



**Missouri  
Department of  
Natural Resources**

## **WATER QUALITY COORDINATING COMMITTEE**

USGS Columbia Environmental Research Center  
Conference Building  
4200 New Haven Road  
Columbia, Missouri

February 16, 2010

10:00 a.m.

### **MEETING AGENDA**

Watershed Comparison Tool Update, Chris Barnett, UMC CARES

Overview of the Mississippi River Basin Initiative,  
Bob Ball / Dwaine Gelnar, NRCS

Other

Agency Activities

Meetings & Conferences



## MISSOURI WATER QUALITY COORDINATING COMMITTEE

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### MINUTES

#### Attendees:

Greg Anderson	DNR, Water Protection Program	Dwaine Gelnar	NRCS
Bart Hawcroft	MO Dept. of Ag, Ag Business Dev.	Bob Broz	University of MO Extension
Suzy Higgins	DNR, Water Protection Program	Chris Barnett	UMC CARES
Colleen Meredith	DNR, Soil & Water Conservation Pgm	Bob Ball	NRCS
Trish Rielly	DNR, Water Protection Program	Claire Baffaut	USDA – ARS
Terri Brink	EPA Region 7	John Holmes	Allstate Consultants
Tucker Fredrickson	DNR, Water Protection Program	Angel Kruzen	Water Sentinel Program
Valerie Hentges	DNR, Water Protection Program	Jerri Davis	USGS – WRD
Cindy DiStefano	MDC	Charlie DuCharme	DNR, Water Resources Center
		Darlene Schaben	DNR, Water Protection Program

Introductions were made.

#### **Watershed Comparison Tool Update**, Chris Barnett, UMC CARES PowerPoint Presentation

Chris said the Watershed Evaluation and Comparison Tool project is a 319-funded project. DNR was interested in continuing to maintain and update the tool after the project ended in 2008 to make it accessible to the public. This is a web-based tool to view watershed information. It includes basic watershed data, comparing multiple watersheds, and maps and reports. This project was originally proposed in 2004 as a tool to support the State Water Plan and used as a tool to prioritize watersheds for certain activities for DNR. It was funded in 2005 with a concept that this be a DNR internal working tool. It would concentrate on nutrient and bacterial contamination indicators. It would be housed on the DNR server. CARES developed a prototype in 2006. In 2007, DNR's direction changed from the State Water Plan so CARES needed to redirect the project and still have a useful project. Chris said they were just doing watershed comparison and removed prioritization with a focus on nutrient management issues. In 2008, another redirection took place. They thought the project should be a public access tool and included a basic watershed profile. While working with NRCS on the Rapid Watershed Assessment, they felt bringing that format and approach into this tool would make sense. To give public access, they put the tool on the CARES Web server. The tool was released in late 2008. Updates were performed in 2009.

The watershed tool can be accessed on Internet through the CARES Map Room ([cares.missouri.edu](http://cares.missouri.edu)). Chris went through the steps and choices available to get the needed information or map or report. He used an example to demonstrate the information, reports, and/or maps that can be obtained. A couple of example reports were passed around the room.

A one-year maintenance agreement, effective March 1, 2010, is currently under review and approval by DNR. There are still three data elements that need completing by the end of February—national water quality information sites, public drinking water, cropland by crop type data. One thing they are looking to



include for next year is the metadata for each of the data sets. The landuse data being used is based on the National Land Cover dataset from 2001 satellite imagery. The 2008-2009 satellite imagery should be released later this year. Cropland by crop type statistics is tied to the National Ag Statistics Service. Some county-level statistics in conjunction with the land cover data is used to show crop land distribution within a county. Those statistics can be mapped to that distribution and be re-summarized by watershed.

Chris encouraged everyone to log on and check it out.

### **Overview of the Mississippi River Basin Initiative, Bob Ball, NRCS**

PowerPoint Presentation; handout: Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative Overview

The goal of this new Mississippi River Basin Initiative (MRBI) is to improve the health of the Mississippi River Basin by working with producers to help them voluntarily implement conservation practices which avoid, control and trap nutrient runoff; restore/enhance wildlife habitat; and maintain agricultural productivity.

NRCS is providing funding for four fiscal years beginning with 2010 and will dedicate at least \$80 million in each year. This competitive funding is available to the twelve states of the Mississippi River Basin. Dedicated additional funding of \$50 million for Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI), \$25 million for Wetlands Reserve Enhancement Program (WREP), and \$5 million for Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) is also available. The watershed focus areas in Missouri are the Lower Grand, North Fork of Salt River, South Fork of Salt River, Little River Ditches, Lower St. Francois, and Cache. The State Technical Committee will have input into the watershed selection. The primary sources of information that will be used to consider where the focus of attention will be include CEAP data/results, SPARROW data, state-level water quality data, nitrogen/phosphorus monitoring/modeling, and state-level nutrient strategies/priorities. They also talked to a number of people about where the success stories are, where the opportunities are. So, it wasn't all data-driven.

The Requests for Proposals (RFP) will target 12-digit HUCs within the focus areas. Watershed areas will be selected that leverage non-federal resources; apply conservation to improve water quality, wildlife habitat, and other natural resource concerns; and where results can be documented.

Bob talked about how this Initiative is different than what has been done. The RFP should be out soon in the Federal Register and on grants.gov. There will be a special announcement for CCPI, for WREP, and for CIG. The purpose of CCPI is to target and leverage resources to address water quality resource concerns by reducing the downstream nutrient loading of Phosphorous and Nitrogen in the Mississippi River Basin. Individual agricultural producers may not submit a CCPI MRBI proposal, but may apply for program benefits through EQIP, WHIP, or CSP after the NRCS Chief selects and announces a partner's proposed project area, if it is a multi-state proposal. If it is a within state proposal, the NRCS State Conservationist, JR Flores, will select the partners proposed project area. The intent is that through CCPI, partners will submit a proposal, not individuals.

Through CCPI, \$40 million through EQIP, \$5 million through WHIP, and approx. 278,000 acres through CSP will be targeted. These are additional funds to what NRCS is already doing. Projects will be implemented through existing program authorities and procedures. Potential partners must submit complete proposals to the NRCS Chief for evaluation. Only a 10% maximum of the total financial assistance funds may be designated for edge-of-field monitoring through producer contracts. A new NRCS interim practice standard for monitoring and evaluation is being developed. A draft is available for review and should be finalized soon. Including monitoring and evaluation in a proposal will score more points.



Bob talked about other ways a proposal could score more points. Higher priority will be given to proposals that integrate multiple program objectives, provide evidence of a watershed planning process, include an effective monitoring component, demonstrate the partner's financial commitment and capability to accomplish water quality monitoring, deliver high percentages of applied conservation practices to address water quality, and include multiple core and supporting practices from each practice category (i.e., avoiding, controlling, and trapping).

Under MRBI, \$25 million of financial assistance funds from the WRP is targeted each fiscal year through the WREP. Projects will be selected through a competitive process based on applications submitted by partners. Projects will be implemented through existing program authorities and procedures. Wetland restoration will be designed to maximize wildlife habitat values and water quality in accordance with WRP regulations and policy. Projects will be implemented using wetland protection, restoration, and enhancement practices in the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide. Partners are required to provide financial and/or technical resources for monitoring. Proposals that include additional partner resources, such as cost sharing for additional water quality practices, will be given greater consideration in the selection process. Once a project area has been approved, eligible landowners (through a partnership approach) may apply for WREP through their local NRCS office.

The Chief shall give a higher priority to proposals that have a high potential to achieve water quality objectives through nutrient reduction; have a high potential to significantly improve wildlife habitat; significantly leverage non-Federal resources; demonstrate the partner's history of working cooperatively with landowners; assist the participants in meeting regulatory requirements; provide for evaluation of effectiveness beyond water quality; provide for matching funds to assist landowners' implementation; facilitate the submission of landowner applications; provide outreach to beginning, limited resource, and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers and Indian Tribes; and integrate WREP activities with a MRBI Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative project area.

The Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) is a voluntary program intended to stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies while leveraging federal investment in environmental enhancement and protection, in conjunction with agricultural production. To be eligible for CIG, projects must involve landowners who meet the EQIP eligibility requirements. Selected applicants may receive CIG of up to 50% of the total project cost. Twenty-five percent must be in cash.

For FY2010, up to \$5 million is available to the Mississippi River Basin states. Award amounts for any project will not exceed \$1 million and will not exceed three years. Proposals that complement MRBI proposals under the CCPI or WREP will be given higher priority consideration in the selection process. Bob talked about the purpose, approach and goals of the CIG. The project must be innovative as described in the RFP and potentially be used by NRCS to successfully use the innovative approach or methods once the project is completed.

Other federal programs that can complement MRBI include Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), EPA's 319, along with state and other partner's programs.

Bob showed lists of core conservation practices and supporting conservation practices for avoiding, controlling and trapping. NRCS will look for Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans, Irrigation Water Management Plans, and Drainage Water Management Plans in the proposals. NRCS is focused on "Edge of Field" monitoring and evaluation, with the primary focus for MRBI on water quality. Again, NRCS has developed a practice standard for monitoring and evaluation.



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Some partners may participate by submitting proposals (or partner with groups submitting proposals) for CCPI, CIG, and WREP; educating the public; conducting outreach activities; committing staff to provide technical assistance and educational activities; assisting with monitoring, evaluation, and assessment activities; targeting your organization's programs in MRBI focus areas; or designating a point of contact for coordination and collaboration.

Bob talked about a timeline of the RFP, agreements, and contract awards. The designated focus areas are Cache, Lower St. Francis, Lower Grand, N. Fork Salt, S. Fork Salt, and Little River Ditches. The multi-state projects will be more complicated. Arkansas will be taking the lead on Cache, Lower St. Francois, and Little River Ditches. Bob mentioned a meeting with Arkansas is scheduled in Dexter on March 25, 10 a.m. to 12 noon, to discuss the watersheds that Missouri is sharing with Arkansas. If interested in attending, contact Bob or Dwaine.

Dwaine Gelnar or Bob Ball can be contacted for any questions ([dwaine.gelnar@mo.usda.gov](mailto:dwaine.gelnar@mo.usda.gov) or 573-876-0900). Bob said there will be a state component CIG coming out soon after the national CIG announcement. There will be a limit of \$50,000, for a total commitment of \$300,000 in Missouri.

To prevent competition and multiple proposals within the same basin, Bob suggested that partners get together and focus on one area, if possible.

Terri Brink agreed to check into a rumor of EPA having \$17 million in funding available for hypoxia.

### **Agency Activities**

Greg Anderson said the Department of Natural Resources has received 23 applications in response to the 2008-2009 319 RFP. This RFP was for non-ag projects. Next year, the RFP will go back to the normal process where all groups will be eligible statewide. The applications are currently being reviewed with a meeting of the Interagency Review Committee scheduled for March 23-24. Hopefully, the ranking will be on the May Clean Water Commission meeting agenda. Then EPA will give final approval. A little over \$8 million is being awarded.

Greg mentioned the Nonpoint Source Management Plan has been delayed due to some changes in the Department and with priorities changing. It is important to get this finalized so the group may be seeing a request to reconvene.

Susan Higgins said they are gearing up for the Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Spring workshops. There are 14 Introductory workshops scheduled that are filling up fast.

Colleen Meredith said the SWCP is thinking of revamping the nutrient and pest management practices. They have asked Soil & Water Conservation Districts for comments or suggestions that must be turned in by March 31. Thus far, they have only received two comments.

Trish Rielly reminded the group that if you notice anything on the Watershed Comparison Tool that may not be working properly, please contact Trish or Chris Barnett. Chris added that if you have other ideas that should be included in the tool, let him know.

Dwaine Gelnar mentioned the regular EQIP sign-up ended Jan. 31, 2010. They received several applications for CNMPs. Several people in southwest Missouri signed up. They should see results of the sign-up within the next month.



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Bob Broz handed out a flyer on the Water Quality Short Course, which is a cooperative effort of University of Missouri Extension, NRCS, and Missouri Department of Natural Resources. The course will be held April 27-29, 2010, at the NRCS Office at Parkade Center in Columbia.

April 23-24 will be the Watershed Management Plan Development training at the Lodge of Four Seasons at Lake of the Ozarks.

May 4-5 at Lied Center, Nebraska City, Nebraska, a Watershed Education training for the 4-state area will be held, looking at delineating watershed boundaries based on using topo maps as an educational tool and how to develop your own watershed model that can be used for training with different groups.

The DVDs for the Pesticides and Water Quality series, "Lawn Care Decisions for Homeowners" and "Training for Lawn and Turf Professionals," will be available on the web soon. They are produced by the Dept. of Agriculture, EPA Region 7, and University of Missouri. The Training for Lawn and Turf Professionals DVD will be used as part of the commercial applicator training process. Contact Paul Andre or Bob Broz for copies.

Claire Baffaut reminded the group that the ARS water quality showcase will be held March 2-3 in St. Louis. It will showcase the water quality work that ARS has been doing across the nation. Contact Claire for more information.

Jerri Davis mentioned that in Water Year 2010 they have a continuing cooperative agreement with Dept. of Natural Resources for the ambient water quality monitoring network. There are 68 stations. Starting with the 2007 Water Year, they are doing a summary of the years of water data collection activities. The 2007 & 2008 reports are available on the USGS and Department's web sites. Water Pollution Control Program is the direct link to both reports. They just completed a Phase I report looking at six stations from the ambient network that have long-term data available. They were looking at a comparison between the stations and a trend analysis. The Phase II report will be available in hard copy and on the Department's web site.

Charlie DuCharme mentioned the latest addition to the Water Resources Center's web page shows precipitation monitoring displays, geospatial distribution, and rainfall across the state (<http://dnr.mo.gov/env/wrc/>). They and USGS have several rain gauges that automatically coordinate rain gauges across the state. Those are displayed in accumulations of 6-hour, 24-hour, and 4-day rainfall. The Center continues to provide assistance and participate in the Regional Water Supply projects that are going on in northwest and southwest Missouri. They are working to provide better water resources to those regions, especially water supply and drinking water.

Meeting adjourned.