



# 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.

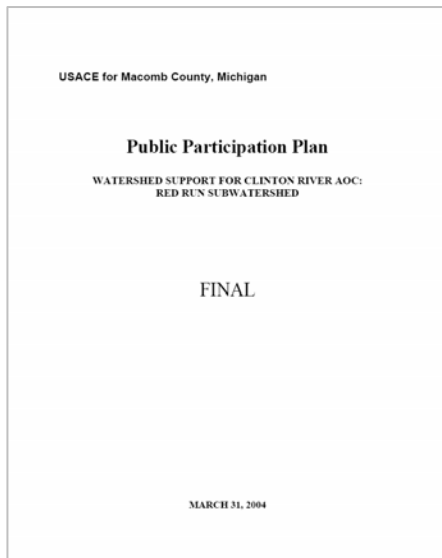
### SWAG Meetings

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 Troy Community Center on January 18, 2005, to participate in a stakeholder workshop. Over 57 invited individuals attended the workshop hosted by Macomb County Public Works Office (MCPWO) and other SWAG partners. Participants represented the following interests:

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



### 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. Conduct marketing and education that targets the general public and developers on the watershed concept and environmental stewardship (14%)
2. Recreational opportunities along stream banks / other areas in the watershed (12%)
3. Realize economic benefit from sustainable stormwater management (10%)
4. Improve opportunities for on-site retention (9%)
5. Provide stream buffers through ordinances & education (7%)
6. Manage retention to decrease downstream flooding and peak flows – still meet minimum flow requirements (7%)
7. Education plan for business & residents (7%)
8. Reduce impacts from stormwater runoff
9. Promote turf management/stewardship
10. Develop outreach program for school age children
11. Education on the cost of stormwater cleanup
12. Change specifications and liability issues related to salt management-contracts and provide tracking
13. Improve the aesthetics of the watershed
14. Promote healthy fish habitat
15. Protect native wildlife and control geese
16. Stencil catch basin covers with a message “Dump no waste-drains to stream”
17. Promote successful soil erosion control with other agencies using regional cooperation
18. Promote use of sustainable stormwater management techniques
19. Improve watershed signage
20. Ensure intergovernmental transparency
21. Address combined sewer overflows and consider sewer separation
22. Daylight Red Run underground drains
23. Healthy plant life
24. Protect water to allow for full body contact
25. Transparent/hidden stormwater management
26. Bioengineering for flood storage & stream bank restoration

#### Stakeholder Workshop Issues and Concerns

1. People and their attitudes (e.g., actions don’t make a difference, don’t see financial and health impacts) (17%)
2. General lack of understanding of watershed & natural systems (17%)
3. Current ordinances conflict with watershed protection approaches (16%)
4. Lack of funding mechanisms (12%)
5. Lack of enforcement of ordinances (10%)
6. Site management needs improvement (Buffers, fertilizer, over watering, salt use)
7. Fear of litigation
8. True cost of development being forwarded to taxpayers (lack of sustainable stormwater practice knowledge in developing community)
9. Ordinance adoption pitfalls / local politics
10. Need for public and government buy-in
11. Different stormwater requirements across municipal boundaries
12. Improve stormwater management for new development
13. Lack of staff time & resources
14. Lack of open space
15. Public perception of landscaping in conflict with watershed protection principles
16. Stop mowing to the edge of our waterways
17. Lack of leadership
18. Don’t look at faults-work together
19. Confusion of Red Run Pollution – Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) vs. stormwater
20. Lack of intergovernmental cooperation / improve communication - coordinated message
21. Economics of proper land management
22. Square Lake & John R impact of construction
23. Think of ways to save money in stormwater management (i.e. less salt)

## 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 Madison Heights Senior Center on February 1, 2005, to participate in a Community Forum. Over 33 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
- 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 (including ties) 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. Make canoeing a recreational opportunity (19%)
2. Daylight portions of the Red Run in Oakland County (13%)
3. Enforce existing ordinances (11%)
4. More aesthetic streambanks in Warren  
(e.g., poor condition of grassy ditch by Maple Lane) (10%)
5. Homeowner education (8%)  
Riparian/waterfront owners
6. Baker Middle School in Troy – develop an outdoor classroom in open portions of the Red Run River (8%)
7. Best Management Practices to promote streambank protection and stabilization
8. Reduction in paved surfaces
9. Removing lawn/groundcover to promote native landscaping
10. Fishing pier
11. Visual inspections of yards  
Downspout disconnection
12. Use porous pavement/permeable pavers
13. Redevelopment in blighted urban areas

### Community Forum Issues and Concerns

- Concerns with the combined sewer overflow (CSO) events in the Red Run Drain and the health and aesthetic problems they create

## Focus Group

The SWAG planned a targeted focus group to obtain input from and the participation of churches, a key stakeholder group in the subwatershed. According to the SWAG, churches 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 churches, some goals of the WMP may be difficult to achieve.

The focus group meeting was held on June 23, 2005 at the St. Rene Goupil in Sterling Heights. The participant, a representative from Bethesda Christian Church received an introduction to the project and answered questions about the congregation, how various churches communicate, how individual churches communicate with parishioners, any environmentally friendly practices they currently implement, and interest in implementing innovative practices. The overarching purpose of the meeting was to identify issues specific to this group for consideration in development of the WMP. The goals raised by the participant are presented below:

- Network with other churches of other faiths in the area to promote public health through clean, safe water. This would be best accomplished by contact with grounds managers and business managers, (especially if churches could save money); and
- Educating the congregation through presentations. Many people would be very interested in the watershed management planning process.

The issues and concerns expressed by the participant include:

- Low participation from other churches.

## 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;
- 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.

## Community Forum #2 and Follow-up Comments

A second Community Forum took place at the Madison Heights Senior Center 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 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 15 individuals attended the forum hosted by SWAG members, of which 2 represented local residents and were not affiliated with the SWAG.

## 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 Clinton River East 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.

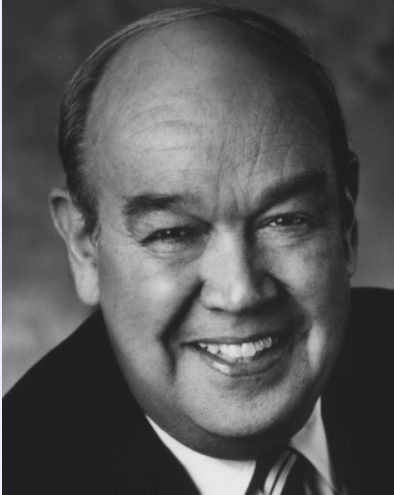
In addition to the facilitated discussion, participants had the opportunity to provide input on the types of technical assistance necessary to implement WMP actions using a feedback form. The participants indicated that they anticipated needing assistance with several implementation actions and provided 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;
- Streambank, 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

## Information Displays

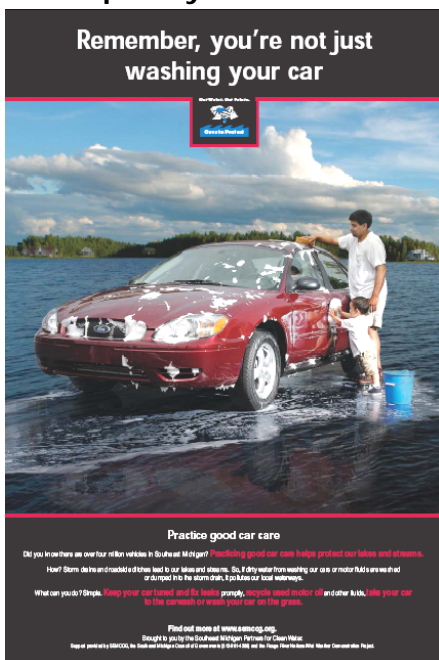
Meeting announcements, contact information, and brochures were and continue to be distributed to SWAG members and interested governmental and community organizations for display in public buildings such as municipal facilities, schools, and libraries.

### Information Display at Hazel Park Offices



Courtesy of Hazel Park

### An Example of Public Education Materials Developed by SEMCOG



- A 'Personal Watershed Stewardship Program' with the following key messages:
  - Definition of a watershed;
  - Knowledge of what watershed an individual lives in and has an impact on;
  - Importance of protecting watersheds; and,
  - Ways that individuals can impact the watershed through their activities;
- An 'Ultimate Storm Water Discharge Location and Potential Impacts' program with the following key messages:
  - Storm drains discharge to waterbodies;
  - Stormwater discharged from separate storm sewer systems does not receive treatment prior to discharge;
  - The environmental impacts of stormwater pollutants in the watershed; and,
  - Knowledge of the separate stormwater drainage system in an individual's neighborhood and the waterbody to which the stormwater is discharged;
- A 'Reporting of Illicit Discharges' program with the following key messages:
  - Definition of an illicit discharge and what to look for;
  - Promotion of the illicit discharge reporting system and how to report an illicit discharge;
  - Water quality impacts associated with illicit discharges and improper waste disposal;
  - Identification of failing on-site sewage disposal systems - physical symptoms to watch for; and,
  - Consequences/penalties associated with illicit discharges and improper waste disposal;
- A 'Personal Actions that Can Impact the Watershed' program with the following key message:
  - Best management practices for each of the following actions:
    - Car, pavement, and/or power washing (preferred cleaning materials and practices);
    - Pesticide use, fertilizer use, and their disposal;
    - Management of grass clippings, leaf litter, and animal wastes;
    - Residential de-icer use;
    - Native vegetation on residential properties as an alternative to turf grass. The impacts of residential car, pavement, and power washing on water quality; and
  - Effects of residential wastes on our water bodies';
- A 'Waste Management Assistance' program with the following key messages:
  - Identification of household hazardous wastes and available alternatives; and
  - Disposal locations, requirements, and availability for household hazardous wastes and other chemicals, including motor vehicle fluids, travel trailer sanitary wastes, recreational boating sanitary wastes, and yard wastes; and

- 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.