

HOG ISLAND ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION MASTER PLAN
HOG ISLAND COMMITTEE MEETING
BONG HERITAGE CENTER, Superior, WI
September 12th, 2006 - 10:00AM – 12:00PM

MEETING MINUTES

Attendance list included as an attachment to this document.

At 10:20 AM - Christine Ostern from Douglas County calls the meeting to order. Minutes from the previous meeting of the Committee are approved. Introductions of attendees are performed, with each attendee stating his or her name and affiliation.

At 10:25AM – Karen Rodriguez from USEPA Great Lakes National Program Office introduces herself and provides some information on the project background:

- Relation of Hog Island project to AOCs (Areas of Concern) and explanation of Hog Island as a pilot restoration project being funded by USEPA.
- Long-term goal is to delist the St. Louis River AOC and improve the condition of recognized BUIs in the St. Louis River area.
- USEPA awarded a contract to Biohabitats to create an Ecological Restoration Master Plan for Hog Island.
- This process is intended to be collaborative and transparent.
- Information and data sharing is encouraged.
- This project is going to move quickly (completed by May, 2007.)
- USEPA is interested in helping implement this project from planning, through design, construction, and monitoring phases of ecological restoration.

At 10:35AM – Keith Bowers from Biohabitats, Inc. introduces Biohabitats and the Biohabitats project team (Keith Bowers, principal and owner; Ivette Bolender, project manager; Jeremy Thomas, project technical lead). Mr. Bowers requests that meeting attendees introduce themselves once again and state their personal or professional interest / goals in the project. Meeting attendees provide longer explanations of their individual or institutional roles. Mr. Bowers then presents the meeting agenda, and discusses the following:

- As defined by the USEPA contract with Biohabitats, the scope of this project includes Hog Island, the Hog Island inlet, and 1.5 miles of Newton Creek upstream from the inlet.
- The goals and objectives of the Hog Island Ecological Restoration Master Plan will be defined by the stakeholder group.
- Biohabitats objectives in the project:
 - To create a consensus-driven master planning process.
 - To create a participatory process between all stakeholders.
 - To create a plan that is practical and pragmatic.
 - To create a plan that is cost effective.
 - The process is as important as the product. To define a process that can be applied to other AOC projects in the Great Lakes bioregion.
- Philosophical approach:

- You (the Committee) are the experts. The role of Biohabitats is to lend our expertise and experience in ecological restoration and planning, and to facilitate the creation of the Master Plan.
 - The product (the master planning document) follows, and is born out of, the participatory planning process.
- Why do a master plan? A master plan is a guiding document that can be used to leverage / guide individual restoration projects. Master plans can be used to help facilitate ecological efforts that are multi-jurisdictional, and that require a multi-year implementation effort. In addition, they provide continuity of a project over long time horizons, help define priorities for a diverse range of stakeholders, can help to attract or enable funding for the project, and can be used as a public relations tool by managing agencies.
- How to implement ecological restoration on an artificial island? Biohabitats has had experience doing this in other areas such as Dike 14 in Cleveland, Ohio and artificial islands created from dredge spoils in the Chesapeake Bay. Ecological restoration can be defined as restoring a landscape or natural system to a state that that is self-sustaining and resilient. We will use the SER (Society for Ecological Restoration www.ser.org) primer on Ecological Restoration to help define the attributes of a restored ecological system.

At this point, a question is raised by one of the attendees: “With a defined project area, how does Hog Island fit into the larger St. Louis River AOC? How does one do a master plan for a specific area?” Keith Bowers answers that Hog Island is intended to be a pilot project to demonstrate how ecological restoration can be used to improve BUIs in an AOC. Jeremy Thomas explains that despite the fact that this project has discreet bounds, the larger biological and physical connectivity to the landscape will be evaluated as part of the master planning process. Karen Rodriguez adds that the process is the important link to the larger St. Louis River AOC. If it can be applied here – it can be applied to other areas of the St. Louis River.

Keith Bowers and Ivette Bolender present the project workplan, including the public workshops as well as the content of the master plan. Data collection and acquisition to be completed by October 31st, 2006. Existing conditions analysis and data synthesis to be completed by December 31st, 2006. First public workshop to be held in the first two weeks on January. Draft master plan to be released by February 15th, 2007. Second public to be held in the middle of March, 2007. Final Hog Island Ecological Restoration Master Plan to be completed by May 1st, 2007. The Master Plan will contain an assessment of current conditions, specific restoration goals and objectives, specific restoration actions, cost estimates, and an implementation schedule and timeline.

Attendee question: “What commitments do the property owners have to make?” Biohabitats: That will be addressed during the process, and the final plan will take into account issues relating to public and private properties within the project site.

Attendee question: “What is ecological restoration?” Biohabitats: Refer to the SER Primer on Ecological Restoration as a benchmark for definitions and attributes of a restored ecological system.

Attendee question: “How will we resolve barriers to implementation and decision-making?”
Biohabitats / USEPA: During the public workshops, we aim to garner a common vision and goals to guide the process.

Keith Bowers presents other projects that Biohabitats has worked on that serve as examples of an ecological restoration master planning process, including Dike 14 in Cleveland, OH, Four Mile Run in Alexandria, VA, Jamaica Bay in New York City, and others.

Finally, Keith Bowers and Jeremy Thomas describe the data collection process and mention the ftp site that Biohabitats will use to collect and disseminate information. They request that the meeting attendees provide Biohabitats with any information and data sources that they are aware of for use in the planning process. The Committee responded with the following:

- SEH (Charlene Johnson) already has a lot of information collected. Available through a web portal.
- GIS data available at the Land Records Department at Douglas County. Contact Randy Jones.
- Topography may be available from the Superior Women’s Plan that was created 25 years ago.
- Reference site information may be available from the NRI & EPA Great Lakes Environmental Indicators Project. Six wetlands sites are in Douglas County. Good accounts of vegetation and water quality.
- Seiches are very important!!!
- Duluth ACOE may have topography data
- Macroinvertebrate studies have been done in the Newton Creek area – both pre and post remediation project. Need approximately \$2500 to properly categorize them and make data available.
- NOAA website has a good historical map collection.
- Historical Sanborn maps available at UWS library archives.
- Graduate research theses may provide some good info – ask Charlene for research done by Dave Schimpf (sp?) and Gary Bolser (sp?).
- Old Bordner survey maps may provide good shoreline reference.

A group discussion about the best time to hold the first public workshop was held, it was decided that an afternoon / evening meeting would be most appropriate.

11:55AM – Christine Ostern announces that a Hog Island site visit will begin at 1:15PM and describes directions to the site.

12:00PM – Meeting is adjourned.

Follow-up items:

- 1) Biohabitats to create meeting minutes and attendance list and send to Committee.**
 - 2) Biohabitats to make a project workplan and schedule available to Committee.**
 - 3) The date and time of the first public workshop needs to be proposed and agreed upon.**
- This should occur soon.**