

PEORIA LAKES BASIN ALLIANCE
Tuesday, January 23, 2018 at 12:00 pm
456 Fulton Street, Suite 401
Peoria, Illinois 61602

MINUTES

Call to Order

Ray Lees called the meeting to order at 12:00 pm

Attendees

The Nature Conservancy:	Jason Beverlin, and Doug Blodgett
Heartland Water Resources Council:	Wayne Ingram, Tom Tincher, and Steve Van Winkle
Tri-County Regional Planning Commission:	Reema Abi-Akar, Michael Bruner, and Ray Lees
US Army Corps of Engineers:	Jackie Veniger – via phone

Public Comment

No public comment

Housekeeping

Meeting goals

Bruner explained the purpose of the meeting is to review and finalize the March 1st Public Open House and continue the discussion on the prioritization tool.

USACE Update

Jackie gave an update on the development of the initial array of projects. Jackie stated she is currently looking at how to sort the results. Sorting by category/issue (altered hydrology, invasive species, loss of habitat diversity, river use/navigation, sediment, and water quality) and by geographic location (in-lake, watershed, other). Jackie stated that there are 4 fact sheets in the other category and they are hydrogeomorphic study, educational component, mud to jobs, and Rivertown USA.

Jackie mentioned she is currently reviewing the results of the first screening tool and using statistics to determine if any fact sheets are to be eliminated and placed in the “parking lot”. Jackie is considering anything at a 3.5 or higher. Anything between a 3 and 3.5 would be transferred to the parking lot.

It was asked if it was worth keeping all the project elements and categorize them based off their location. Jackie mentioned that she is categorizing the alternatives based on issue and location. Jackie also mentioned that if we do not put some in the parking lot then at the end of the day, we will have a lot to sift through with the second tool.

Peoria Lakes Comprehensive Conservation Plan Public Open House #2

Bruner explained the purpose of the second public open house is to present the initial array of projects developed by the USACE based off the screening tool results, obtain public input of preferences, and obtain input on the criteria proposed to evaluate each alternative. Bruner also noted the flyer that staff developed to advertise the second open house. Blodgett recommended replacing “Come learn about Peoria Lakes conservation efforts” with “come help us prioritize conservation projects”.

Bruner went on to explain the different activities and stations planned for the open house. Staffs idea is to have an activity were participants get an index card and asked to supply their idea(s) for conserving the Peoria Lakes. Participants would be encouraged to add their ideas to the “Parking Lot” station. Blodgett was confused why we were asking for additional ideas, since we already did that at the first public open house. Blodgett recommended changing the idea cards to comment cards for participants to fill out at the end.

Bruner stated that each conservation alternative would have their own display board and participants will have the opportunity to share what they like the most and least about each alternative, as well as supply general comments. There was general confusion amongst the PLBA if there would be alternatives or project groups (for example, “here’s what can be done to address sedimentation...”) to be presented to the public. Jackie clarified there would be draft alternatives for the public to review and comment on.

The project elements that were not considered for a conservation alternative or ideas generated by the public via that idea cards activity will be included in a “parking lot” station. At this station participants will be asked to vote for their favorite idea using the same method the PRC will use to prioritize the alternatives. Van Winkle made mention that as he sees the “parking lot” as a means to include good ideas that are outside the scope but could be considered in the future. Van Winkle mentioned that we will need to make this clear to the public.

A station will be dedicated for participants to use the same prioritization tool as the PRC will use to evaluate the conservation alternatives. Participants will use sticky dots to vote for the alternatives based off a set of criteria. Next to this station will be an opportunity for the participants to supply comment and recommendations on the set of criteria used to evaluate the alternatives and “parking lot”.

Bruner mentioned that there will be another stakeholder survey available at the event and that it will be developed next month once we have the initial array of projects.

Prioritization Tool and Criteria

Bruner explained that at the last PLBA meeting, it was suggested to simplify the tool to make it easier to explain and use. Staff decided to limit the number of criteria to three (Environmental Impact, Regional Impact, and Feasibility). Each criteria will be given a separate color. Bruner used an example of six alternatives and four participants. In this example, each participant is given three sticky dots of each color. From this example it was revealed that alternative 1 is the best option and alternative 6 the low hanging fruit option (easy to get done but has limited benefits).

Bruner explained that a dry run of this exercise will occur at the public open house. Blodgett stated that the “dry run” will be the single most important station at the open house. Blodgett also stated that Regional Impact should be changed to Human Impact. Ray Lees suggested to change it to Quality of Life. Van Winkle stressed that sustainability needs to be a main factor when reviewing alternatives. Abi-Akar stated that is covered under feasibility and we would stress the sustainability portion of that.

Other

Next scheduled meeting

Bruner stated the next schedule meeting is Tuesday, February 6, 2018 and noted it is the 1st Tuesday instead of the 2nd Tuesday to keep the pattern of having a meeting every two week.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 1:45 pm