

The following is a summary of progress toward completion of the Portage Lake Watershed Forever Plan since the last Joint Executive and Technical Advisory Committee meeting on June 26, 2007. Please refer to the temporary project website at <http://www.pscinc.com/documents/PLWF> for additional information.

Public Engagement in the Planning Process

- **A focus group was held for seasonal residents on June 28, 2007.** Thirty-five people attended and new ideas and concerns were brought forth. This concluded the focus group meetings; a complete summary of all focus groups and the community forum (nearly 150 participants in total) is posted on the website.
- **The watershed resident survey was completed between June 25 and July 30** and 228 households participated (one out of every four households in the watershed). A final analysis will be posted on the website by August 31, 2007.

Watershed Plan Development

- **The draft Phase I report has transitioned into the draft Portage Lake Watershed Forever Plan.** In response to questions and suggestions raised at the last meeting, the following updates have been made to the plan or are in the process of being added to the plan:
 - ◆ Additional characterization of tributaries, along with water quality data (SOURCE: Snell Environmental Group. 1993. Portage Lake U.S. EPA Phase I Diagnostic/Feasibility Study.)
 - ◆ Updated land-use cover data, change and projections (SOURCES: Center for Geographic Information, Michigan Department of Information Technology, 2001, The Computational Ecology and Visualization Lab/Michigan State University Land Policy Institute, 2007.)
 - ◆ Hydrology and precipitation information (pending) (SOURCES: MDEQ, USGS, LRBOI, NOAA National Weather Service)
 - ◆ General soils map (SOURCE: United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Grayling Area Office, 2007.)
 - ◆ Updated map of location of oil and gas wells (SOURCE: Center for Geographic Information, Michigan Department of Information Technology, 2007.)
 - ◆ Underground storage tank site types and locations (SOURCE: Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, 2007.)
 - ◆ Water well nitrate levels and locations of uncapped wells (pending) (SOURCE: MDEQ, District 10 Health Department, Manistee Health Department) Threatened and endangered species and species of concern (SOURCE: Michigan Natural Features Inventory – MSU Extension, Watershed Element Data for Watershed ID 4060104 20L 2)
 - ◆ Additional information on exotic species (pending, various sources)
 - ◆ Updated information on MDNR fish planting since 2000 (SOURCE: MDNR)
 - ◆ LRBOI walleye recruitment assessment (SOURCE: Little River Band of Ottawa Indians, 2005 and 2006)
 - ◆ Air quality information (Tribe is not currently collecting information on toxics or nutrients)

- ◆ Updated information on Onekama School water quality monitoring prior to 2004 and including 2007 (pending) (SOURCE: Onekama Schools)
- ◆ Onekama Township 2006 water quality monitoring data (Will not be included in plan)

Follow-up on Other Questions and Concerns

- Beach monitoring during times of heavy uses (Assisted Onekama Township with 2007 Interim Water Quality Monitoring Strategy, July 26, 2007)
- Need for additional dissolved oxygen profiles during summer stratification (SOURCE: MDNR, July 16, 2007)
- Information on how to identify Eurasian water milfoil (posted on website)

Meeting with MDEQ to Discuss Plan Approval Criteria

On July 25, 2007, Jack Bails and Laura Heintzelman met with MDEQ Cadillac District Office Water Bureau staff including Mike Stifler, District Supervisor; Brian Myers, Technical Assistance; and Greg Goudy, Technical Assistance, to discuss meeting approval criteria put forth for watershed management plans by the MDEQ and EPA. Mike Acton, PLWF Executive Committee Chair, and Tim Ervin, Manistee Economic Development Office (project fiscal agent) also participated in the discussion.

In summary:

- The group agreed on necessary components of and a general outline for the plan.
- It is not anticipated that additional data collection will be required. It may be helpful, however, to have some limited stream inventory work completed as part of Phase II. Other additional research, inventorying, and monitoring can be included as action items in the plan.
- Additional information needed includes:
 - ◆ More detailed characterization of the tributary streams and additional water quality information for tributaries (if known)
 - ◆ Hydrology and precipitation information
 - ◆ Chart of designated and desired uses including sources and causes of known or potential threats (Water quality standards put forth by the MDEQ should be referenced for designated uses in the plan. There are no state standards for desired uses.)
 - ◆ Estimates of known or suspected pollutant loadings based on land-use cover types and estimated changes over time
 - ◆ List and map of critical areas for designated and desired uses organized by known or potential threat or opportunity
 - ◆ Analysis of how/if local programs, projects, and plans are helping to meet goals and objectives of the plan
 - ◆ Long-term goals, short-term measurable objectives (10 years), and tasks (best management practices, information and education strategies, community engagement)
 - ◆ Cost estimates, timelines, and priorities for tasks

General comment from the MDEQ was to ensure that the plan would help the community identify what to do next and why. It is anticipated that the plan will continue to be updated as new information becomes available. MDEQ review is anticipated to take 45–60 days per draft, including review by some Lansing staff. The meeting provided information needed to finalize the recommended strategy for Phase II.

Recommended Strategy for Phase II

PSC continued to refine the recommended strategy for Phase II. Primary tasks include:

- Identify and prioritize potential threats, pollutants, sources, and causes for designated and desired uses of the watershed

- Establish long-term goals for protecting and restoring designated and desired uses
- List and map critical areas for meeting designated and desired uses
- Establish measurable objectives and identify management measures and other actions to help achieve watershed goals
- Inform, educate, and engage the public
- Analyze how/if local programs, projects, and plans are helping to meet watershed plan goals and objectives
- Develop an evaluation process to track progress on achieving plan goals and objectives
- Assemble the Portage Lake Watershed Management Plan and submit to the MDEQ for approval

Additional recommendations for Phase II that are not required components of the watershed plan but are viewed as priority needs include:

- Development of a Portage Lake Watershed Forever website
- Development of a comprehensive water quality monitoring strategy for the Portage Lake watershed

Elements of Phase II are already under way and a draft Portage Lake Watershed Forever Plan will be submitted to the MDEQ for approval no later than October 31, 2007. The draft plan will be made available to the PLWF Executive Committee and Technical Advisors by September 30, 2007.