

4. Community Outreach and Involvement



Public Input Processes

Public involvement played a key role in the development of this watershed management plan (WMP). Throughout the development process, members of the general public and specific groups of stakeholders had the opportunity to actively participate. A Public Participation Plan (PPP) crafted for the subwatershed guided the opportunities for public participation. The goal of the PPP, which was submitted to MDEQ on March 31, 2004 and subsequently approved, is to effectively involve stakeholders throughout the WMP development process so that they would contribute during the process, understand the WMP recommendations, and ultimately support its implementation. To achieve this goal, the PPP identified the following objectives:

- Identify key stakeholders in the subwatershed;
- Include a wide variety of agencies and interests;
- Develop a process for effective stakeholder involvement;
- Develop materials to educate stakeholders and constituents; and
- Gather useful, measurable social feedback.

The PPP contains an adaptive management approach, allowing the Subwatershed Advisory Group (SWAG) to have the necessary flexibility to adjust the process during WMP development. While the PPP outlined specific activities for the SWAG to complete, the SWAG was able to modify these activities based on a better understanding of how to obtain local public input.

To ensure broad public participation, the WMP development process incorporated several activities for obtaining public input. The public participation activities included:

- SWAG meetings
- Stakeholder workshops
- Focus group meetings
- Community Forums with follow-up comments via website

These activities, and the feedback obtained, are summarized below, in chronological order.

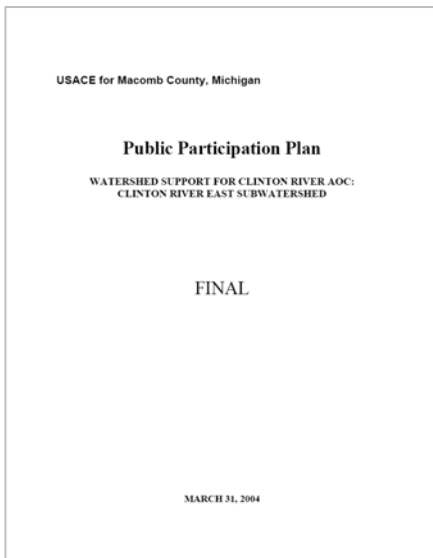
SWAG Meetings

The SWAG consists of representatives from each community, as well as Macomb County and other local agencies (see Chapter 1 for a complete list). This group met monthly and served as the core decision-making body throughout the WMP development process. The members regularly provided data, opinions, comments, and other information that formed the core of the WMP and guided it into this final form.

Stakeholder Workshop

Representatives from the communities, institutions, and businesses in the subwatershed gathered at the Macomb Intermediate School District building on January 19, 2005, to participate in a stakeholder workshop. Over 47 invited individuals attended the workshop hosted by Macomb County Public Works Office (MCPWO) and other SWAG partners. Participants represented the following interests:

- Churches
- Federal government
- Local businesses
- Recreation
- Regional planning
- Schools/ universities
- Development
- Environmental / conservation groups
- Technical consultants
- County and municipal government
- Community residents



SWAG Meeting



Courtesy of Tetra Tech

Stakeholder Workshop



Courtesy of MCPWO

The workshop consisted of the following:

- A presentation on the watershed planning process that included information on how the public could continue to participate;
- A facilitated brainstorming session where participants formed small groups and identified a list of watershed visions and desired uses. Each group then shared their input as facilitators compiled a single comprehensive list;
- A voting session where each participant had the opportunity to cast three votes as a way to narrow and prioritize the list;
- Another brainstorming session to develop a list of watershed issues and concerns; and
- Another voting session to narrow and prioritize the list of issues and concerns.

Stakeholder Workshop



Courtesy of MCPWO

The ranked results of the brainstorming and voting process follow. The top five (including ties) in each list show a number indicating the percentage of votes cast for that item (out of the total number of votes).

Stakeholder Workshop Visions and Desired Uses

1. Public education/awareness (30%)
 - Daily activities/watershed definition
 - Household Hazardous Waste
 - Erosion Control
 - Alternative Landscape
 - Economic Benefits
 - Developer Education
2. Identify & provide public access (11%)
 - Increase recreational opportunities
3. River should meet water quality standards - total and partial body contact (11%)
4. Wetland protection and preservation (10%)
5. Construction site enforcement (10%)
6. Create Buffer (Riparian) zones
 - Native vegetation
 - Stream bank protection: restoration
 - Wildlife corridor
7. Manage water quantity/reduce flooding
8. Manage river for fish habitat
9. Septic system maintenance
10. Clean/clear open channel maintenance
11. Eliminate sanitary sewer overflows (SSO)
12. Preservation of natural systems & hydrology
13. Watershed signage and maps
14. Protect floodplains from development
15. Regulators provide solutions - not just fines
16. Managing Soil Erosion to protect water quality - between Yates Cider Mill and Lake St. Clair
17. Decrease imperviousness and parking lot size
18. Education of municipal salt applicators
19. Business community watershed stewardship
20. Smart development
21. Return river to prior historical water quality

Stakeholder Workshop Issues and Concerns

1. Lack of funding for watershed (29%)
2. Lack of / outdated ordinances to protect water resources (Reserved parking, onsite water retention, landscaping for water quality, site management - construction, flood plain, wetlands) (23%)
3. Lack of incentives and recognition for smart, environmentally friendly design (15%)
4. Need for significantly more public awareness to combat apathy (6%)
5. Barriers (4%)
 - Lack of agency and state support
 - No single source of accountability
 - Interagency/regional communication
6. Street sweeping coordination amongst communities-subdivisions (4%)
7. Politics- permitting & program bureaucracy
8. Training needs and time issues for staff
9. Sewer overflows, overwhelmed infrastructure
10. Time and lifestyle changes -individual & families / lack of ability to get involved
11. Treating symptoms instead of causes
12. Partnership between developers and homeowners
13. Lack of Best Management Practices maintenance
14. Environmental cleanup of Stramaglia superfund site in Mt. Clemens
15. Log jams - Mid. & Main Branch of Clinton River
16. Changing laws / removing phys. barriers to public access
17. Changing development practices
18. Address problems over time & geography
19. Stakeholder input as WMP solutions developed
20. Provide useful list on resources
21. Connect people with solutions
22. Lack of enforcement of laws, including wetlands
23. Farm runoff
24. Need park land & riparian acquisition for purchasing/granting/easements
25. Negative public perception of water resource
26. No design of stormwater controls for smaller (e.g. homeowner) scales

Community Forum



Courtesy of MCPWO

Meeting Fact Sheets

Meeting fact sheets were developed for the stakeholder workshops and the community forums. The fact sheets served as a meeting summary as well as an educational tool. Fact sheets were provided to municipal officials and stakeholders to demonstrate what the public view as critical water resource issues in the watershed. Each fact sheet contained a schedule of upcoming meetings to promote participation and input during the planning process. Copies of the fact sheets can be found in Appendix D.

Community Forum #1

Interested residents from the communities in the subwatershed met at the Macomb Intermediate School District building on February 2, 2005, to participate in a Community Forum. Over 30 individuals attended the forum hosted by MCPWO and other community partners participating on the SWAG. Although all participants were local residents, they also represented specific interests within their community, including:

- Churches
- County and municipal government
- Recreation
- Environmental / conservation groups
- Civil organizations (e.g., a scouting group)
- Public institutions
- Development
- Schools
- Local businesses

The forum consisted of the following:

- Educational displays and activities for children, including a demonstration of how a watershed works using an EnviroScape® model;
- Informational displays for adults, provided by SWAG members;
- A session where attendees had the opportunity to share their ideas on the development of the WMP, including their visions and desired uses and the issues and concerns for the subwatershed;
- A voting session where each participant had the opportunity to cast three votes as a way to narrow and prioritize the comprehensive list of watershed visions and desired uses; and
- A watershed scavenger hunt, which also served as a raffle for assorted prizes provided by SWAG members and other watershed partners, such as the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority.

The ranked results of the brainstorming and voting process follow. The top five in the Visions and Desired Uses list shows a number indicating the percentage of votes cast for that item (out of the total number of votes).

Community Forum Visions and Desired Uses

1. Public education (15%)
2. Allow for canoeing and provide an interpretive water trail across the county - including maps & signs (15%)
3. Identify & provide public access, increase recreation such as bike paths (14%)
4. Develop greenbelt along the Clinton River (9%)
5. Fishable and swimmable Harrison Township at the most downstream point (6%)
6. Development demonstration sites for Best Management Practices (native plantings, rain barrels, and buffer strips)
7. Streambank protection to prevent erosion
8. Promote green building practices
9. More publicly available monitoring data - Health Dept. and real time data
10. Financial incentives for residents and developers
11. Create wetlands to improve water quality
12. Removal of major obstructions in the river to restore flow
13. Label storm drains
14. Preserve current wetlands
15. Enforce existing ordinances
16. Funding accountability/reporting
17. More positive press
18. Remediation of contaminated sediments
19. Remove fish advisories
20. Install biofilters at outfalls

Community Forum Issues and Concerns

- Clean Boat Areas along Harrison Township
- Why are the Mount Clemens docks closed?

Focus Group

The SWAG planned a targeted focus group to obtain input from and the participation of developers and builders, a key stakeholder group in the subwatershed. According to the SWAG, developers and builders are important stakeholders because of the potential impact of their activities on the watershed. The focus group served as a mechanism for gaining meaningful input and buy-in for the WMP development process and future implementation. Without the buy-in from developers and builders, some goals of the WMP may be difficult to achieve.

The focus group meeting was held on June 22, 2005 at the Clinton Township library. The six invited participants received an introduction to the project and answered questions on how members of this key stakeholder group communicate, where they get their information, what factors influence their services and activities, and what practices they use to protect water quality. The overarching purpose of the meeting was to identify issues specific to this group for consideration in development of the WMP. The issues raised by the focus group participants are presented below:

- Streamline the permitting process (i.e., make the county and state regulations consistent). State, county and local requirements tend to conflict with each other;
- Regulations should not be retroactive because it causes a financial burden for the developer. Grandfather existing projects in the “pipeline”;
- The watershed management plan should be a workable, user-friendly document. The standards and specifications should be realistic and practical and offer flexible solutions; and
- Municipalities should take a more active part in the planning aspect. Developers are not opposed to smaller lot sizes with more open space; however, a majority of the municipal planners are resistant.

The group discussion indicated that some issues are important to raise not only with the building community, but also with the planning community. Issues for discussion by both the building community and the planning community include:

- The goals of the watershed plan must be economically feasible as well as improve water quality;
- Wetland preservation should be consistent throughout the area;
- Planners need to look at non-traditional Low Impact Development (LID); and
- The plan shouldn't be restrictive, goals should be broad.

Community Forum #2 and Follow-up Comments

A second Community Forum took place at the Clinton-Macomb Library on September 19, 2006 for interested residents from the communities in the subwatershed. The structure of the forum was similar to the first held in February 2005. Macomb County provided activities for children and SWAG members provided informational displays for adults. SWAG members conducted a watershed scavenger hunt and raffle for various prizes. Participants also received pizza during the open house portion of

Desired Uses

The public's desired uses for the watershed have been elicited and summarized for the purposes of meeting Clean Michigan Initiative (CMI) grant funding requirements and assisting in development of the goals and objectives listed in Chapter 6. Note that the desired uses include, either explicitly or implicitly, the restoration and protection of designated uses (as defined in Chapter 3).

20 Years Ago

In 1986, a public meeting was held to seek public comments to facilitate the development of the first Clinton River Remedial Action Plan (MDNR, 1988). It is interesting to note: 1) some of the concerns raised as a gauge of how long certain problems have been around; and 2) some of the approaches suggested for pollution control as a gauge of how much progress has been made.

The following categories summarize the comments:

- The need for watershed-based permitting and modeling;
- Sedimentation;
- Cooperative approach between governmental entities and other stakeholders;
- Stormwater runoff issues – quality and quantity;
- High and low flow issues in the Clinton River;
- Floodplain development;
- Polluted lands and other historic pollution sources;
- Sewer overflows;
- Wetland protection;
- Fish contaminants and health; and
- Other pollutants.

Community Forum #2



Photo courtesy of MCPWO.

CRWC Website: Utilized for Draft Plan Distribution and Receiving Public Comments



Image courtesy of CRWC.

Stakeholder Workshop #2



Photo courtesy of MCPWO.

the forum. The agenda for the forum consisted of a brief presentation on the status and content of the WMP, including an overview of how stakeholder input from the first Community Forum affected the development of subwatershed goals and objectives. The presentation also described the action items that communities in the subwatershed included in the WMP to fulfill their Phase II NPDES permit requirements and to obtain future grant money for implementation activities. Forum attendees then had the opportunity to provide feedback on the planned actions, the overall WMP, and voice their opinions on subwatershed issues. Approximately 37 individuals attended the forum hosted by SWAG members, of which 23 represented local residents and were not affiliated with the SWAG.

During the meeting, participants asked questions about stormwater management related to new developments, impacts from combined sewer overflows occurring upstream in the Red Run subwatershed, appropriate management practices for riparian landowners along drains in the subwatershed, and opportunities for improving recreation (e.g., camping) in the subwatershed.

Stakeholder Workshop #2

To obtain stakeholder input toward the end of the WMP development process, SWAG members hosted a second stakeholder workshop on September 27, 2006 at the Macomb Intermediate School District Educational Service Center Facility. The workshop, referred to as the Joint Community and Business Forum, brought together representatives from the communities and institutions in the subwatershed, as well as the Red Run and Lake St. Clair Direct Drainage subwatersheds. Approximately 70 individuals attended the workshop. Participants represented the following interests:

- Recreation
- State and Federal government
- Regional planning
- Schools/ universities
- Community residents
- Environmental / conservation groups
- County and municipal government

The workshop consisted of the following:

- A presentation on the nearly final content of the WMPs for each subwatershed. The presentation gave an overview of the goals and objectives developed using stakeholder input from stakeholder meetings conducted in 2005, as well as the pollutants of concern for each subwatershed and specific actions proposed to address each pollutant; and
- A facilitated session where participants had the opportunity to discuss the type of support necessary to ensure successful WMP implementation, the type of technical assistance needed to implement specific actions, and the type of tools to support successful implementation.

The facilitated discussion on technical assistance and tools necessary to promote successful WMP implementation generated the following feedback:

- Focus on public education regarding phosphorus-based fertilizer use and impacts;
- Identify opportunities for additional funding to conduct activities required under the Phase II NPDES permit;
- Create a mechanism that will provide a direct line of communication to exchange information at all levels of government;
- Create opportunities for local communities to exchange information on BMP successes and challenges;
- Identify and implement sustainable mechanisms to foster participation and information exchange by all communities;
- Focus on enforcing existing ordinances first, then identify where new or modified ordinances are necessary;
- Provide workshops on phosphorus reduction solutions; and
- Provide focused training for municipal employees on how to spot real problems in the watershed and what specific actions to take as a result.

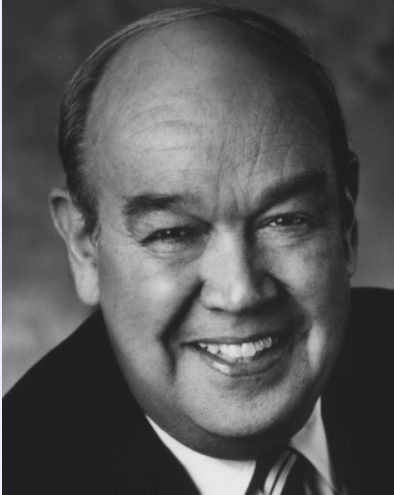
In addition to the facilitated discussion, participants had the opportunity to provide input on the types of technical assistance necessary to implement WMP actions using a feedback form. The participants indicated that they anticipated needing assistance with several implementation actions and provided specific ideas on the type of assistance that would benefit their community. Results from the feedback form are provided in Table 4-1.

Table 4-1. Results from feedback forms.

Action	Anticipate Needing Assistance?	What Type of Assistance Would Benefit Your Community or Business?
Update Storm Water Pollution Prevention Initiatives	Yes (5)	General info (2), public seminars, samples; technical assistance
Develop Annual Reports	Yes (5)	Guidance, funding, subwatershed summary information
Implement Public Education Plan	Yes (8)	Guidance (examples/samples); help in talking to the public; information; funding; provide technical assistance
Train Municipal Employees	Yes (3), No (1)	General info - displays; train the trainer; any training materials
Develop and Implement Storm-water Management Standards	Yes (6)	Models; post suggested standard
Manage Development Patterns	Yes (3), No (1)	(re)development; too late
Preserve Natural Features	Yes (4), No (1)	Fundraising/easements/land purchase; post natural features inventory; assist with preservation activities
Maintain Storm Sewer Systems	Yes (3), No (1)	Guidelines (schedule); funding; identify county drains
Minimize Pollution from Roads, Parking Lots, Municipal Garages	Yes (3), No (1)	Guidelines (schedule); funding; any and all technical assistance
Implement Turf Management	Yes (3), No (1)	Any and all technical assistance
Implement Flood Control Water Quality Considerations	Yes (3)	Funding; any and all technical assistance
Correct Illicit Discharges	Yes (5)	Funding (3)

Quotable Quotation

"I started out thinking of America as highways and state lines. As I got to know it better, I began to think of it as rivers."



- Charles Kuralt

Participants assigned priority rankings to voluntary implementation actions (i.e., activities not required under the Phase II stormwater permit). Activities ranked as having the highest priority in LSCW are listed below.

Activities ranked as having the highest priority:

- Develop pollution prevention ordinances;
- Stream bank, road, and ditch stabilization;
- Promote infiltration and filtration;
- Remediate contaminated sediments; and
- Restore fishing opportunities.

Activities ranked as having the second highest priority:

- Post signage;
- Support public involvement activities;
- Educate and involve municipal officials;
- Repair bare soil;
- Use structural controls where necessary;
- Address existing impervious surfaces;
- Minimize failing septic systems;
- Identify, protect, and restore natural features; and
- Promote natural buffers.

Activities ranked as having the third highest priority:

- Continue community forums and stakeholder workshops;
- Identify and protect sensitive sites;
- Manage solid and animal waste;
- Develop marine pollution prevention program;
- Identify and protect sensitive sites;
- Coordinate with existing recreation programs; and
- Add and enhance boat access sites.

Participants also suggested project ideas that should be considered for implementation funding. Project ideas included:

1. Purchase natural areas to provide stormwater filtration and retention. Assist owners with easements;
2. Need low phosphorus fertilizer ID in garden stores countywide;
3. Native plants for stormwater control;
4. Urban parking lot stormwater management demonstration; use an average parking lot that does not have any BMPs; show what must be done to maintain (e.g., sump cleaning); and
5. Educate children and homeowners.

Presentations to Municipal Officials

Local appointed and elected officials are critical players in adopting the WMP and allocating resources toward its implementation. Obtaining buy-in and providing education to this group helps ensure the success of implementing the WMP. Local government leaders value the advice, concerns, and issues that community residents vocalize in terms of the watershed conditions of the past, present and future.

Members of the SWAG and other key stakeholders have made presentations to municipal officials throughout the watershed management planning process. These presentations are given during regular City Council, Township Board, and County Commissioner meetings. These meetings are a way to provide information on future meetings and improve participation. Many of the people that attended these meetings are potential community participants in public education meetings. SWAG members received a PowerPoint presentation to use at these types of meetings with municipal officials.

Public Education Plan

Public education is inherent in the public participation process. Before the public is interested or willing to participate, they need to have a basic understanding of the issues. A Public Education Plan (PEP) is designed to promote, publicize, and facilitate education to help raise the public's awareness and motivate positive behavior in the watershed. Public support for watershed management programs will help to achieve the goals of the WMP.

In complying with the requirements of *NPDES General Permit No. MIG619000 for Coverage of Storm Water Discharges for Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems Subject to Watershed Plan Requirements* (or 'Watershed-based Permit'), each community in the subwatershed prepared and submitted a PEP to the MDEQ.

The MDEQ explains that "an adequate PEP will implement the necessary amount of educational activities to ensure that the targeted sectors of the 'public' or audiences are reached with the appropriate message(s) for each education category."

The Clinton River Watershed Council (CRWC) provided assistance in the design and implementation of educational activities undertaken as part of each community's PEP. Each PEP identifies activities that the communities will implement, or assist with, to provide public education. These activities optimize existing programs and materials from regional organizations currently conducting public education such as the CRWC, the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG), and the Michigan State University Cooperative Extension (MSUE) Program. By using and adapting existing outreach opportunities and materials, the communities are able to cost-effectively reach a broad audience with a consistent watershed protection message. Specific details concerning each community's activities are available in their respective PEP, but some common elements include:

CRWC Display at Home and Garden Show – Detroit, MI



Courtesy of CRWC

- A ‘Management of Riparian Lands’ program with the following key messages:
 - Importance of riparian corridors; and
 - Best management practices for riparian lands, including:
 - Protection through use of conservation easements;
 - Lawn maintenance for water quality (no-mow and no-chemical application areas);
 - Landscaping for water quality;
 - Shoreline stabilization techniques;
 - Proper septic system maintenance; and
 - Proper management of grass clippings, leaf litter, animal wastes, and other wastes.

Each community and its partners (e.g., CRWC) will use a variety of mechanisms to implement the PEP, including: programs, presentations, education materials/guides, displays/signs, workshops/forums/trainings, volunteer monitoring/clean-ups/marking, mass media content, hotlines and a website.

Many other programs currently exist to educate the public and to help foster public involvement with watershed awareness, stormwater management, and water quality protection. Chapter 7 describes these programs in detail.

Summary

Public involvement and participation was actively sought throughout the development process of the watershed management plan through various meetings, workshops, and forums. This input, along with data obtained and presented in Chapters 2 and 3, was used to focus the analysis of watershed problems for Chapter 5. In addition, the public input concerning visions, desired uses, issues, and concerns along with the analytical results presented in Chapter 5 was used to formulate the goals and objectives that are presented in Chapter 6.

References

Michigan Department of Natural Resources [MDNR]. “Remedial Action Plan for Clinton River Area of Concern.” 1988.

School Districts

The school districts in Macomb County that are participating in the SWAG (see Chapter 1) have been coordinating with the MCPWO to implement PEP activities.

Future Public Education and Involvement

Those entities that have PEPs will continue to implement them with a cooperative subwatershed-based approach. Additional public education and involvement activities have been included as actions in this plan and are discussed in Chapter 8. A discussion of resources available for public education and involvement is presented in Chapter 7.

Volunteers Participating in Cleanup Activities in Fraser: an Example of a Currently Implemented Action that will Continue into the Future



Photo courtesy of MCPWO.