

Executive Committee Meeting

August 26, 2008, 4-6pm
Farr Center, Onekama

Participants- Mike Acton, Herb Lenon, George Panches, Howard Hughes, Laura Heintzelmann, Stephanie Ogren, Grant Poole, Tim Ervin, Mary Reed, Alice Hendricks, Frank English, Richard Knechtges, Greg Goudy, Dave VanEerden

- 1. Welcome and Introductions-** Mike Acton made introductions. Greg Goudy will be the representative from the MDEQ. Brian Meyers from the MDEQ has retired. Stephanie Ogren and Grant Poole from the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians will present the results of their testing. Laura Heintzelmann is here with information regarding the endowment fund.
- 2. Approvals of Minutes-** The minutes for the June 17, 2008 Executive Committee Meeting were approved after a small change.
- 3. MCCF Endowment Fund-** Laura Heintzelmann, the executive director of the Manistee County Community Foundation, thanked everyone for the opportunity to work with the Watershed group. The MCCF has been in place since 1987 to enhance the quality of life of Manistee County residents. Portage Lake Watershed Forever was made to ensure that Portage Lake exists for future generations and that MCCF is happy to help reach that goal. The Endowment fund for Portage Lake Watershed Forever was formed in late 2006. Money donated to the endowment fund stays in the fund forever. Every year 5% of the interest earned will be available for spending and 1% of the interest earned is paid to MCCF as an administrative fee. Even though the current economic climate isn't good the long-term investments will be profitable. There is currently \$70,000 in the fund and the goal is \$500,000. People who are considering contributing to the fund should know that all donations are tax deductible. This year there was \$1,600 available from the fund. After the printing of the plan and other materials there is a little over \$1,000 left for the rest of 2008. Currently, there is a Portage Lake Watershed Forever Endowment Advisory Committee to approve disbursement from the fund. Mike Acton is the chair of the committee. Three people have also agreed to be on the committee: Bob Evans, president of the Onekama Consolidated Schools Board of Education, Dave Meister, Onekama Township supervisor, and Lee LaFleur, an upland-property owner. The goal is to keep the committee small but representative of the people involved in Portage Lake Watershed. Most advisory committees are 5-8 people. Mike would like to know everyone's opinion about how to round out the committee. People suggested having a member of the PLA, someone from the Village of Onekama, and a business owner. Mike would like everyone to continue thinking about this. It will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

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4. Committee Reports

A. Community Outreach and Education- Kathy Ervin, the vice chair of the committee, was proud to report that they had accomplished everything they had wanted to do this summer. The banner was hung, 1,000 homeowners' packets have been distributed, and the road commission has placed all seven signs. She is very grateful for the help of all the volunteers. She estimates that over 100 volunteers helped to make all of this possible. Kathy would like to encourage everyone to put their stickers on their cars to show support for Portage Lake Watershed Forever Plan. There is a display that is available for presentations about the Watershed. Mary Reed and the rest of the Portage Lake Garden Club had a booth at the fair where they provided information about phragmites. Eric Beeman has updated the website. George Panches spoke for Dan Behring about having a brochure made to point out the benefits of investing in the watershed. He had an example from the Little Forks Conservatory passed around. Dan felt that this should be started soon before the momentum from Fish Out of Water slowed.

B. Monitoring and Inventory - Stephanie Ogren and Grant Poole from the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians gave a presentation from their results of dissolved oxygen profiling during summer stratification. The Little River Band of Ottawa Indians agreed to do this testing every year in mid July to early September. It was found that there was D/O depletion in the bottom of the two deep holes in the lake. Even with this finding Portage Lake is still a typical mesotrophic lake. Every lake goes through a cycle from oligotrophic to eutrophic and we should try to maintain the stage that Portage Lake is at. Herb Lenon would like to see another D/O profile this summer to see if it gets worse before the lake turns over.

Herb also talked about the E. coli sampling. He thanked Tim Morley, Howard Hughes, Dave Combs, Nipper Wisniski and Chase Calloway for their help and the township for covering the cost. Dave Combs and Chase Calloway did weekly sampling at the Onekama Village Beach. All samples showed results well below the Michigan Water Quality Standards. Seven other sites were tested on July 2nd, July 30th, and August 20th and Dock Street Park was tested once on July 30th. The only results that were above the Michigan Water Quality Standards were the samples taken at the Schimke Creek outlet on July 30th. The site was retested on August 1st and the results were back to where they should be. The most probable cause for the spike in E. coli is turbulence that could have caused buried toxins to be stirred up. Someone suggested testing upstream from the site the next time the results are high to determine if the cause is turbulence. Someone also felt that other creek outlets should be tested. The Monitoring and Inventory Committee will meet with the Township and the Village over the winter to decide which sites to test next year.

Herb also talked about the shoreline survey. There were 43 volunteers trained for the surveying and he thanked everyone for their interest in the project. The 43 volunteers were divided into 18 groups who each surveyed a section of shoreline. The surveyors looked for five things: cladophora algae, invasive plant species, artesian water flows, stream inlets, and storm drains. Locating the cladophora was the main objective of the

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survey. It is an indicator of phosphorus, which is a major nutrient in Portage Lake. The surveyors reported whether their section of shoreline had a suitable habitat for cladophora. If it did they also noted whether it was present and whether it was scarce or abundant. The invasive species that were noted were phragmites, purple loosestrife and mustard weed. The phragmites are the main problem however some of the purple loosestrife was missed in the survey because the plants weren't blooming yet. There were 39 artesian water flows noted around the lake. Herb feels that there should have been more. There were 29 stream inlets that were reported and Herb feels that is more than there are. He thinks that people could have mistaken some of the artesian water flows for streams. There were also 20 storm drains reported. All of the results have been turned in and recorded on maps. Herb would like to have all the information on one map instead of different ones. The data reported might not be 100% accurate but it is fairly close. Herb wants to do another shoreline survey in a few years for comparison. This year's data showed that there was an abundance of cladophora where the artesian flows came into the lake. It would be beneficial if they could add phosphorus analysis to the survey, especially in the artesian flows to make sure the phosphorus comes from natural sources. Septic systems could also be contributing to the level of phosphorus. The monitoring and inventory committee will meet before spring to make a game plan for next year.

- 5. Phragmites Control Demonstration Project-** George Panches spoke again for Dan Behring. Dan found that the MDEQ and the Water Bureau, Division of Aquatic Nuisance Control classify Portage Lake as an inland lake. Any phragmites along the exposed bottom lands can be cut to a height of two inches and sprayed with chemicals without a permit *if they are not in water*. All property owners must make sure that the chemical they use is safe to use around water. One suggested chemical was Rodeo *plus a surfactant* but there are other *brand name products of glyphosate*. Phragmites that are in the water cannot be cut or sprayed without a permit. *The deadline for obtaining this permit each year is August 14th*. Plants cannot be uprooted from the water without a permit. When Dan talked with Eric Bacon of the Water Bureau, Aquatic Nuisance Division, he said that the phragmites on the bottom land can be cut now and the chemical can be applied either with a sprayer or with a brush. Hand swiping can also be done. The best time to treat phragmites is in the fall. Any phragmites that are cut or uprooted need to be burned afterward to avoid spreading. Dan suggested that the watershed group find a large demonstration site in the village to show property owners how to *treat* phragmites using these techniques. It was suggested that the shore outside of the Farr Center could be used for this demonstration for the phragmites that are not in water. Dan would like to see a committee with a passionate chair formed to accomplish all of this. Mary Reed also spoke about phragmites control. She would like to contact Beaver Island, Harsen's Island, Saginaw Bay and others to see how they are managing their phragmites.. She thinks that if we do a demonstration/educational project for property owners, we should have a certified professional applicator present to demonstrate the techniques that can be used.. Phragmites needs to be treated in the fall before the first frost. She would also like to have us study the feasibility of getting the proper permits to be ready to treat the lake in the fall of 2009..

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6. **Watershed Partners Spreadsheet-** The PLA, PLEA, Garden Club, Onekama Township Board and Planning Commission, Village of Onekama Board and Planning Commission, Harbor Commission, marinas, and Little River Band of Ottawa Indians are included on the spreadsheet. The watershed group will check with the associations on action steps they would like to have and track which goals are already being accomplished.

7. **Other**
 - A. Richard Knechtges conveyed his concern about handicap violations along the waterfront. He would like to make sure that the watershed and other organizations remember to follow handicap accessibility regulations.

 - B. Beach Cleaning Status- Mike Acton said that the beach cleaning will have to take place next year due to a miscommunication while applying for the permits. It was also mentioned that it would be nice to have metal rings placed on the Lake Michigan beach for people to build campfires in.

 - C. Storm Drains- George Panches again spoke for Dan Behring. Dan met with Jerry Peterson, the manager for the road commission, to discuss the plugged drains and dirty streets. He found that MDOT is only responsible for three of the drains on Main Street: the one in front of the blue slipper, the one in front of the hardware store, and the one north of town that flooded last year. All the rest of the drains are the responsibility of the village because they drain village streets. Jerry will get the city of Manistee to clean the drains this summer. He is working with the village maintenance man to switch to a beet juice, salt, and sand mixture for sanding the streets in the winter to reduce clogging. Jerry also suggested that the village or township make a contract with Kaleva or Manistee to have our streets cleaned with one of their street sweepers. Jerry also suggested getting an interceptor chamber installed at the end of the storm drain to trap pollutants and sediment. Dan suggests that a group of two or three people from the watershed coordinate with the village, the township, and PLA and work with Jerry Peterson to find a system that will keep storm sewers clean and control pollutants that enter the lake through the storm sewer runoff. A concern was voiced that the salt and beet juice may not be good for the lake. It pointed out that the village spends a lot of time and money putting the sand on the streets in the winter and it doesn't make sense to spend more time and money cleaning it out of the drains every summer. Could Dan Behring could present all of this to the village and the township and see how much of the cost they would be able to cover?

8. **Next Meeting-** The next Watershed meeting will be tentatively Tuesday, October 21st from 4:00 to 6:00 at Farr Center. Another meeting will be held sooner if more information regarding a phragmites demonstration is available. There will be another meeting in January. The date will be decided at the next meeting.