Cedar Creek Watershed Management Plan Development
Steering Committee
January 24, 2024 @ 4:30pm
ACRES Land Trust
1802 Chapman Rd, Huntertown, IN 46748
Meeting Notes

- In attendance:
  - Jim Shiffler – SJRWI Board
  - Ben Taylor – ACRES Land Trust
  - Drew Wallace – Auburn MS4 Coordinator
  - Nellie Peffley – Dekalb SWCD
  - Mike Watson – Dekalb County Commissioner
  - Gabe Curtis – Allen SWCD
  - Jackie Buck – SJRWI Executive Director
  - Deanne Zepp Jensen – Maumee Watershed Alliance
  - Bob Gillespie – PFW Environmental Resource Center/SJRWI advisor
  - Vickie Lamb – SJRWI Board
  - Kyle Quandt – Quandt Consulting Services – Cedar Creek Contracted PM

- Presentation - water quality sampling and desktop/windshield survey results and discussion

Kyle presented initial findings during the watershed investigation in a ppt. The ppt was sent to all board members on January 25th and again with these notes. Below are items of special note:

- *The majority of the soils in the watershed are NOT highly erodible*
- *34% of the soils are hydric indicating wetland appropriate soils*
- *Almost the entire watershed's soil is very limited for septic usage*
- *There are 733 miles of legal drains and only 310 miles of flowing surface water indicating excessive use of field drainage tiles…a direct conduit for nutrients and pesticides to enter surface waters*
- *Most of the watershed had a moderate to high susceptibility to aquifer contamination. There are six source water protection plans in the watershed and 4/6 indicate they have a moderate susceptibility to water contamination*
- *The majority of the watershed is in row crops. Tillage transects show that allen county has less no-till and reduced till than Dekalb or Noble County overall*

- *The Windshield survey and water quality results from the 2023 sampling efforts were presented. Overall water quality was better than many other watersheds. Below are takeaways:*
    - *DO exceeded in Dibbling Ditch; Matson Ditch; Headwaters John Diehl Ditch; and Dosch Ditch. DO can be effected by temperature, plant growth and stream velocity. High flowing streams will have higher DO which is strange considering the drought that we experienced in 2023.*
    - *Turbidity exceeded at Smith Ditch; Peckhart Ditch; and Site 100 at Tonkel Rd. Turbidity is a measurement of the cloudiness of the water and may be caused by sediment, or an overgrowth of aquatic plants.*
    - *Atrazine exceeded the limit at Site 100. Atrazine is a pesticide used in agriculture. It has been shown to cause cardio vascular problems and there is research pointing to it being a human carcinogen.*
    - *E. coli exceeded standards at Matson Ditch; Smith Ditch; Headwaters John Diehl Ditch; and Site 100. E. coli is a bacteria found in animal and human waste and can cause intestinal upset or even serious illness in humans.*
    - *Dissolved Reactive Phosphorus exceeded standards at Dibbling Ditch; and Dibbling Ditch at both sites. DRP is a readily available form of phosphorus and results in excessive plant growth resulting in large algal blooms and lower DO which harms aquatic life.*
    - *Nitrate+Nitrite exceeded the standard at Dibbling Ditch; Matson Ditch; both sites at Smith Ditch; Peckhart Ditch; Black Creek; and at both sites in Dosch Ditch. Nitrites are toxic to aquatic life, and nitrates has the same effect as phosphorus only to a lesser degree.*
    - *Total Phosphorus exceeded the standard at Dibbling Ditch; Matson Ditch; one site at Smith Ditch; and one site at Dosch Ditch. Too much TP causes excessive plant growth like DRP does.*
    - *Takeaways from the windshield survey indicate deeply cut creeks, minimal riparian buffers, and streambank erosion at ag. fields and residential properties. 54 sites were noted specifically during the windshield survey.*
- *The group went through the initial steering committee concerns listed at our first meeting in 2023 to determine if they were still areas of concern after reviewing what has been discovered so far. (see attached list).*
    - *The group decided that everything is still a concern however to add groundwater as a concern to the drinking water source, add the expense to address damage from climate change after the fact rather than implementing preventative measures, link wetlands and bank stabilization needs to climate change and infrastructure, and Amish that are moving into Dekalb county to the Livestock production concern.*
    - *Jim mentioned that Michigan distinguishes between point and not-point pollution source loading. This would require getting the allowable discharges for the 136 NPDES permitted facilities in the watershed and determining loads based on this information. Bob and Gabe who are determining loads for this project are not*

sure this is possible with the resources we have. Kyle will contact IDEM for discharge rates though.

- *Jim also brought up the idea of source tracking for the sites with E. coli exceedances. Kyle will look into the possibility of doing this with the funds left in the water quality task of the grant.*

- Next Meeting – April 24 @ 4:30pm (Location TBD)

- Adjourn at 6pm