

Western Lake Erie Basin Partnership

Oct. 12, 2010

Afternoon Meeting Minutes – 12:30 PM to 3:30 PM

“Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Capacity Building”

University of Toledo Lake Erie Center

6200 Bayshore Rd.

Oregon, OH 43616

1. 12:30 -12:40 Welcome

Terry Cosby and LTC Stephen Bales

Carol Stepien, Director, Lake Erie Center

Ms. Stepien highlighted projects lead and involving the Lake Erie Center’s faculty and students.

2. 12:40 – 1:00 Brief WLEB Updates

Comments from morning Leadership Team Meeting – Terry/LTC Bales

Dave Romano: The USACE, in moving forward with the WLEB Partnership, sees the key components to include the following:

Strategy: Coming together as to how the future meetings will play out. Mapping out purpose and focus of the year ahead. Potentially a pre-meeting conference call to let leadership get on the same page and coordinate meeting agenda items/action items.

Structure: Asking the questions “Is our current structure working?” “Do adjustments need to be made to be successful moving ahead?” “If the partnership is well organized then, how can we make an ‘A’ an ‘A+’?”

Communications: Focus on public communications that clearly express items accomplished in strategic plan. ‘Accomplishments report’ with the sensitivity to reach the public audience.

Comments from DC Meeting with Congresswoman Kaptur – Terry/LTC Bales

Matt Kaplan and Jane Ruvolo: Thanks for meeting with their office in DC. We are entering a New Era, unprecedented dollars focusing on Great Lakes health and restoration. Next question is ‘How to best integrate the work GLRI is doing?’ Within the GLRI the WLEB was a hot spot and will likely continue to be if another round of funding occurs. The legislature will likely be dealing with issues of better focusing the GLRI dollars and improved coordination. With the

retirement of Senator Voinovich the Great Lakes is losing a great advocate for the Lakes in congress. Priorities are still difficult to discern with so many groups with different foci.

Linda Greenwood, Senator Voinovich's office: Thanks for all the accolades. No additional announcements.

Brief Report from WGTE Town Hall Meeting – Katie Swartz

Ms. Swartz provided a brief description of the event's impact and the statistics provided by the station. (Digital version attached) Next Outreach Committee conference call is December 2 at 1PM.

Any Brief Important Committee Updates – Committee Chairpersons

Dick Bartz, Research Committee:

Highlights to communicate: the release of the Ohio Phosphorus Task Force Report, Lake Erie Commission/Ohio Sea Grant's upcoming GLRI Forums (November 10th Lorain County Ag Center office is the first)

No Project Committee report.

Kristy Meyers, Funding Committee:

HOW Healing Our Waters, Fresh Water Future implementation and grass roots grants are now being released.

3. 1:00 – 1:30 Synopsis of WLEB GLRI Projects – Round One Comments

Terry Cosby moderator

Panel Discussion – Recap of WLEB Projects Submitted & Projects Funded
“What Worked and What didn't”

Panelists - Gail Hesse, Ohio Projects

Ed Hammett (spoke on behalf of Gale Hesse):

Process → Used the Ohio Lake Erie Commission to draw all the state agencies to plan projects together. Projects were organized in a watershed context. Projects that addressed the Millennium Network research priorities ranked higher.

Results → Reasonably successful.

City of Toledo, Ottawa River scrap yard project
The Nature Conservancy *Fragmities* control project
TMDL (Lima) Ottawa
Toledo Harbor Sediment
Ohio EPA/CAP Phosphorus Reduction thru VRT
Beach Quality
Reforestation of three Ohio State Parks
Comprehensive Near Shore Monitoring Program (3yrs)
Ottawa River Wetlands habitat restoration

Lake Erie Synthesis Coordination Team: Sharing information between managers and researchers. Two fold purpose: coordinate research and generate new project ideas. Key to identify gaps in research and dollars needed to address. Share the results with the public. Annually show progress.

Jim Lake/Larry Clemens, Indiana Projects

Indiana has only a portion of a few counties in the WLEB. The State of Indiana mainly coordinated for Lake Michigan. Focus on land treatment and 'shovel ready'. TNC, EDF, and SWCDs put together proposals for BMP Urban and ag practices in the St. Joe and expanding the on-farm network in the Upper Maumee. Neither were funded. CTIC was funded for the installation of BMP practices in three watersheds. Purdue was funded for a study of model BMPs for best site selection.

Joe Draper, TNC: Alternative Channel Design project. St. Mary's BMP work thru GLC dollars.

Steve Shines, Michigan Projects

Proposed SWIMS project with Indiana, MEAP program to focus on targeting at the individual farm scale for complete plans to cover all resource concerns, River Raisin projects, and Saginaw Bay projects. (River Raisin) BMP auction idea targets a short list of practices and promotes the opportunity to bid at what payment a producer would be willing to implement that practice. Nutrient management practices were targeted. May be beneficial to target the same watersheds in which other direct to agency GLRI dollars were targeted.

Ed Hammett: lessons learned; not to limit geographically

Q/A as Time Permits

Sandy Bihn: Can we, in the future of GLRI, cross state lines for collaboration?

Carol Stepien: Can we better use universities as a resource to garner GLRI funding?

4. 1:30 – 2:00 GLRI Lessons Learned – Tom Davenport, USEPA

Tom Davenport provided a PowerPoint presentation Tips for Success in GLRI Applications. Presentation is available for download from the WLEB website. Tom's presentation included:

Comments on First Round Funding

Tips for Project Success

Expectations and What We Know About Round Two

5. 2:00 – 2:40 GLRI Capacity Building – Small Group Exercise

Break-out session into small groups. Each group discussed the following 4 questions centered on GLRI project ideas and Multi-Entity Proposals:

Question #1 Are Multi-Entity Partnership Proposals feasible and will they better position us for GRLI success? How do we get from here to there? What are barriers and challenges to achieving this? How do we compete with other regions rather than with each other?

Question #2 How can the WLEB partners marry NGS's, State and/or Federal partners into quality integrated projects that build on the strengths, capabilities and needs of each partner? What/Who is needed at the table to achieve this?

Question #3 What ideas do you have for potential proposals/project opportunities that would address one or more of the following major resource concerns in the WLEB:

Sediment/Nutrients, Habitat Restoration/Wetland Restoration/Floodplain Easements, Invasive Species Control, Urban Conservation/Urban Storm Water Runoff Mgt., Other

Question #4 What next to move these ideas and proposals forward?

2:40 – 3:05 Group Reports – Group Moderators

Group 1 Dick Bartz

Question #1 Yes, proposals would be improved with more partnerships. Need to generate a good game plan by utilizing already existing plans and beginning to talk about projects now. Do we have incorporated or know of the priorities of our NGO partners to incorporate?

Success stories included folks that had plans, had priorities and commitment from state agencies.

Question #2 Take WLEB priorities and cross reference with partner's plans and benchmarks.

Question #3 Can we quantify the need? How many ac. of wetlands, rain gardens to accomplish goals? Can we focus and garner dollars by using 'target or demonstration watershed' approach?

Question #4 Priorities.

Group 2 Michelle Lohstroh

Question #1 Yes, Focus on Phosphorus reduction implementation: use non-traditional partners like fertilizer dealers. How do we do this? Funding caps have hindered implementation efforts since WLEB is larger than a 10-digit HUC. WLEB needs large scale implementation but this puts us at a disadvantage. How do we address nutrient management practices and influence behavior changes?

Question #2 Does GLRI allow for a large scale implementation project as is needed in the WLEB? Need to include NGO's to take advantage of ideas and capabilities.

Question #3 CCPI: May be an opportunity to use GLRI funds and garner support from NGO's by providing implementation assistance. Needs to include marketing dollars and technical assistance dollars. Need more information to see if this would work and how to set up a sequence for work.

Question #4 WLEB role needs to be defined in order to communicate a better approach to GLRI process to congress.

Group 3 John Kessler

Question #1 Look to the Lake Erie Millennium Project and the work of the associated academic institutions as good examples. Ask partners to list their strengths and weaknesses. Be open to diversification and non-traditional partners (e.g., Iowa Soybean Growers) A key barrier is getting an organization to commit to the personnel and time to properly manage and develop support for a proposal.

Question #2 Focus on each partner's strength. States (especially Ohio) need to reach out to academic institutions and other partners at the beginning of the process. Learn from other states/regions who had success with GLRI last year (e.g., MI, NY). Use the WLEB Partnership to vet proposals and compare them to RFP requirements.

Question #3 Yes, group members believed there was great potential in a MI/IN/OH collaborative project. Dissolved phosphorus should be a focus again. Support for the sediment/nutrients and habitat restoration resource concerns (e.g., restoration of fish spawning areas). Projects to address Asian carp/invasive species would be supported

Question #4 Ran out of time before we could answer this question.

Group 4 Katie Swartz

Question #1 Bring more resources together. Can we do shovel ready across state lines? How do we identify these? Need to utilize IN and MI upper watersheds for bigger bang for the dollar. How do we partner with different groups (folks we haven't partnered with before)? Use MI's success as a model.

Barriers/Challenges: lack or problems with data layers across state lines. Does WLEB endorsement gain us anything in the eyes of EPA? Need as current information as possible to make our case (current data sets are aging or out of date) Our area is not on the 303d list.

Question #2 Partnering: Coming up with individual organizations priorities and seeing where there is overlap. Using and knowing of local watershed plans to focus on priorities. Engage local SWCD's for their expertise and resources. Review and learn from successes.

Question #3 Project ideas: Working with local governments on LID implementation. Wetland and stream restoration.

Question #4 Can we staff this grant focused partnership? Should WLEBP review 'pre-proposals' or conceptual ideas to help coordinate GLRI process and foster partnerships? Need to regurgitate EPA materials on proposals.

6. 3:05 – 3:25 Where Do We Go From Here – Leadership Team Response To Capacity Building Exercise & Discussion By Partnership

See ACTION ITEMS listed below at the end of minutes.

7. 3:25 – 3:30 Wrap Up, Action Items, and Plan Next Meeting Date

Lt Col Bales: Hearing a frustration with the GLRI process. Gives us the opportunity to come back smarter to the next round. Spend our time now at looking at priorities and partnerships. Definitely finding this type of feedback is essential. Make it a priority to contact your EPA project managers now to ask questions related to project ideas and partnerships.

Jim Lake: Keep outreach and education not simply at a 10-digit HUC but basin-wide for the most impact. The 'Town Hall' idea seems popular and can be effective.

Matt Kaplan: Keep a close eye on the timeline for the RFP. Keep the focus on 'shovel ready' and implementation focused. Results focused and within three years.

Vince Messerly: Identify holes or gaps in current project needs, prioritize projects, and share with partners to see what type of collaborations make sense. Highlighted

monitoring needs to make this prioritization realistic. Focus on critical measures that describe impacts.

8. 3:30 Adjourn

ACTION ITEMS

Note... The Leadership Team met in a morning session for a strategic review of the partnership, progress on the strategic plan and any items needed to discuss on the current operating procedures, organization and structure. (See notes of session below.)

Consensus of the discussion was that the current operating procedures and structure are serving the partnership with no major need of revision. Some minor adjustments were discussed. Terry Cosby and LTC Bales tasked the operations group with the following 3 actions items for the next meeting:

1. There was discussion that while the partnership has accomplished much, the public, media, and other organizations are not adequately aware of the accomplishments. ***The Operations Group shall convene a team that includes the outreach committee, and the NRCS and USACE public affairs specialists and craft a strategy or process to get wider visibility for the partnership and its accomplishments.***

2. There is a need for the partnership to review the bylaws to make sure there are provisions for discussion of strategic items in executive session by the leadership team. ***The operations team will review the existing bylaws and existing USACE and NRCS authorities, and if there is any need, draft any language for adding executive sessions to the bylaws.***

3. There was considerable discussion on how to focus extra 2011 WLEB efforts to move forward a few key and important projects or action items from the strategic plan. ***The Operations Team will craft a process for giving priorities or extra emphasis to specific projects of programs which address the most critical items in the WLEB strategic plan, and which fits with the many authorities, obligations and limitations of the various level WLEB partners represented on the leadership team.*** The Operations Team will present this at the next WLEB Leadership Team meeting.

4. Steve presented at the morning meeting the accomplishment updates that have been entered by all the partners into the strategic plan. ***An updated copy, with current accomplishments in red, will be posted on the WLEB website. Any additional accomplishments or comments that need to be entered into the various action items should be provided to Steve and Katie by the appropriate WLEB partner*** and they too will be added to the current working copy of the strategic plan that is maintained on the website for public viewing.

WLEB LEADERSHIP MEETING

NOTES FROM STRATEGIC BRAINSTORMING SESSION

12 OCT 2010

STRATEGIC ISSUES

- Where do we go next with dissolved Phosphorous?
- How better track impacts of what goes on land,
 - what are reductions
 - What does this mean?
- Strategic Planning Meeting - first quarter
- Not giving ourselves enough credit for what we have done in strategic plan assisting w/GLRI
- Show public what we have done for local communities
- Prepared – 4 years ahead – ready for GLRI when it arrived
- Critical to have staff dedicated to WLEB
- Ms. Kaptur holds our feet to fire; demonstrate success;
 - tell story to mom & pop – what it means to them
- Next round of GLRI be ready by doing “what has been suggested”.
- Look for permanent funding for work; including water testing.
- Communication tied to something folks understand
- Closer look at strategic planning – look at state, local – maybe too spread out – concentrate
- EcoTrack II – some great stuff
- Track progress not only w/BMP’s, but also communications
- Monitoring – interest in end result – need to support water quality monitoring – see change.
- Support dedicated staff to work on implementation of strategic plans.
- USDA
- State Technical Committees – use them more effectively.
- Public Perception – not much going on
- Communicate success stories, market more
- Look at who has relationships with farmers (SWCD’s NRCS) – fewer numbers
- Need to prioritize work
- “Healing Our Watersheds” could be used
- How to fund WLEB work?

COMMENTS FALL INTO THESE AREAS:

- Strategy
- Structure
- Communication

By Craig Forget, USACE