

Dearborn County Water Quality Management Plan Update
Advisory Committee
December 13, 2010
Meeting Summary

ATTENDED BY:

Committee Members:

Randy Turner	Dan Lansing	Margaret Minzner	Heather Wirth
Mark McCormack	John Grace	Bruce Keller	Steve Renihan
Rita Cutter	Jennifer Hughes	Jim Deaton	Steve Lampert
John Getzendanner	Mel Davis	Floyd Ogden	Paul Grimsley
Andy Bischoff	Bill Neyer	Duane Drockelman	Chuck Hail

OKI Staff:

Travis Miller Bruce Koehler Robert Lakeberg Jane Wittke

Guests:

Steve Canter Jerry Jacobsen

Distribution of Draft Plan Chapters and Opportunities for Questions and Answers

Robert Lakeberg presented a summary of the draft chapter on *Dearborn County Water Resources*. The summary includes information on surface water resources, relevant natural resources, land use statistics, and stream impairments. The purpose of the draft chapter is to provide a description of the county's water resources and their condition as a baseline for developing other parts of the plan. Committee members expressed some difficulty with aspects of map symbology in the draft, suggesting changes to better distinguish among map features. It was also suggested that the land use information presented did not include enough categories to differentiate among residential, commercial, industrial and agricultural land; staff explained that categories were combined to make a simple distinction between developed and undeveloped land because of the differences in water quality impacts. In addition, a committee member mentioned that it would be helpful to know what percentage of watersheds drain directly to the Ohio River, the Whitewater River, and the Great Miami River, in order to better visualize the flow of runoff.

Bruce Koehler presented a summary of the draft chapter on *Nonpoint Source Pollution Management in Dearborn County*. It has three purposes: (1) to identify nonpoint (NPS) source pollution issues in Dearborn County, (2) to determine which types of nonpoint sources can be linked to water quality problems, and (3) to identify resources and strategies available to address them. The summary highlights residential developments with clusters of failing onsite wastewater treatment systems as a major contributor to nonpoint source pollution in the county.

Jane Wittke presented a summary of the draft chapter on *Point Source Management in Dearborn County*. This chapter provides requirements for water quality management planning, federal, state and local wastewater management information, profiles of each wastewater management organization, and criteria used to draft new wastewater facility planning area boundaries. Advisory committee members requested that the map titled *Major Wastewater Treatment Plants, Facility Planning Areas, and Sewer Service Areas in Dearborn County* use a different color coding for jurisdictions and sewer service areas, because the colors used were similar enough to be confusing.

Proposed Wastewater Facility Planning Area Boundaries and Management Agencies

Travis Miller presented a work map with an initial draft of wastewater facility planning areas (FPAs), which were based on interviews conducted in the summer of 2010 with wastewater management providers in the county about their facilities, operations and service intentions, and on the process and criteria presented in the *Point Source Management in Dearborn County* chapter, as described below:

As a departure point for updating, OKI began by revisiting existing wastewater FPA boundaries and management agency designations. The original OKI plan for Dearborn County did not identify an FPA for St. Leon facilities or Logan Miller Harrison (LMH) facilities because neither were being contemplated when the original plan was developed in the 1970's. In addition, neither St. Leon nor LMH were identified as designated management agencies in the 1977 OKI plan, and the Dearborn County Regional Sewer District (DCRSD) was designated through a 2009 plan amendment as a management agency responsible for collection and treatment in the small Highridge Estates FPA.

Existing sewer lines have provided another practical consideration for updating FPA boundaries, as they involve wastewater facilities available for use and expansion and can also involve a substantial investment of public dollars. For example, the sewer systems of St. Leon and LMH did not exist when the original OKI plan was prepared. A St. Leon sewer line has been extended under the Whitewater River by a developer in the vicinity of the U.S.52 and I-74 interchange; and the South Dearborn Regional Sewer District's (SDRSD's) sewer lines have since expanded beyond SDRSD's original FPA boundaries to serve evolving demand.

Natural physical features have been another factor in the updating process. A general understanding of slope/surface gradient is important when gravity lines are being contemplated. Ravines and major streams are often costly to cross with infrastructure and should be evaluated as future service areas are considered. For example, the topography associated with North Hogan Creek is a consideration for the SDRSD FPA, and the topography associated with South Hogan Creek is a consideration for the Dillsboro FPA. Built physical features like roads and railroads have also been considered in the update process, as crossing such features adds cost to extending sewer lines.

In Dearborn County, known areas of on-site septic tank system concentrations are a major factor in contemplating centralized sewer service needs and updating wastewater FPAs. As noted in the nonpoint source chapter, many on-site systems have failed and are contributing to water quality problems because of the generally poor suitability of soils in the County for their use. A map of hot spots of problem on-site systems is provided in the nonpoint source chapter, and includes the SR 148 and SR 48 intersection, the Guilford area, and portions of the U.S. 50 corridor.

Areas where population is projected to increase significantly have also been considered as OKI revisits FPA boundaries, including the SR 350 corridor and Logan Township, as well as areas where population is expected to decrease, such as Lawrenceville. Future land uses recommended in the Dearborn County Comprehensive Plan, particularly those uses likely to have needs for centralized sewer service, are another factor considered in making FPA boundary changes. In addition, OKI has considered areas with incentives to spur development, such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts, because they are assumed to develop within the life cycle of this plan update. These include the West Harrison TIF district, the West Aurora TIF district, the St. Leon TIF district, and the Greendale TIF district.

This first draft of updated FPAs included modifications to reflect the merger of the High Ridge FPA within a larger rural area proposed to be managed by the DCRSD, as the DCRSD had declared its intentions and willingness to tackle several "hot spots" of failing septic tank concentrations in rural unincorporated areas of the county. The draft of updated FPAs also involved the creation of an LMH FPA and a St. Leon FPA.

When Jane Wittke asked for comments or concerns about the methodology used to draft updated FPA boundaries, none were received, but committee members expressed a desire to obtain copies of the map for further review and analysis. It was agreed that committee members would receive PDF copies of the map via email, with the understanding that the current version was an initial draft that could change significantly depending on committee input. Travis Miller requested that comments on the FPA boundaries and methodology be forwarded to Jane Wittke in writing by January 5th through jwittke@oki.org

Initial reactions to the map included concern over the draft FPA boundaries potentially complicating growth potential for some areas. Travis Miller explained that growth potential was considered, but so were wastewater treatment capacity, the ability to raise the necessary funding for extending service, and existing infrastructure.

Opportunities for Community Outreach from January to March, 2011

Jane Wittke asked committee members to brainstorm about public events at which the plan update process could be briefly described and a draft FPA map displayed. In addition to regular meetings of town and community councils, other possibilities mentioned were meetings of the Chamber of Commerce and the annual dinner meeting of the Dearborn County Soil and Water Conservation District.

NOTE: The draft materials prepared for this meeting were subsequently revised and refined based on comments from the committee, and the revised drafts are available on Dearborn County's website: <http://www.dearborncounty.org/waterplan>