

Big Walnut Watershed Planning Partnership
Thursday, February 17, 2011
New Albany Public Library
200 Market St.
New Albany, OH 43081
Meeting Summary

Attendees:

Voting Member Communities

Rob Platte, Jefferson Township
Bill Dorman, New Albany
Steve Morris, Groveport
Susan Dorsch, Genoa Township
Cindy Powell, Plain Township
Jim Endsley, Jersey Township
Matt Hansen, Reynoldsburg
Bruce Langner, Bexley
Jeanna Burrell, Galena

Stakeholders

Bob Bostard, Friends of Big Walnut & Tributaries
Kurt Keljo, Franklin County SWCD
Jerry Brems, Licking County Planning Commission
Scott Sanders, Delaware County Regional Planning
Matt Brown, Franklin County Economic Development & Planning

MORPC Staff

Erin Grushon
Joe Kitchen

The meeting was called to order at 4:02 p.m. Erin welcomed the meeting attendees and started a round of introductions. Erin provided an overview of the meeting agenda and project timeline. Erin reviewed the process that has been used to develop the list of recommended criteria. First, partners reviewed and commented on a list of potential criteria at the December meeting of the full Big Walnut Planning Partnership (BWPP). Next, the Steering Committee met in January to discuss the potential criteria and draft a list of recommended criteria, including recommended weights for each feature. Finally, the full partnership will review the recommended criteria and weighting at this meeting and finalize and adopt the criteria list.

Erin briefly reviewed key elements of the Balanced Growth Planning process, highlighting the goals and definitions that had been adopted by the Big Walnut Planning Partnership. She reminded the meeting attendees that their Priority Area definitions could serve as guidance for criteria selection. Erin explained that the final Balanced Growth Plan will contain the Priority Area maps and an implementation toolbox.

Erin then discussed how the Priority Area criteria would be used to create the initial maps for the Big Walnut Balanced Growth Plans, explaining that MORPC staff would conduct a technical analysis using GIS software. The analysis would score every parcel in the watershed based on each of the 3 criteria lists (PCA criteria, PDA criteria, and PAA criteria). Erin reminded the group that each community would have an opportunity to review the draft maps and make changes. Erin also explained that there is a little bit of flexibility built into the weighting system. The partnership has established weights (low, medium, or high) for each criterion. Those weights will be translated into scores ranging from 1-3 for criteria weighted low, 4-6 for criteria weighted medium, and 7-9 for criteria weighted high. Initially, MORPC's technical staff will select the middle of each scoring range (2 for low, 5 for medium, and 8 for high). However, if the maps need some adjustment, we may ask the Big Walnut Steering Committee to meet again to review the progress and help MORPC staff adjust the individual scores within the established scoring ranges. All of the criteria would maintain scores within the range related to the weight established by the partnership. For example, the Steering Committee could suggest changing the score of a criterion weighted as medium from 5 to 6, but could not change the score to anything in the low (1-3) or high (7-9) ranges. Erin noted that this process is slightly different than what we used in the Olentangy watershed, but should help us avoid some of the initial problems we had with the Olentangy maps and should prevent us from having to bring together the full partnership multiple times to make minor tweaks during the analysis.

The group moved on to review, discuss, and adopt the recommended criteria list. Erin started by pulling up the recommended PCA criteria. A partner asked if there was a limit to the number of criteria that could be weighted high for each of the Priority Areas and Erin said that there was not.

Erin explained that the group would need to suggest a buffer for scenic roads and establish a weight for corridor management zones. Erin also mentioned that it was recommended that the partnership establish a buffer and weight for streams. The Steering Committee had recommended weights and buffers for the intermittent and perennial streams, but the full partnership would need to decide a buffer and weight for the remaining streams. The partners discussed this topic and agreed to weight the stream buffers high. Some partners had questions about the buffers, and Erin explained that we were not establishing stream buffers or any regulations on land in the watershed. The buffers were only being applied to the streams data to be used as criteria that would be analyzed using GIS to highlight initial Priority Areas.

There was some discussion about whether or not the buffers for the streams criteria should be larger. Ultimately, the group decided to keep the recommended buffers of 30 feet from the center of intermittent streams and 50 feet from the center of perennial and main stem streams.

The partners discussed the buffer for the scenic roads criterion and decided to include all parcels adjacent to the scenic roads. Next, the group discussed the corridor management zones and decided to weight them high because the zones are established to protect public drinking water supplies. The group also selected a high weight for the wellhead zones because the zones protect public drinking water supplies.

The criteria for Priority Development Areas were discussed next. One of the partners suggested breaking out the sewer service area into current sewer service area and future sewer service area and giving the current service area a higher weight. Others in the partnership agreed. One of the partners suggested changing the weight for urbanized areas from low to medium and others in attendance agreed. The group also decided to change the weights for Future Land Use for both High Density Residential and Commercial & Industrial areas from medium to low.

Next, the partners worked on the criteria list for Priority Agricultural Areas. Erin explained that MORPC had some additional data that could be considered for PAA criteria that had not been available when the Steering Committee met in January. First, MORPC had data for parcels that were registered with the state of Ohio as "Century Farms," meaning that the land had been farmed by the same family for over 100 years. The partners agreed to include "Century Farms" as a criterion and decided on a high weight. The group also agreed to include agricultural easements, land adjacent to agricultural easements, and parcels greater than 50 acres as additional PAA criteria.

Steve Morris of Groveport made a motion to adopt the revised list as the working criteria list for the Big Walnut Planning Partnership. John Carter of Columbus seconded the motion. The partnership unanimously approved the adoption of the criteria list. The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.