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Portage Lake Watershed Forever Plan

Executive Committee Meeting

June 17, 2008

4 p.m. – 6 p.m.

Farr Center, Onekama, Michigan

Participants- Mike Acton, Denny Blue, Chuck May, Alice Hendricks, Mary Reed, Howard Hughes, Dee Dee Miller, George Punches, Barry Peterman, Brian Myers, Jim Simons, Frank English, Kathy Ervin, Janice McCraner, Roger Cody, Dan Behring, Frank Beaver, Robert Evans, Lee LaFleur, Bob Wendt and Dave Combs

- 1. Introductions** – Mike Acton made introductions. Anna Veverica will be taking notes and helping out with miscellaneous tasks. Janice McCraner is the Manistee County Commissioner and is here to discuss the point of sale well and septic ordinance, Brian Myers and Barry Peterman are from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. Brian is with the Water Bureau and Barry is with the Water Management Division.
- 2. Celebrate-** Mike Acton thanked everyone for their hard work. The MDEQ and the EPA have approved the plan. The map was colored in to show that the Portage Lake Watershed has a plan that passed state and federal standards.
- 3. Succeeding with the Watershed Plan Implementation-** Brian Myers congratulated everyone for making a plan that passed state and federal standards. He said to be careful because switching from planning to implementation can be tricky. You should focus on things that are in the plan and not get distracted by things that aren't. You may see additional things that you could do but those should be left for another organization. He warned that the collaboration might be fragile because it is so new. The group needs to find common ground and stay away from conflicts that could break it apart. Brian gave a few examples of this. One watershed group advocated for something that wasn't good for some of its members who were in a canoe rental business and it caused the group to break apart. Another example involved a bank restoration group. They started focusing on things that didn't involve bank restoration and it caused their group to split. He also cautioned against allowing the name Portage Lake Watershed Forever to be used for programs that aren't covered in the plan. Barry Peterman spoke next. He told the group that some statutes might allow the DEQ to issue a permit for something that might seem contradictory to what the watershed group is doing, but if someone receives a permit it is for a good reason. The DEQ would appreciate it if the watershed group would submit comments and facts to help them make better-informed decisions about permits. For the

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most part, the Watershed Plan and the DEQ will be consistent with each other however, there may be some exceptions. One example was that someone was issued a field permit to build a house after a professional came to the conclusion that the area of wetland was too small to protect. He also mentioned that politics could play a role in what permits are issued because the Governor appoints the director of the DEQ.

4. Plan Implementation

- A. Point of Sale Well and Septic Ordinance – Janice McCraner reviewed the history. The Onekama Township started the idea of a point of sale well and septic ordinance and decided to bring it to the county. The Manistee County Sanitarian Committee worked with District Health Department #10. The District Health Board voted to approve the ordinance and take it to all ten counties for their approval. There will be a meeting in late summer or early fall in Manistee to finalize it. The meeting information will be posted in the newspaper. The point of sale well and septic ordinance will make it mandatory for the buyers or sellers of a home to have an inspection of the well and septic system.
- B. Onekama Community Joint Master Plan – Tim Ervin spoke on behalf of the Manistee County Community Foundation and said they were happy to help with joint master plan. It is only the sixth time in Michigan that this has been accomplished. A grant was received and two others currently are pending to support the implementation of the joint master plan. The initial set of meetings were held three weeks ago and the next meeting will be held on July 17 to help define what the community wants. The goal is to have the joint master plan completed by the end of the calendar year.
- C. PLA – Mike Acton and Tim Ervin will meet with the PLA on July 2 to identify association implementation priorities.
- D. Inventory and Monitoring Committee Update – The village started their weekly sampling and all results were well below the maximum level. Chase Callaway will soon be trained and will begin collecting samples. Another volunteer is needed to collect sample results. The SOS Lab will send results, which will be posted on the web site. There will be a spreadsheet to display the data and a paragraph explaining what the results mean. It was suggested that the results also be posted at the areas where the samples were taken. Some natural occurrences, such as storms, could result in a spike in the amount of bacteria. The sample for Schimke Creek should be taken at the crossing. Because fishing boats leave early in the morning from Onekama Marine, the results should be compared with other areas of the lake. If they are significantly higher, then the sampling time will need to be adjusted. District Health Department #10 will do testing Lake Michigan at the Onekama and Pierport beaches. The Little River Band can help test Portage Lake with dissolved oxygen profiling during summer stratification. Jim Hunter and Stephanie will coordinate this project. No sediment testing is being done at this time. The oxygen level is low or depleted in the lowest holes of Portage Lake. The same thing happened in Platte Lake, which had high phosphorus levels from a hatchery. Shoreline survey training will be done the afternoon of June 23 and the morning of June 24 and will take an estimated 2-4 hours. Most of the people at the meeting preferred to have the training on June 24. Shoreline surveying will look at invasive plant species, storm drains, cladophora, and

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- spring-fed creeks. The township will provide maps that can show the divisions of the shoreline for each group. The surveying will be done over an 11 day period that is till to be determined.
- E. Integrating Plan Implementation into groups/organizational missions and actions – Tim Ervin suggested having specific groups choose separate items to work on. Some possible organizations are the Garden Club, School Board, The Lions, PLA, PPSRC and PLEA. Activities should be kept fun so that people don't lose interest. Clubs/organizations should be informed of the Watershed Plan to help them find areas that they can help with or tasks they may already be doing. It would be best if each group could send a member to a Watershed meeting. This should be done before fall. Priorities that haven't yet started should be identified so the organizations/groups know what needs to be done. A spread sheet showing tasks/action steps is needed and should include who is responsible for objectives in the plan. Many volunteers are needed to go door-to-door to deliver homeowner packets. Concern was mentioned about certain areas of the shoreline being inaccessible for surveying.
- F. Beach Clean Up- Lee Lafleur discussed cleaning Lake Michigan and village beaches with the City of Manistee's beach cleaner. The cost would be \$150 per hour for a person to run the equipment. The sites were evaluated and it would take about one hour at the village beach, three hours at the Lake Michigan beach and 30 minutes of travel time each way. The total cost would be about \$900. A dump truck, a dump site and some extra sand to make the beach accessible will be needed. This will be presented at the PLA meeting. Onekama Township and the Village of Onekama will check to see if there are funds to help with the cost. A permit may be needed.
- 5. Community Outreach and Education-** Kathy Ervin and Dee Dee Miller head the Education Committee. Their purpose is to educate people and encourage them to become involved. They have several ideas about how to accomplish this. They would like to begin going door-to-door to hand out a homeowner's packet of information as soon as possible. They want to place signs on county roads at seven locations alerting people when they have entered or exited the watershed. They want to order stickers with the watershed logo for cars, boats, etc. and would like businesses to have information brochures available for the public. They have an idea for a banner that could be moved to various locations within the watershed. They are going to have aerial photographs taken for use on postcards and they are drafting a letter thanking people and encouraging future support. Their next meeting will be June 19. They estimate the cost for all of these projects to be around \$2200. It was suggested that the township could organize a clean up or phragmite removal day or that the shoreline survey could count at this year's community involvement program. It would help identify areas where the phragmites need to be removed. A permit is needed to remove them.
- 6. Funding-** Tim Ervin discussed an opportunity for additional funding. On June 18 a grant workshop will be held from 10 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. at West Shore Medical Center. He encouraged anyone to attend. The Manistee County Community Foundation has set up an endowment fund for the Portage Lake Watershed Forever. They would like to raise an additional \$500,000 and are asking for donations. Laura Heintzelman can make a presentation regarding the fund when she returns from maternity leave.