

Friends of Lower Muskingum River Monthly News Roundup July 30, 2013

The following is a slightly shortened version of this month's board meeting minutes, provided to the FLMR membership to keep you up to date with what is going on in FLMR.

In attendance were board members Marilyn Ortt, Katy Lustofin, Elin Jones, Quincy Robe, John Lee, Dave Blount and Doug Albaugh; and watershed coordinator Jesse Daubert and summer intern Steve Williamson.

Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District Advisory Committee: Marilyn reported some items of interest from the meeting she attended recently. The amount of water held back by the flood control dams is very impressive. The Mohawk Dam, which is normally a dry dam and leased out to farmers for raising crops, now contains 700 acres of water with a depth of 54 feet. Monitoring for Asian Carp in Ohio is now being done by testing water samples for DNA of this species. Oil and gas activity is a major cause of the high sediment load in the Muskingum. [Quincy pointed out that increasing corn acreage on land too steep for corn is another source, and Dave noted that recent extremely heavy rain storms have washed away leaf litter so that the forest floor in some areas is now bare dirt.]

Muskingum River Advocacy Council: Quincy reported that the council will be incorporated as a non-profit, and will be a membership organization. It may be concerned mostly with boating, but FLMR probably should be represented at their meetings.

Summer Intern Report

Steve reported that preparations for the Raft Regatta, which is only two weeks away, are on schedule. FLMR has received \$1,550 in sponsorship donations, most of which has been spent; however it has not been necessary to tap into the funds from last year. Most expenses have been met. Income from sale of tee shirts and other items should be profit. There have been 10 donations of items for prize packs. One hundred tee shirts are now ready and available for sale, including via the website. Fifty color posters have been put up. FLMR is renting a large inflatable obstacle course as an added attraction at the Regatta, and to make it more kid friendly. It is sort of expensive, but Steve and Jesse feel that it will be worth it. Marty's Printing did a terrific job on the posters, brochures and cards, at a greatly reduced price. Jesse suggested that the following weekend should be set as a rain date for the Regatta.

Watershed Coordinator Report:

Jesse has renewed our website hosting plan with Go Daddy at a cost of \$101 for 24 months.

Jesse presented water quality education programs at Camp Hervida on 5 dates in July.

The letter requesting funding for an AmeriCorps VISTA has not yet produced results. Katy is following up with AEP and Peoples Bank. [Shortly after the board meeting Jesse received notice that PDC Energy will not contribute.]

Jesse has submitted the Watershed Action Plan to ODNR for endorsement, and expects to get it back by September.

The *E. coli* monitoring in Goose Run in Marietta has gotten the attention of the City of Marietta's sanitarian.

FLMR now has 303 Facebook fans, which is an increase of 88 from last month.

Clean Ohio Conservation Fund Projects:

Luke Chute/Cabin Run – Doug and Dave reported a number of large trees brought down by recent wind storms. Dave has worked on retrieving the bridges that were washed away. Amazingly, they are intact – but ended up quite a distance from where they belong. Dave has a friend who has a four wheel drive tractor with front end loader, and will help put the bridges back in place, but we will need additional volunteer help. This will not happen right away. Dave will announce a date.

Old Business:

Luke Chute Riverbank Stabilization – Marilyn and Doug had a conference call with Tom Evans of URS Corp. Tom is going to convene a “stakeholder meeting” of key people from agencies that might contribute to this project. MWCD granted \$10,000 for feasibility study, and any further support from MWCD will require funding from other sources as well.

Hydroelectric: Free Flow Power application to FERC – Marilyn compiled and edited FLMR’s comments and submitted them to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

Hydroelectric: other perspective – Katy recently visited hydroelectric plants in several eastern states, and got some interesting information from Albany Engineering (which has no connection with Free Flow Power). She learned that very small plants can be profitable (but we probably should not generalize from the Hudson River to the Muskingum). She was told the trend now is to build small hydroelectric plants entirely underground. She confirmed what Quincy had already found out – namely that FFP has never before done a hydroelectric project.

New Business:

Quilt Raffle – Quincy announced that his wife, Charlotte, will make a quilt for FLMR to raffle, if we can sell enough tickets to make it worthwhile. This met with general approval and Marilyn suggested that we should not hold the raffle until we sell at least \$500 worth of tickets.

Future Dates:

FLMR Potluck Picnic – Thursday August 22 at 6:00 p.m., Luke Chute Conservation Area. Bring your own table service and beverage and a dish to share.

5th Annual Mighty Muskingum River Raft Regatta – August 11.

Respectfully submitted,
Doug Albaugh, Secretary