



Meeting Notes

Meeting Date: May 15, 2017 **Time:** 1:30 – 3:30 pm
Meeting Location: Johnson County Transit Facility, 1701 W Old Hwy 56, Olathe, KS 66061

Attendees:

Water Quality Focus Sub-Committee	JC SMP	Consultant Team
Ian Fannin-Hughes – City of Overland Park	Heather Schmidt	Patti Banks – Vireo
Patty Ogle – City of Overland Park	Sarah Smith	Triveece Penelton – Vireo
Pam Fortun – City of Overland Park	Lee Kellenberger	Andrew Smith – B&V
Bryan Dyer – City of Merriam		James Schlaman – B&V
Rob Beilfuss- City of Olathe		Justina Gonzalez – B&V
Matt Just – City of Lenexa		
David Roberts – City of Leawood		
Todd Rogers – JC Department of Health and Environment		
Julie Davis – JC Department of Health and Environment		
Teresa Rasmussen – U.S. Geological Survey		
Lauren Grubbs – CDM Smith		
Katie Handley – GBA		
David Dodds - AECOM		
Jamie Cole – HDR		
Rachelle Lowe – Burns and McDonnell		

Agenda Objectives

Review sub-committee feedback from first meeting
Discuss case studies in Water Quality White Paper
Highlight discussion questions for third meeting

Handouts: Agenda

Notes

Introduction / Update of Implementation Status / 2nd Meeting Goals

- Andrew of B&V welcomed attendees to the second meeting of the water quality sub-committee. He provided a quick update of SMP strategic plan implementation to date.
 - **SMP Strategic Plan Implementation Status:** The watershed-based organization sub-committee has held four meetings thus far and have determined key structural components of the future organizations. The watershed sub-committee will now be taking a hiatus while the other sub-committees delve into further details of their assigned focus. After the sub-committees have

looked further at the issues of water quality, flooding, system management, and funding, then the watershed-based sub-committee will reconvene to finalize a future framework. Strategic plan implementation will then move on to the pilot watershed stage where the framework will be applied.

- The consensus from the watershed-based sub-committee was that municipalities and the County (representing unincorporated areas) will be voting members of the watershed organizations. The organizations will also have established ex-officio members and a technical advisory committee associated with each watershed.
- SMAC will be restructured such that there will be one representative from each watershed instead of representatives from individual municipalities.
- JC SMP and consultants are trying to educate the public about the strategic plan implementation as soon as possible. As further details are developed, SMP will prepare materials and undertake efforts in the fall and winter to speak with local councils and area stakeholders.
- Andrew then outlined the agenda and goals of the second water quality sub-committee meeting.
 - **Water Quality Sub-Committee 2nd Meeting Goals:** A Water Quality Focus White Paper was given to the sub-committee as reference material. The main goal of the second meeting is to discuss the material in the White Paper so as to identify a preferred alternative for the sub-committee. James Schlaman of B&V will lead the discussion of the White Paper, outlining main elements from case studies across the nation.

Review of Feedback from 1st Water Quality Sub-Committee Meeting

- Andrew quickly highlighted the feedback received from the participants during the April meeting. During the first meeting, participants discussed what water quality factors the SMP should address, which water quality factors should have priority in the SMP, and how would the SMP impact priority factors. Further specifics on that discussion can be found in the meeting materials, but the following overarching goals were established:
 - **Watershed-Specific Goals for Improved Water Quality**
 - Determine level of service standards
 - Protect/prioritize water bodies that are in good shape
 - Establish criteria to quantify all measures

Water Quality Focus White Paper

- James Schlaman of B&V directed the discussion of the Water Quality Focus White Paper. Comments from the White Paper discussion are summarized below:
 - For background information, the Clean Water Act is the foundation that has driven the majority of water quality regulations. An additional key driver is the scientific assessment of the factors affecting the attainment of uses outlined in the Clean Water Act (“fishable/swimmable” uses) which is the use attainability analysis.
 - Typically regulators take a no back sliding approach, meaning no reduction of water quality standards.
 - But just because two separate streams are in compliance or out of compliance that does not mean that their water quality conditions are comparable. That is an important point that will come up frequently when trying to evaluate and prioritize projects.
 - The use attainability analysis is a frequent issue for communities negotiating water quality requirements.
 - Important points from each case study were briefly noted.

- **Kansas Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPS)**
 - Funding for the WRAPS program is through the EPA Section 319 and the Kansas State Water Plan. The EPA has established nine key elements that are to be within all KDHE approved watershed plans in order to receive funding. WRAPS uses a priority scoring matrix that aligns a state interest priority scoring (60% weight) with implementation scoring (40% weight).
 - Of note, historically funding has been given to projects that are strictly water quality. (i.e. no mention as a flood project as well)
 - Also, socio-economic issues of the community being served are part of considerations for project funding though that is not directly noted in scoring.
 - The state interest priority scoring could act as a model for County interest priority scoring.
 - The WRAPS program is a good example of how to establish prioritization that aligns with regulator requirements and funding opportunities.
- **Metropolitan Sewer District of Greater Cincinnati (MSDGC)**
 - MSDGC is very similar to the KC region. In terms of water quality, the region has issues of urban development along with agricultural runoff and septic systems with high concentrations of bacteria. For a long time Cincinnati and its encompassing county worked well together and were promoting forward thinking water quality projects.
 - MSDGC invested in a significant characterization study that established a baseline for water quality to gauge improvements over time.
 - The program assessed stream and river sites, reaches, and watersheds.
 - MSDGC developed an Integrated Priority System (IPS) Data Exploration Tool that synthesized and analyzed large amounts of data in a comprehensive database. Impaired sites are given a restorability rating while sites attaining standards are given a threatened and susceptibility rating.
 - The IPS is color coded so as to show incremental improvements in water quality vs. a pass/fail system. Also, the color coded system is easily understood by the public.
 - The MSDGC wanted to assume a more proactive approach instead of a reactive one. They also wanted to identify “low hanging fruit” by showing how close some sites were to improvement if given a portion of the limited resources.
- **New York State Guidance**
 - The State of New York issued guidance on how to prioritize watersheds and identify the best opportunities for improvements. Guidance includes example factors to classify and rank watersheds.
 - However, there are potential issues with their list of factors that are important to consider. For instance, utilizing the % of impervious cover as a factor may be an arbitrary and over simplified designation.
 - There is not necessarily a correlation between development and poor streams. There are plenty of examples of low impact development that does not result in poor water quality.
 - USGS does not see thresholds with impervious cover and impaired biotic life.

- The case study highlights how classification factors need to be carefully chosen based on robust methodology.
 - **Central Orange County Watershed Management Area**
 - The Central Orange County Watershed Management Area drafted Integrated Regional Water Management Plans (IRWMPs) to access federal, state, and local grant opportunities. The area illustrates approaches on how to address stormwater trade-offs and funding strategies.
 - The IRWMP includes a basic ranking criteria and weighting for project prioritization which are noted in the White Paper.
 - LA County is a good example for highly complicated and interesting stormwater planning. The region has significant water quality issue and regulations around stormwater. Also, water supply is a major concern so stormwater re-use is a management strategy seen in LA County which is generally not seen in this region.
 - **Cayuga Lake Watershed Inter-Municipal Organization**
 - The Cayuga Lake Watershed Inter-Municipal Organization (IO) drafted a Watershed Restoration and Protection Plan. The plan lists top IO priority recommendations for action which are grouped under monitoring, stormwater management and erosion control, collaboration and coordination, and public education and engagement. The plan does not identify specific projects but highlights focus areas.
 - **Cherry Creek Basin Water Quality Authority**
 - The Cherry Creek Reservoir is located in metropolitan Denver and is a recreational amenity and source of drinking water. In their watershed plan, the Authority identified pollutant source areas and defined potential management strategies. The list and ranking of pollutant source areas can be found in the White Paper.
- During the White Paper discussion, individual participant comments were noted and are summarized as such:
 - The color coded gradation used by MSDGC would be very useful in measuring progress and demonstrating the return on project investments.
 - Water quality assessments will have to be updated periodically so as to measure program impacts.
 - USGS has a significant amount of data collected for the JC area. The majority of data was collected from 2003 to 2010 and could act as a baseline for water quality improvements. Having at least 10 years of data can help in identifying influences of seasonal variability.
 - JC SMP is in the midst of a five year monitoring program with USGS but discussions are in place for how to setup monitoring in the future for the watershed based approach.
 - The program will need to identify strategies for sampling so as to ensure that data accurately represents the site. There should be clear characterization of dry weather vs. wet weather conditions. Site compliance could vary depending on the sampling method and day that sampling is being done.
 - As reference, the KDHE current sampling schedule is to take four samples in one day for a given site. A site is assessed once every four years, give or take.
 - County wide water quality sampling should be better than what the State is currently able to do since ultimately it is County stakeholders that can best meet needs. For instance, the program should look at urban hydrology, how flood control can benefit water quality, the sources of habitat impact, and base flow conditions.

- The water quality aspect of the SMP shouldn't be just a "check the box" program but should focus on root cause analysis and modification. Goals should be robust and nuanced so as to best identify causes for water quality impacts.
- The importance of reliable water quality data cannot be underestimated. Data provides the power and leverage to have an informed discussion with regulators. The program will have to balance between spending money on site characterization vs. constructed projects that may or may not help the issue.
- Public involvement needs to be a key part of the program. There should be more education on what the program is doing, the value of it, and how it has been helping the community.
- Common resident complaints are streambank erosion and algae growth. It would be helpful for cities to know what studies have been done, the data that is available, and what are the key water quality issues for this area.

Discussion on Municipality Water Quality Requirements

- Andrew then asked the sub-committee if there are water quality requirements that the SMP should establish in order for municipalities to participate in the program. The following individual comments are summarized:
 - Establishing standards would be difficult because some of the watershed groupings have homogenous communities and others have significant rural areas.
 - There are opportunities for cities to promote minimal water quality standards such as by adopting the MARC BMP manual or by passing minimal ordinances. Some requirements could be established that demonstrate that the city is being proactive to preserve water quality.
 - There could be a requirement to have a public education and involvement component.
 - The program may not want to put too many requirements on cities to participate. Establishing minimum standards may send the wrong message. Sub-committee discussions so far have been to promote water quality efforts that go beyond just meeting compliance.
- Lee of JC SMP noted that the program is voluntary and that water quality efforts should be proactive based on scientific data. Requiring cities to adopt certain things (manuals, ordinances, etc.) is a strategy they may not want to consider at this time.

Closing / Next Steps

- Meeting closed with consultants highlighting key points for the 3rd meeting discussion. The next meeting will cover developing a project prioritization matrix. Consultants asked that before the next meeting that participants consider goals, top priorities, and assumptions on data needed for the program.
 - Consultants suggest reviewing the Findings from Case Studies section of the White Paper for reference.
- The sub-committee will meet again on June 19th at the same place from 1:30-3:30 pm.
 - If participants are going to be on vacation, they can let JC SMP know and then meetings can be re-scheduled if a sufficient number cannot attend.
- JC SMP and consultants thanked the participants for their time and thoughtful discussion. Comments will be incorporated into meeting notes and used in later discussions.