

Lower Missouri River Watershed Meeting May 10, 2017

690 Chesterfield Pkwy West, Chesterfield, MO 63017

Small group discussion questions

1. Given today's presentations, discussion and the recent flooding, what challenges have you faced or what lessons have been learned?

a. Group 1 – Bonnie Harper moderator

- When it rains 15 inches, we will flood
- May storm was a 91-year event
- Misconceptions about what a 100-year event is
- Public is poorly educated because media is not reporting correctly
- Storm intensity has changed and we go through dry and wet cycles
- Maryland Heights now has a bowl from the 500-year levee, but it's private land
 - Pump stations are expensive
 - Need to manage stormwater that falls on site of flows to the area
- FEMA regulates the floodplain, but differences exist between states
- Not a lot of land left to develop so people are going to floodplains, except there are areas in north St. Louis city that would benefit from development instead of going to the floodplains
- Maryland Heights is counting on that land being developed, but Federal government won't bail them out so taxpayers will have to
- Most Missouri levees are agricultural, which can get over-topped, restoration won't happen because everyone would have to fall back
- Post-Dispatch doesn't cover what happened in the other communities of the Meramec, could have been worse here on Missouri River if the storm was in a slightly different location.
- The Hazard Mitigation Plan is voluntary, it's really the local floodplain manager who drives the way the community develops
- If flood insurance rates actually reflected the costs, (but insurance is not required for development 'protected' behind a levee) would that drive more levees being built?

b. Group 2 – Chad Eggen moderator

- Flooding as a calamity is man-made
- Increase organic matter in soil
- Rain gardens are a good idea
- Solutions start at the individual, local level, but need a holistic management approach
 - Partnerships
 - Hydrolic channel
 - Natural absorption
 - Don't use nutrient bags from store, use composting and leaves
 - Give people something they can do on their own, composting, leaves

- Soil conservation
- People not entitled – need improvement
- County – No plan unless there is a vote of the people
- Floodplain management vs land rights
- Comprehensive or project-by-project
- Continue to get all groups together, good things happen
- Politics of land use, start at the local level
- Mid-level is state legislation, including farm bureau (natural system versus political strength)
- Flood insurance
 - Should taxpayer pay or
 - Jeffersonian approach, land owner should handle
- Need education
 - Floods of '73-'83-'93 etc.
 - Levee too high, first reaction to flood is to raise the levee
- Communication, get the word out, so it is beneficial
- Individuals wanted to blame someone in 2015
- In 2017, more information and lead time

c. Group 3 – Aaron Young moderator

- The 2017 flood disrupted work, but it's still too early to tell the full impacts of the flood
- USACE opens up lock and dams during floods
 - Also patrol the levees
 - Monitors for components nearing end-of-life
- People generally have a short attention span and priorities quickly fade
- Missouri has no state level over-sight of floodplain management
 - As a result, IL is looking at loosening restrictions on levees
- Can East-West Gateway do something to organize local efforts?
 - Staff has capacity, but would need direction from the Board of Directors
- Legal precedent in relation to liability, or pushing flood waters to other places favors construction of levees
 - Refer to lawsuit of St. Charles County vs. City of St. Peters
 - County sued the City over flooded areas caused by a St. Peters levee. Court found in favor of the city

2. Do we need to encourage a more regional approach or vision to floodplain management? If so, what would that involve?

a. Group 1 – Bonnie Harper moderator

- Does state legislature have to weigh in on this?
- There will be push back
- 134 cities in MO and need to consider IL too
- Can we look to the Netherlands for floodplain management?
- Problem would be funding needing to come from Federal government
- Bring in high level officials – Municipal League could assist

- Mayors could bring power and put pressure on this
 - Have to get mayor and councilors themselves together to hear better information and get experts in front of them
 - Industry has changed terminology of 100-year flood, but not the media
 - People don't realize cost personally of the floodplains, if we impress on people the cost, that could lead to change
 - Move people out of the floodplain because you will never be protected from 12 inches of rain
 - Difference between river flooding and stormwater flooding
- b. Group 2 – Chad Eggen moderator
- Measure levees, enrolling levee in federal program
 - Howard Bend
 - If inspection associated with flood
 - Farmers create levee districts
 - Local selection
 - Self assess
 - Collect taxes
 - 3 foot 3
 - Farmers are businessmen – promote future development
 - Regional approach to floodplain management
 - Political neighbor, but who pumps
 - Buyout protected
 - Acknowledge that, first, we should not make anything worse
 - Don't infringe on floodway
 - Monarch levee, soccer field and recreation
 - Maryland Heights, want buildings on levee
 - Flooded areas for recreation, not huge cost
 - Volume of water
 - What would it take to absorb?
 - Topography, hydrology, land use manipulation
 - Dr. Criss
 - Land use, regional perspective
 - Geology of property – Meramec
 - Developed – man-made floodplain
 - Allow for 1 foot rise in river, IL has 1/10 foot rise
 - Not looked at cumulatively
 - We've done all these things, now we aren't eligible for federal funding
- c. Group 3 – Aaron Young moderator
- MPO's and COG's should spearhead
 - Need to get state-level policy
 - Legislation was proposed, but only got a hearing, no vote
 - Need public outcry
 - Keep public involved (examples include River Sounding, Nine Network)

- Need no more floodplain development, no more levees
- USACE takes orders from Congress through authorizations
 - FEMA is more important agency
 - Congress allowed Valley Park levee
- Big Muddy reserve
 - Has willing land owners
 - Congress has not authorized spending
 - TNC can buy land, but eventually wants to turn it over (sell) to government agencies
- USACE Silver Jackets attempts to integrate levels of floodplain management including levee districts
 - Hal Graef is Silver Jacket in St. Louis office
 - Goal is to turn control over to the state
- Missouri River Recovery Program is still authorized, but not funded
- Refer to Galloway Report