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Lisa White

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ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ROCKY RIVER WATERSHED COUNCIL

**January 26, 2006
7:00 PM – 9:00 PM**

Rocky River Nature Center
24000 Valley Parkway
North Olmsted, Ohio

Agenda

Speaker Series:

Rain Gardens and Native Plants- Bob Kehres, Ohio Prairie Nursery

Board of Trustees Business Meeting

1. Approval of December 1, 2005 Board of Trustees Meeting Summary
2. Endorsement of Nomination Committee's Slate of Trustees

Watershed Council Annual Meeting

1. Election of Trustees
2. Year End Review & Plans for 2006 (Commissioner Hambley)
3. Old Business
4. New Business
 - a. 2006 Meeting Calendar
 - b. Western Cuyahoga Audubon Society Bird Population Monitoring Program
 - c. NEO PIPE Rain Garden Initiative
5. Public Comment
6. Next Meeting Date

February 23, 2006
Rocky River Board of Trustees
Location to Be Announced
6:30 – 8:30 PM

For more information contact Andy Vidra at (216) 241-2414 Extension 254
or by email <mailto:avidra@mpo.noaca.org>.

Meeting Notes for the Annual Meeting of the Rocky River Watershed Council

**January 26, 2006
7:00 to 9:00 p.m.**

**Rocky River Nature Center
North Olmsted, Ohio**

Board of Trustees Business Meeting

Chairperson Steve Hambley called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. A list of attendees is attached.

The first item of business was the review of the meeting summary of the December 1, 2005 Board of Trustees meeting. Secretary George Remias was called out of town on business and was unable to present the meeting summary. Approval was deferred until the next meeting of the Board.

The second item of business involved consideration of the Nominating Committees Slate of Trustees. Kathleen Bradley informed the Board that Jim Werleg was unable to continue to serve on the Board of Trustees. All remaining Board members up for election consented to continuing on the Board. The Nominating Committee recommended that Terri Martincic be endorsed for the seat vacated by Jim Werleg. The Board endorsed this nomination.

There being no further business before the Board, the Trustees meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Watershed Council Annual Meeting

Chairperson Hambley opened the Annual Meeting of the Council at 7:10 p.m.

The first item of business was the election of Trustees. Mr. Hambley asked for nominations from the floor. A motion was heard from the floor to close the nominations and to elect the slate of Trustee offered by the Nominating Committee. This motion was unanimously approved without further discussion.

Mr. Hambley reviewed the accomplishments of the Council and its members over the past year as reported in the attached Annual Report. He noted that watershed communities are beginning to enact riparian and wetland protection setback ordinances. Berea, Broadview Heights, North Royalton, and Parma have taken the lead in this effort. Home sewage treatment system management benefited from an educational outreach program sponsored by the Cuyahoga County Board of Health and funding assistance to replace 47 failing systems. The Lake Erie Balanced Growth Initiative in the Upper West Branch of the Rocky River was initiated with funding assistance from the Lake Erie Office. This effort will work to identify policies to help manage growth. The intention is to eventually expand the work watershed-wide.

Mr. Hambley stated that the Board of Trustees is looking forward to reenergizing its Committees and moving forward to seek a 501(c)3 status as a nonprofit organization. He stated that the intention of the Board was to continue the Watershed Festival and announced that the 2006 Festival would be held on September 23. He also announced that the Cuyahoga County Farm Bureau and the Cuyahoga oil and Water Conservation District would be sponsoring a horse owner-training program on March 23 and 25, 2006 to help horse owners better manage their animal waste.

Ray Stewart informed the Council that the Friends of Wetlands were holding a Vernal Pool Monitoring training session at the Lorain County Metroparks Carlisle Reservation on Saturday, February 25. Interested parties can register for this event at FOWL.org.

Becky Siekkinen-Donaldson announced that starting on May 13, 2006, River Rally Week will be held. This provides an opportunity for communities and citizens to get involved in clean-up activities across the watershed. Projects are already being planned in Middleburg Heights, North Olmsted, and North Royalton.

Mary Ellen Stasek informed the Council that the Friends of Big Creek are sponsoring a series of activities that could connect with efforts on the Rocky River. The Friends are looking to connect local neighborhoods to Big Creek, to organize invasive species pulls, and hold watershed hikes. More information can be found on the Friend's website: friendsofbigcreek.org.

Nancy Howell of the Western Audubon Society announced that their group has adopted an important bird area in the Rocky River. The chapter is looking for volunteers to help monitor birding areas. They are sponsoring a reception on March 5, 2006 at the Rocky River Nature Center at 1 p.m. to introduce interested parties to the project. This will be followed up with a training session on April 2.

David Cass of Middleburg Heights announced that a trail from Lake Isaac to Lake Abram was being opened with funding assistance the Ohio Fund and mitigation funds from the Hopkins Airport expansion.

Marie Urso stated that Audubon Ohio was seeking support for an effort to help educate federal officials about the importance of bird habitat protection. A rally is being held in Washington on February 13-16. Audubon Ohio has limited funds to help people attend.

Becky Siekkinen=Donaldson reported on the activities of the Northeast Ohio Public Involvement/Public Education Committee (NEO PIPE) that is working to help educate the public on storm water issues in six counties in Northeast Ohio. This committee is preparing a Rain Garden Guidance Manual that can help watershed residents build a storm water management improvement project in their own yards.

Kathleen Bradley stated that she regularly represents the Rocky River at meetings of the Northeast Ohio Watershed Council that is supported by the Ohio Environmental Council. Evening meetings are held at the Boston Store facility in the Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Interested parties can get more information from the oec.org website.

Chairperson Hambley concluded the open discussion portion of the meeting and introduced the Speaker Series Portion.

Speaker Series Discussion: Rain Gardens and Native Plants

Bob Kehres of the Ohio Prairie Nursery presented a slide show on Rain Gardens and Native Plants. Mr. Kehres is working with the Medina County SWCD on a workshop about rain gardens to be held in April. He has worked with the City of Berea to improve the shoreline of Coe Lake. He is also working with the Geauga and Lake SWCDs to implement rain gardens of their own.

Mr. Kehres emphasized the importance of cleaning storm water at its source. That is a primary function of rain gardens that are designed and sized to fit in residential yards. Rain gardens offer an organic approach in the effort to accomplish this. Ohio Prairie Nursery is located in Hiram, Ohio and is in the business of seed production from native Ohio plants. The Nursery can supply plant packages that serve many needs from the planting of rain gardens, to mixes that help to process wastes from some home sewage treatment

system designs, to storm water/erosion control plantings, as well as prairie restoration mixes. Plant packages are available for wet and dry locations. A variety of heights and colors are available to help coordinate any planting project.

Mr. Kehres proceeded to show how rain gardens are designed and constructed. His presentation mirrors that provided in the NEO PIPE Rain Garden Manual that is to be made available in April. He particularly stressed the advantages of native plants in these gardens. Native plants are very low maintenance plants. They need little attention because they evolved to be in tune with in the climate of Ohio. They can survive wet and dry conditions as well as hot and cold ones. One way that they do this is by producing root systems that are typically much deeper than most hybrid varieties and ornamental plants. The deep root systems have the added advantage of helping more rain water to be absorbed by the ground. This makes them ideal for use in rain gardens.

In the discussion that followed Mr. Kehres presentation it was felt that the rain garden concept was a great idea and that local nurseries should be encouraged to handle the materials needed to plant them in the watershed. Mike Durkalec noted that the native plants spoken of by Mr. Kehres should have applicability in the construction of Bioretention cells that are beginning to be used to help clean storm water from new developments. Mr. Durkalec noted developers need to be trained in the proper use of native plants on their sites.

Kathleen Bradley asked why it was desirable to disconnect downspouts and redirect them to a rain garden. Mr. Kehres indicated that the intention is to slow down the rainwater runoff that would otherwise rush into nearby streams. The rain garden also helps to trap materials washed off of roofs.

The Annual Meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.