

Cobus Creek Watershed Diagnostic Study

Steering Committee Recap

January 6, 2016 - 2:00pm

Cleveland Township Fire Department - Elkhart, IN

Attendees	
Jeremy Reiman	Michiana Area Council of Governments / St. Joseph River Basin Commission
Steve Schweisberger	Elkhart County Surveyor's Office
James Turnwald	Michiana Area Council of Governments / St. Joseph River Basin Commission
Paula Reinhold	St. Joseph County Health Dept.
Sara Peel	Arion Consultants, Inc.
Brian Gunderman	Michigan DNR – Fisheries
Jan Ivkovich	St. Joseph County Soil and Water Conservation District
Dru Wrasse	St. Joseph County Soil and Water Conservation District
Deb Jimison	Elkhart County Soil and Water Conservation District
Marcy Colclough	Southwestern Michigan Planning Commission
Cyndy Herms	Friends of Cobus Creek/Elkhart County Conservation Club
Cyndy Keeling	Elkhart Community Schools
Ryan Clussman	Elkhart County Highway Department/Stormwater Coordinator
Paula Sniadecki	Ontwa Township – Concerned Citizen
Bill Hartsuff	Elkhart County Health Dept.
Adam Bowden	St. Joseph County Dept. of Public Works
John T. Law	St. Joseph River Valley Fly Fishers
Larry Magliozzi	St. Joseph County Area Plan Commission
Rick Davis	Cleveland Township Board
Mary Davis	Cleveland Township Board
Diane Madison	Elkhart County Parks Department
Jim Cripe	Elkhart County Parks
Susie Cleaver	Ontwa Township
Daragh Deegan	Elkhart Aquatic Biology
Rod Edgell	Indiana Department of Natural Resources – LARE Program Staff

Meeting Summary

Upon walking into the meeting, each attendee was given a sheet surveying their desired level of participation in the study. The meeting opened a brief overview of the project history, study goals, and introductions of steering committee members. After opening remarks, the steering committee moved into an activity involving documenting important locations in the watershed (i.e. high quality areas, fishing spots, boating areas, water quality improvement projects). Below is a brief summary of the comments received.



- Cobus Creek has excellent fishing locations at the Elkhart County Conservation Club and Cobus Creek Park.
- Stream stabilization projects, fish habitat improvement projects, and lunger boxes have been installed at Cobus Creek Park
- Several fish passage barriers located along Cobus Creek. Specifically at Elkhart County Conservation Club as well as the outlet of Garver Lake
- Outlet of Garver Lake has a small dam structure that dumps into a small wetland complex. Unclear whether this structure is necessary to maintain lake levels or built for aesthetics.
- Cobus Creek, between Redfield Road and approximately the Toll Road, tends to run dry in dry summers. The Creek is groundwater fed downstream of the dry zone.
- Cobus Creek is not a regulated drain in Elkhart County
- Gast Ditch is a regulated drain in St. Joseph County and Elkhart County
- Lack of documented information about Cobus Creek and Garver Lake in Michigan portion of watershed
- Elkhart Community Schools has property at the southeast corner of County Road 2 and Ash Road. They intend to develop onsite projects to teach K-12 students about farming practices

The information collected from this meeting will be compiled into a GIS layer indicating areas of interest in the watershed. Arion Consultants and the SJRBC will be working to compile additional GIS layers and water quality data to be incorporated into the study. Several members of the steering committee will be contacted regarding any potential data available that will help the study. Once the weather warms up, in the field data collection will occur. All data, new and historic, will be compiled into a watershed scale study of Cobus Creek. A draft of the study will be completed by December 2016 with a final draft approved in early 2017. The SJRBC will coordinate with the Steering Committee to set up another meeting to discuss the project in 2 to 3 months.

Cobus Creek Steering Committee Questions **January 6, 2015 - 2:00pm**

What are your concerns associated with Cobus Creek?

Are there specific problem areas?

Examples

- Locations where livestock have access to Cobus Creek?
- Areas of streambank erosion?
- Locations where flooding is a concern?
- Septic or sewer hot spots?
- Areas undergoing development?
- Any NPDES permitted locations or outfalls?

Are there particularly high quality locations?

Examples

- High quality wetlands or forest land?
- Locations where individuals recreate (paddling, swimming, etc)?
- Popular fishing holes

How are the Cobus Creek Watershed lakes utilized?

Are you aware of any water quality sampling data? Where was it collected and by whom?

Have any water quality projects been installed? What type and in what locations?

Is this a popular area of the counties for EQIP or other NRCS-based funding?

Is the watershed located within any MS4 boundaries?

Opportunities for education or events we should plan to attend to promote the project?

Are there any groups that are not here that should be invited to participate in the project?

How would you like to be involved in this project?