

OUTREACH MEETINGS

One community-level Protected Water Area meeting was held in each of the five PWAs between October 24 and November 9, 2006 by Rivers Team staff. A presentation was made about new strategies being proposed. The facilitation method known as “nominal group technique” was used to solicit input in three main categories: 1) Current initiatives and strategies 2) Challenges 3) Opportunities.

PURPOSE OF THESE WORKSHOPS

- To gauge each area’s current capacity/projects
- Learn about current techniques
- Determine current community interest in rivers as important natural resources.
- Hear concerns about possible changes.

The following are a summary of the outreach workshops

WAPSIPINICON RIVER PWA

October 24, 2006, Central City, Iowa

This PWA spans a large river area, including eight counties, creating both challenges and opportunities. County conservation boards appear uniformly engaged in land acquisition efforts. An example is in Linn County, which manages 6,800 acres and 3,000 of those acres are along the Wapsipinicon River. In-county partnerships (CCB/DNR, CCB/Pheasants Forever, etc.) are well developed. Partnerships among all agencies spanning the PWA do not appear to exist, except in DNR initiatives. Early indications are that a solid number of adjacent landowners, recreational and otherwise, would consider conservation easements. A challenge in working in an area this large, particularly with the messaging project, will be that there is not a group or coalition spanning these areas – in other words, there is no “go to” person and DNR may need to fill that role or facilitate development of such an organization. Enthusiasm was strong at the meeting among both citizens and agency staff. One local citizens group called Restore Our Wapsipinicon (ROW), requested the PWA be extended north to Frederika.

UPPER IOWA RIVER PWA

October 25, 2006, Decorah, Iowa

This PWA spans the river area from Kendallville (Winneshiek County) to Highway 76 (Allamakee County). The Upper Iowa Watershed Alliance group is engaged in partnerships with the stakeholders and has completed numerous efforts to protect the area. Strong local official/agency support exists in this area. With only one of the two county conservation boards present and that person being relatively new, not many conservation boards efforts seemed to be planned. Challenge in working in this area would be what could we accomplish that would not duplicate the current efforts. Regarding the opportunities, there would be support for testing a clean water quality message, which hasn't been done here. There seemed to a low to moderate sense of enthusiasm noted with this group.

BOONE RIVER PWA

October 30, 2006, Webster City, IA

This PWA spans the west central corridor of Hamilton County from Brewers Creek to the Des Moines River. There is the Boone River Watershed alliance group in this area, which engaged in scenic protection measures. The county conservation board is ready and willing to assist DNR in any measures we set forth. Both agencies appear to have a great working relationship with landowners in the area and have completed many acquisitions between them. Partnerships among all agencies spanning the PWA do exist and DNR initiatives play an important role in this area. Early indications are that a solid number of adjacent landowners, recreational and otherwise would consider either conservation easements or land acquisitions. A challenge in this area would be getting land secured through either land acquisitions or conservation easements before housing development come to this corridor due to the readily available rural water. Enthusiasm was strong at this meeting among both citizens and agency staff.

MIDDLE RACCOON RIVER PWA

November 7, 2006, Guthrie Center, IA

This PWA spans the smallest section of the five river areas, including only a small section of two counties (Guthrie and Dallas). The two county conservation boards are engaged with one another when it comes to land acquisition efforts and other project planning and implementation. They work well together and much credit should be given to them for these efforts. This area is in the midst of much development pressure. Partnerships among all agencies spanning the PWA do not appear to exist, except between DNR and the two county conservation boards. Other challenges include high land prices due to urban sprawl and can possibly hinder potential future acquisitions and conservation easements. There seemed to a moderate sense of enthusiasm noted with this group.

LITTLE SIOUX RIVER PWA

November 9, 2006, Spencer, IA

This PWA spans a large section of the Clay County area and the top tier of Buena Vista County. County conservation boards appear not to be coordinating with one another in either land acquisition efforts or other efforts along this corridor. There are few apparent partnership among agencies except were DNR has initiated with NRCS staff, and RC&D coordinators. Major challenges are lack of coordination and there appears to be little hope for forming a coalition partnership. An opportunity in working in this area would be proximity to the Iowa Great Lakes with associated tourism and recreational activities. There seemed to be a low to moderate sense of enthusiasm noted with this group.

Selection rankings *

1 = least, 3 = most

	Little Sioux	Middle Raccoon	Boone	Upper Iowa	Wapsipinicon
Citizen support	3	2	3	1	3
Local official/agency support	1	2	3	2	3
Assisting group present	1	1	2	1	1
Willingness for new strategies	1	2	3	1	3
Need/desire for assistance	2	2	3	1	3
Capacity for partnering now	1	2	3	2	2
Total points	9	11	17	8	15

GOALS OF THE PILOT PROJECT

- To provide assistance to a PWA to update the management plan while forming interagency partnerships.
- Test various methods of protection and develop system to track conservation easements.
- Test DNR water quality messages for wider use.