

Kentucky River Basin Team Meeting
EKU Center for Appalachian Studies
Tuesday, March 24, 2009

Meeting Participants: Malissa McAlister (UK Kentucky Water Resources Research Institute); Tim Eling (Daniel Boone National Forest); Mark Meade (Ky. Abandoned Mined Lands); Don Hassall (Bluegrass ADD); Pete Cinotto (USGS); Jack Stickney (Ky. Rural Water Association); Pat Banks (Kentucky Riverkeeper); Stephanie McSpirit (EKU); Emily Bruner (UK/Cane Run Watershed); Amy Sohner (Bluegrass PRIDE); Sue Elliston (KRA); Tom Edwards (Ky. Dept. of Fish and Wildlife); Tony Powell (Northern Kentucky Health Dept)

What is the Role of a Basin Coordinator?

- Acts as non-regulatory liaison for Kentucky Division of Water
- Works with local entities to better understand water issues and address concerns
- Networks with variety of groups, including watershed watch volunteers, basin team members, university staff, existing watershed groups and local officials.

Status of Kentucky Division of Water Monitoring in Kentucky River Basin

- Focus was on Kentucky River Basin sites in 2008
- Lab analysis delayed due to move of DOW
- 2008 data to be incorporated in 2010 305b Report to Congress on state's water quality (report will focus on Kentucky River Basin)
- DOW currently conducting more intensive fish tissue analysis, will be revising state's fish consumption advisories to make them more stringent. Will include stricter advisories for all people, not just children and pregnant women.

Meeting Comments: *The USGS is assessing atmospheric deposition in some areas of Kentucky, including a Trimble County site that has shown high mercury levels. The study has also shown other mercury hotspots in the region.*

KDOW Priority and Focus Watersheds

Priority

(selected by Basin Team in 2001 and UK Kentucky Water Resources Research Institute)

- North Fork of Kentucky River (Letcher County) – *Head of Three Rivers Project*
- South Elkhorn Creek (Fayette/Scott Counties) – *Friends of Wolf Run, Town Branch Trail*
- Red River Gorge (Powell/Wolfe/Menifee Counties) – *Friends of the Red River*
- Eagle Creek (Carroll/Gallatin/Owen/Grant Counties) – *Eagle Creek Watershed Council*
- Muddy Creek (Madison County) – *Friends of Muddy Creek*
- Clark's Run (Boyle County) – *Clark's Run Environmental & Educational Corp. (CREEC)/Dix River Watershed Council*

Focus Watersheds

(selected by Kentucky Watershed Framework Steering Committee in 2006)

- Clark's Run (Boyle County) – *CREEC/Dix River Watershed Council*
- Cane Run (Fayette/Scott Counties) – *Friends of Cane Run/Cane Run Watershed Council*

Meeting Comments: *The Kentucky River Basin Team can revisit these priority watersheds and remove or add any that the group feels would be more appropriate. May want to do this after reviewing DOW's 2008 sampling data.*

Kentucky Division of Water 319 Nonpoint Source Projects in Kentucky River Basin

Active 319 Projects in Kentucky River Basin:

Cane Run
Georgetown Fire Station Demo project
Dry Run
Dix River
Peyton Creek
Gainesway
McConnell Springs Wetland

FY 2009 319 Applicants in Kentucky River Basin:

- LFUCG / Wolf Run Watershed-Based Plan and Partial Implementation
- Fayette County Public Schools / Agriscience Center Watershed Protection and Education Initiative
- Northern Kentucky Health Dept. / Eagle Creek Straightpipe Abatement Project (Grant County)
- Daniel Boone National Forest / Red River Gorge Restoration and Watershed Plan

Comments: The Division of Water is currently reviewing the 2009 applications and will be selecting those to be forwarded to the USEPA for funding consideration. Watershed Based Plans are now required for implementation projects. DOW is also favorable to phased projects that can be completed in 2-3 years, rather than 5 years, as was previously the norm. 2009 funding levels from the EPA are expected to be similar to 2008 levels, with \$700,000 in base funds and \$1.45 in incremental funds.

Kentucky River Authority Watershed Grant Program

- Grant offerings of up to \$3,000 for watershed education, sampling, assessment, restoration projects
- Total of \$15,000 offered each year
- Applicants must be nonprofit organization, school, or local government
- Applications will be accepted again in Fall '09, project duration of 1 year
- 2009 KRA Watershed Grant Recipients:
 - o Friends of Wolf Run (Fayette Co.) – riparian zone demo project
 - o Montessori Middle School (Fayette Co.) – riparian tree planting, education
 - o McConnell's Trace Neighborhood (Fayette Co.) – riparian zone demo/education
 - o Letcher County High School – water quality sampling
 - o Dix River Watershed Council (Boyle/Lincoln Co.) – septic system education
 - o International Training & Development Center (Menifee Co.) – watershed restoration education
 - o Breathitt County Coop. Ext. – community watershed awareness projects
 - o Providence Montessori School (Fayette Co.) – rain garden
- More info online at www.krww.org, KRA Grant Program page.

Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife's Wetland and Stream Mitigation Program

- Associated with mitigation requirements under the US Army Corps of Engineers Clean Water Act 404 Permit and KY Division of Water 401 Water Quality Certification Programs when permitted activities result in the permanent loss of streams or wetlands.
- Projects typically involved in this process include highway construction, mining, development, or other construction activities that take place in or near streams or wetlands.
- Section 404 permitting prioritizes mitigation in the same watershed.
- 404 permit applicant can:
 - o Conduct mitigation on-site or off-site
 - o Use private mitigation bank, if available

- Pay a fee to another entity that is approved by the Corps of Engineers to conduct the mitigation in-lieu of doing the mitigation themselves—called “in-lieu fee mitigation.” Kentucky’s Department of F&W oversees this program.
- Projects mainly conducted on private lands, and thus rely on cooperation of private landowners.
- All projects must be protected by permanent conservation easements or ownership.
- Conservation Easements are typically 50-foot corridors on either side of the stream.
- Projects at least 1,000 feet in length are preferred to achieve an economy of scale with stream construction costs.
- Project proposals reviewed by mitigation review team composed of representatives from US Corps of Engineers, USEPA, KDOW, US F&W and Ky. F&W.
- Project site proposals can be submitted using online form available on F&W website.

Constructed In-Lieu Fee Projects:

Terry's Branch (Knott County)
 Balls Fork (Knott County)
 Red Lick Creek (Estill County)
 North Fork Kentucky River riparian planting
 Guy Cove (Robinson Forest)
 Bullskin Creek

In-Lieu Fee Projects In Design:

Frozen Creek (Breathitt County)
 Red Lick II and Kissy Branch (Estill County)
 Upper Cane Creek (Menifee County)
 Elisha Creek (DBNF)
 Cove Spring (Franklin County)
 Mill Creek (Fayette county)

Conceptual In-Lieu Fee Projects:

East Fork Indian Ck (Menifee County)
 Sand Lick Creek (Powell County)
 Gilmore Creek (Wolfe County)
 Trib to Bull Creek (Knox County)

- *Comments: What are the guidelines for the in-lieu fee restoration projects? How does the project team determine the level of restoration that is appropriate for the location and conditions? For example, what flood rating does the mitigation review team use for engineering projects (i.e., 100-year?, other?)*

Division of Abandoned Mine Lands Reclamation Projects

Contact: Ed Boone at 502.564.2141 or ed.boone@ky.gov

- Received \$3.5 million in funding this year for addressing streams impacted by Acid Mine Drainage (through Reauthorization of Surface Mining Reclamation Act)
- Currently investigating potential project sites, looking at streams listed on 303d list for pH impairments
- Characterizing streams for most beneficial use.
- Potential site on Macy’s Creek in Perry County. Looking for additional sites.
- The AML Division also provides funds for drinking water lines and in currently working on water line extensions in Letcher County.

Kentucky River Watershed Watch (More info at www.krww.org)

- Number of sites sampled in 2008 – 197 sites sampled, mainly in Central portion of basin and North Fork of the Kentucky River
- Spring – Triazine herbicide testing at new sites
- Summer – E coli at all sites, twice if found to be in exceedance during first sampling event
- Fall – nutrients and metals at all sites
- Sites of Concern in 2008

2008 KRWW SITES OF OVERALL WATER QUALITY CONCERN

- o **K082 – North Fork Ky. River, Perry Co.**
pathogens, sulfate, metals (iron/zinc)
- o **K216 – Lost Creek, Breathitt Co.**
pathogens, sulfate
- o **K585 – Rockhouse Creek, Letcher Co.**
pathogens, sulfate
- o **K606 – Unnamed Trib of Neals Creek, Lincoln Co.**
pathogens, nutrients, metals (iron/zinc)

2008 KRWW SITES WITH HIGH NUTRIENTS

- o **K026 – South Elkhorn Creek, Scott Co.**
(also listed in 2007 for nutrients)
- o **K191 – Otter Creek, Madison Co.**
(also listed in 2007 for pathogens and nutrients)

2008 KRWW SITES WITH HIGH PATHOGENS

- o **K264 – Unnamed Tributary of Shallowford Creek, Madison Co.**
(also listed in 2007 for pathogens)
- o **K300 – Hickman Creek, Fayette Co.**
- o **K517 – Spring Branch, Fayette Co.**

2008 KRWW SITES WITH HIGH METALS/SULFATE

K214 – South Fork of Quicksand Creek, Breathitt Co.

- 2009 KRWW Training Workshop Schedule (register online at www.krww.org)

PHASE I Training:

- March 14, 2009 – Whitesburg, KY
- April 11, 2009 – Richmond, KY
- April 18, 2009 – Lexington, KY
- April 25, 2009 – Midway, KY
- April 25, 2009 – Danville, Ky
- May 5, 2009 – Lexington, KY

PHASE II Training:

- May 9, 2009 – Richmond, KY
- May 30, 2009 – Lexington, KY
- June 6, 2009 – Skyline, KY

Comments: Cindy Harnett, of University of Louisville, has developed inexpensive velocity sensors that can be “daisy-chained” across a stream to calculate flows. These could be helpful for citizen monitoring efforts. The USGS may be able to contribute a 40% match for focus water quality studies. It was noted that funding is tight for KRWW, and the organization needs to seek new funding sources, including the possibility of membership dues to pay for sampling supplies and administrative support.

A way is needed to better publicize citizen sampling results. Currently, results are posted online at www.krww.org, with the assistance of the Kentucky Geological Survey. It would be nice to have a way to filter those results by watershed. It would also be helpful to post signs with a website where those interested could immediately view sampling results and their meaning.

Kentucky Riverkeeper

- *The Big Idea Survey* – Over the past six months, the Kentucky Riverkeeper, along with ECU students/faculty associated with the Center for Appalachian Studies, have been meeting with County Judge Executives, mayors and other local officials to better understand their view of issues related to the Kentucky River. A survey about the Kentucky River, compiled by students, faculty and Kentucky Riverkeeper Pat Banks, was sent to these officials. The general agreement is that we have mistreated the Kentucky River and missed opportunities to improve it. It is time to take better care of this resource and to seize opportunities for creating recreation and tourism jobs on the river.
- *Kentucky River Documentary* – Several county officials have also expressed the need for more information about the potential role of the river in improving communities in the watershed. Based upon suggestions from these officials, Kentucky Riverkeeper plans to create an educational documentary about the Kentucky River starting this fall. It is the next critical component in a campaign to educate and build coalitions among citizens and community leaders. Appalshop filmmaker, Herb E. Smith, has agreed to work with the Kentucky Riverkeeper on this film project. He has several students from Duke University working on internships at Appalshop this summer that are willing to help complete the film.

Comments: Pat Banks, the Kentucky Riverkeeper director, requested offers of assistance on developing the documentary content and figuring out how best to draw more attention to the Kentucky River as natural asset for the state. You can contact Pat at 859.622.3065 or kyriverkeeper@eku.edu if you are interested in being involved.

Open Discussion Topics

Pressing issues in the basin?

Comments: Canoe and kayak portages around the river's lock and dams are needed to encourage recreational use. Favorable attention could also be drawn to the river by formally designating it as a scenic and/or historic waterway.

Proposed watershed activities?

Comments: Kentucky River Basin Signs along roadways would be a good way to draw attention to the watershed. These can be created by the Transportation Cabinet and should be requested by a private entity, such as the Kentucky Riverkeeper or Kentucky River Watershed Watch.

Desired role of Basin Team?

Comments: The group agreed that the Team provides a great outlet for informational exchange about water quality initiatives throughout the basin. Informal dialogue is beneficial to the team's participants and allows for coordination on projects. A Basin Team website would also be helpful as a way to post pertinent information. One is already set up through the Division of Water and could be enhanced with info provided by the Team.

Frequency of Basin Team meetings needed? Proposed meeting locations? Next meeting? Topics for next meeting? Others that should be invited?

Comments: It was decided that the Team should meet twice a year. The next meeting will be scheduled for the fall of 2009. Richmond was an acceptable location for everyone present. Topic proposals are requested. They can be sent to mmcalister@uky.edu.