

## Lower St. Joseph – Bear Creek Watershed Management Plan

### Stakeholder meeting St. Joe, IN on Thursday, August 24<sup>th</sup>.

Jane Loomis, Dawn Ritchie and Phil Carpenter walked the St. Joe River Greenway before the meeting. On the route to the meeting, Mr. Carpenter also showed us the latest city park on Main Street that was recently dedicated.

Meeting location: St. Joe Town Hall, 3<sup>rd</sup> & Railroad Streets, St. Joe, IN  
Beginning at 6:30 pm.

In Attendance: Steve Monroe, Chuck Arnett, Bill Lambert, Rex & Mary Lu Snyder, Robert Wilder, Franklyn & Fran Sechler, Phil Carpenter, Tom Hollabaugh, Dawn Ritchie, John Jones, Jane Loomis.

#### Notes:

After introductions, Jane Loomis explained the process of gathering information from stakeholders, collecting data and ground-truthing data, and developing a vision and goals for the watershed.

Loomis then gave a power point presentation on some of the information that has been collected on the two sub-watersheds regarding geology, mileage of waterways, and general watershed characteristics and develop. She also explained that the SJRWI Partnership had created GIS layers showing conservation in place and wetland delineation, among other things.

Loomis handed out maps of the two sub-watersheds depicting roads and streams and explained the process of choosing stream crossings where monitoring of habitat, biology and chemistry of the stream would be conducted this fall. Participants were able to add information about the various locations (30 in the Bear Creek sub-shed) and relay information about access and ownership.

Also discussed at the meeting were parks and public access points to the river. One participant noted that public access translates into public support and it should be encouraged.

Discussion on a possible wetland development on 9.5 acres of land adjacent to the St. Joe Greenway which is owned by the School Corporation followed, with J Loomis suggesting that the US Fish & Wildlife Agency may be able to help with the project. Jane will contact Forest Clark of the US FWA in Bloomington and check on this, and put him into contact with P. Carpenter.

Tom Hollabaugh has been stocking the river with walleye over the past few years, 400 walleye in the last 4 years. Will continue as long as he can find the funding; has done 200

every two years. This year three large walleye were caught, so they are surviving and growing. Hollabaugh works w/ his students (Eastside HS Biology) on the river each summer. He noted that they do fish population studies with nets. They also check water quality and he noted that the “water quality is ok.” There is plenty of dissolved oxygen most of the year. They also check ammonia and phosphorus, pH. He noted that turbidity is high. They find lots of live mussels. RE. the fish population study, they’ve netted 12 different species, including quillback, gizzard chad, (perhaps) redhorse (endangered species), largemouth bass, bluegill and pike. He noted that there are bass tournaments nearly weekly at the Cedarville Reservoir. Sponsors include a local Wednesday night tournament run by Dough Fetters, as well as weekend tournaments sponsored by Summit City Bass Masters, Bait’n’Hook. Full listing can be obtained from DNR since permits are needed.

### Public Access

There is access on the Reservoir. No access points between the reservoir and St. Joe’s access on CR 60/63. That access point includes a considerable amount of public land between the railroad and west of Old Rt. CR 63, and then to the River (DNR and DeKalb Co.) that was purchased when the bridge was put in. The agreement on the bridge was that DNR would put in a public access ramp (concrete boat launch)

The ramp on the north side of Cedarville is at Leo (Grabill & Swartz Roads. This area is where the bass tournaments are held, but parking is v. limited.

A place for a ramp access exists in Newville but no public access has been built there:

### Log jams

Log jams were discussed. It was noted that at Hanson’s Island (@ SR 1 near #10 on the map) there is a speedboat w/ 2 motors under water. It’s been there for ~25 years and can be seen when river levels are low.

No major dumping sites were known.

Worst logjams are reported north of Newville, south of CR 79. (This is outside the Bear Creek sub-shed.) Participants noted minor washouts and log jams at Wild Cherry Park. However, those washouts have been there for years.

T. Hollabaugh noted that other than large trees that impede the canoeists, that he recommended the logjams should be left in place. Acc to his studies, there are very few frogs – a few leopards and bull frogs only – in the river and that the log jams are the only habitat left.

Discussion on the upcoming logjam clear out by the Maumee Conservancy District in Williams Co (OH): the consensus is that this will just increase the flow and energy of the river downstream to this area.

Discussion on walking access (greenway) from St. Joe to Covered Bridge in Spencerville: people on both ends are supportive of this. At least 2 bridges would be needed to span wetlands. There is a private conservation area on the east side of the river where a family named Inlow is restoring wetlands, etc.

Orange (Orangeville) Oldest platted town in DeKalb County. ~7 houses. Between Newville and SR 101, near CR 75A. 3 mills and dam have been there through the years – not all at the same time. Steve Monroe says he has pictures of all three mills.

Map points:

- #6 Wild Cherry Park – access for sampling
- #7 Canoe access put-in on SR 8 near Newville UM Church. Also location for possible public access site noted in discussion above?
- #8 Mary Lu & Rex Snyder property is v. near this point. We have permission to sample there.
- #10 Public access site – available for sampling
- #13 & #14 Near St. Joe Sewage Treatment plant outlet. T. Hollabaugh has been sampling w/ his students on these two streams
- #15 is Spencerville Covered Bridge – can get access to sample there.
- #15 “lakes” nearby are abandoned gravel pits