

Overview of Lake Conway Watershed Advocacy Group
Meeting on October 29, 2009

Attendees:

Mark Oliver, AGFC
Jim Fugatt, LCHOA
Matt Schroder, AGFC
Keith Stephens, AGFC
Smitty Burgess, Paradise Landing
Shari Campbell, Rogers Estates
Matt Mourot, AGFC
Jason Patterson, ATU
Shawn Bates, UCA
Sarah Pavan, UCA
Matt Horton, AGFC
Jim Malcolm, FTN
Len Carter
Cliff Hoofman, AR Highway Commission
Lloyd Wilcox, LCHOA
Peggy Vernon
Alan Ott
Mark Spitzer, UCA
Mary Alice House
Grover House
Thomas Jones, ADH
Dana Coburn, USACE
Bill Miller, LCHOA
Sarah DeVries, ADEQ Water Division
Steve Drown, ADEQ Water Division
Richard Collins
Marsha Guffey, Metroplan
Dan Flowers, AHTD
Frank Vozel, AHTD
Bobby Edwards, Rogers Estates
Nick Ruffin, Rogers Estates
Rep. Jane English
Judge Preston Scroggin
Tim Mize, AGFC?

In the absence of Jim McKenzie, Marsha Guffey from Metroplan called the meeting to order. Guffey asked if there were any corrections, clarifications or questions regarding the overview of the September meeting. There were none.

Minutes of the September 22, 2009 meeting to discuss funding for the watershed study and Grassy Lake Road solution were included with the agenda for the meeting. Mark Oliver, AGFC, gave the group an update on funding for the watershed study. He and Dana Coburn from the Corps of Engineers had met and discussed the merits of using PAS (Planning Assistance to States) money from the Corps. They concluded it would be better to use money from the Sport Fish Restoration Act for the following reasons:

- The 75-25 match would require less funding from local entities and in-kind, rather than cash, contributions could apply;
- AGFC has unobligated funds of up to \$200,000 that could be used for the project, subject to approval by the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission;
- The study could be done in phases so that local funding could be split over 2 fiscal years;
- Both flooding and sedimentation issues could be addressed;
- The expected spring start time for the study would mesh well with the usual spring floods.

Shari Campbell (Rogers Estates) asked the extent of flooding that would be covered by the study. Mark Oliver said he thought the Grassy Lake Road area would be included in the study.

Representative Jane English asked for an explanation of the two parts (flooding and sedimentation) of the study. Mark Oliver said that the two are linked, because sedimentation has contributed to the flooding problems in the area.

Marsha Guffey asked for the group's approval to proceed with the funding route recommended by Mark Oliver, rather than further exploration of the PAS funding. Dr. Richard Collins expressed his disapproval of using Sport Fish Restoration funds for the study, stating that the money might be better directed to fisheries or other avenues more directly related to fish restoration. Mark Oliver explained that sedimentation did have an impact on fish habitats. Tom Bly (AGFC) added that water control is the biggest issue for fish in Lake Conway, especially keeping the water levels optimal for fish in the spring.

Bill Miller (LCHOA) asked if the planned study would duplicate the 2003 FTN study. Mark Oliver asked Jim Malcolm of FTN to reply. Jim Malcolm said the previous study was from the dam down, while the upcoming study would be of the whole watershed. Tom Bly added that in the 2003 study, FTN was asked to look at the Zander study, which was approximately 25 years old in 2003, to see if it was still viable. Jim Malcolm stated that the study Mark Oliver is proposing will focus largely on the fish management aspect of the watershed, with Mark adding that the study would extend beyond fishing issues. Tom Bly noted that professors from both Arkansas Tech University and the University of Central Arkansas wanted to assist in various aspects of the watershed study.

Both Representative English and Jim Malcolm stated that the study would just be the first step--getting other groups involved in implementing the study recommendations would be key.

Marsha Guffey again asked for the group's approval to proceed with the funding route recommended by Mark Oliver. By show of hands, a majority of those present were in favor of this, with Dr. Collins indicating he was still against the move.

Marsha Guffey gave the group an update on funding the road to solve the Grassy Lake Road problem. Following the September 22nd meeting, Marsha has been in touch with Leigh Ann Pool of Central Arkansas Planning and Development District several times. Leigh Ann is researching various funding possibilities and will report back as the options are narrowed down.

Judge Preston Scroggin said that he had sent a letter to the Highway Department firming up the offer of \$97,500 for the project courtesy of Senator Gilbert Baker, Senator Mary Ann Salmon, and Governor Mike Beebe, as well as the offer of \$100,000 of in-kind contributions for the proposed road. Judge Scroggin also wanted to confirm that the PAS money from the Corps was not going to be used, and that the Corps was aware of this fact. Dana Coburn, from the Corps confirmed.

Shari Campbell asked about the status of the wetlands permit. Matt Mourot, AGFC, stated that the county did not have an easement for a road in that location, rather that it had a license, but that necessary easement work was being handled. The actual wetlands mitigation can be done after the project is constructed. Mark Oliver stated that AGFC can help with this part, up to \$100,000 (subject to Commission approval). This would bring funding for the road to approximately \$300,000, not including the design and construction supervision provided by the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department.

Judge Scroggin added that one of the potential funding routes was through the Economic Development Administration disaster funds. The first round of money had been devoted to emergency preparedness, buying things like generators in case of future ice storms, but the second and third rounds should be forthcoming soon.

Bobby Edwards asked if the military would contribute any funds. Representative Jane English said this was doubtful.

Marsha Guffey said that the next meeting was proposed for January 14th, 2010, to be devoted to the sewer issues in Lake Conway. She asked for names of appropriate people to help address the issues. The names offered were:

Buddy Wilcox
Tom Jones, ADH Environmental
Robert Hart, ADH Engineering Division
Floyd Bradley, Public Facilities Board

Francille Honeycutt, AEDC

Before concluding, Bobby Edwards asked if the Corps of Engineers would grant a permit, or do the work, to clean out Palarm Creek. Dana Coburn said she would check into this.

UCA student Sarah Pavan announced that UCA environmental science students would be conducting a workshop on stream clean-up at UCA, on November 17th and 18th at 7:00 both nights. The room had not yet been determined--she will send an email with the location to anyone who is interested in attending.

The meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by Marsha Guffey, Metroplan