lack of in-stream habitat for fish and other macroinvertebrates)

- Point source pollution (PCBs and Hexavalent Chromium) from previous contamination events
- Other pollutants that are suspected, but not confirmed:
  - Nutrients (Nitrogen and Phosphorus)
  - Pesticides
  - Salts
  - Pathogens (*E. coli* bacteria)

The handouts will be attached with these minutes, as well.

After the recommendations are given in the watershed management plan and implementation begins, the desired outcomes of successful efforts will be along the lines of the following:

- Protection of high quality natural features/resources (i.e. wetlands, woodlands, areas that support high species diversity and wildlife habitat)
- Improved water quality throughout the watershed
- Conservation of water resources
- Protection of public health
- Flood control

### **Public Input**

The attendees were given a chance to provide their input regarding local water quality/resource issues. The following bullet points are a synopsis of their concerns:

- Land Use Issues: Preservation of high quality natural areas—namely wetlands and lakes, for example, that are currently very high quality and are in danger of being degraded or eliminated from construction/development activities. Land use planning will need to be a large component of how the watershed is managed.
- Septic systems: Questions regarding if they are inspected for failure, or if there is a time-of-sale inspection done on the systems. Currently, a time-of-sale program is not in place. The Health Department does take care of complaints regarding septic system failures, but staffing levels are too low to do a comprehensive analysis of whether or not septic system failure is of great concern.
- Land application of septage: Are inspections done on these practices throughout the watershed. Currently, inspections are inadequate due to lack of staffing, and it is not confirmed whether or not this activity is contributing nutrient levels and pathogens to the water resources throughout.
- Cooperative Lakes Monitoring Program (CLMP)—this could be an excellent source to gather lake data throughout the watershed. This is a program offered through the MDEQ. Many lakes throughout the watershed are already part of the program. Ms. Paul stated that she'd like to look at this program in further detail, try to get more lakes on board. A resident stated that the program works very well, and is very inexpensive. You just need volunteers to do the field sample collections.

- Support is needed for comprehensive natural features inventory. The Livingston Natural Features Coalition (LNFC) is trying to gather the funding to begin a County-wide inventory of data presented in a publication put out by the Livingston County Planning Commission where, based on aerial photography and GIS data, they mapped all the high quality natural areas throughout the County and prioritized them. The LNFC will work to “ground-truth” these areas and ensure that the highest quality areas receive the greatest efforts for protection. This initiative will be presented to local governments to see if they can support this effort.
- Residents suggested having a County wide boiler plate for land use planning that any township board could use to help develop the most effective Master Plan. At this time, there is nothing like that for these commissions to go by. As was stated before, the land use issue for the future of Livingston County will be a large part of the watershed planning process.
- Residents were curious what the status was on groundwater mapping for the County. Ms. Paul stated that the initiative was started, but was relatively understaffed and has a lack of monies to get the job done anytime soon. The initiative at last check was two men with a five-foot auger. In order to get an accurate map of groundwater flow throughout the County, more money and the right equipment, along with adequate staff, will be needed for the job. The progress on this initiative will be monitored.

### **Wrap-Up**

There were 30 attendees at the break-out group meeting. Members were handed out a survey that they can fill out at home. The survey outlines additional areas of concern/water quality issues that residents might have additional input on. The survey provided a section to describe problem areas in greater detail. Ms. Paul’s contact information is in the rear of the survey for where to send responses.

These minutes are intended to be a summary of those items discussed. Any corrections and/or comments should be noted to the writer as soon as possible.

Respectfully submitted,

HUBBELL, ROTH & CLARK, INC.

Jacy L. Paul

JLP/jp

pc: All present  
HRC; M. Synk Kuhn; J. Booth; File