

4 County Wastewater Task Force

Organizational Meeting

May 5, 2010

Central Bank of Lake of the Ozarks, Osage Beach

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 pm by Donna Swall, Executive Director Lake of the Ozarks Watershed Alliance (LOWA). Handouts included an Agenda, a pie chart of a LakeSun opinion poll, charts showing the taxable sales for each of the four counties from 2008 and 2009, Overview of Lakewide 'Hub and Spoke' Sewer System, and a reprint of Lake Sun E-Board about the 4-county sewer district proposition. Introductions were made round robin and then the meeting was turned over to Jim Rogers, LOWA Wastewater Chair.

Jim said this was a meeting to organize a task force. The first question was: What shall be the mission of this task force? Could it be to have a lake wide sewer system covering all 4 counties which would take on site septic off the lake and not flow to the lake? By what means? Good question. Can't do the whole lake with one WWTP (wastewater treatment plant) If there were 25 operating independently, treatment would be doable, but funding would be enormous to do it all at once. Need to build onto what we have and then build as needed.

We are interested in getting systems that don't work and getting their effluent off of the lake. We need to check out what is working and what isn't, and see where else WWTPs are needed.

For where WWTPs are needed, 1) Start with areas of highest risk. 2) Plan Hub and Spoke facilities for those areas. 3) Move around the lake and see where the next logical place would be. See what blocks are there. See what they need, and then expand from there.

For the last 14 years new septics have had to meet current requirements.

We also need to look at the poorest people who can't afford \$10-15,000 for a hook up. Look at major funding package requirements and then put them in place. Then look at where existing facilities can expand. Can put businesses and residences in different cost categories.

Questioning the \$150 Million price tag. The City of Osage Beach subsidizes sewer. Many CRT funds are split between sewer and water. Osage Beach rates are due to go up in June but they will still be the second lowest rates in the lake area because of the subsidization. They need to figure out how to fund the D road 42 to Turkey Bend area with lift stations, shredders, etc. Just that is looking at \$21 Million with an existing plant in place.

If you can't pay for it and people can't afford it, then you can't do it.

The \$150 Million price tag came from 25 hubs with 20 miles of spokes per hub – the hubs and main pipelines only. Several counties and municipalities already have WWTPs and these could be tapped into with strategically placed hubs.

Forming a Port Authority for the Lake of the Ozarks (LOZ) including those parts of the 4 counties was discussed. A 501c3 has already been formed for this purpose so we could use this vehicle to fund the projects. A Port Authority (PA) would have the power to issue bonds and implement the master plan and could involve all 4 counties.

Today we might be able to identify what we need to learn and figure out how to study it and research what we need to know. We need to categorize what we need to know and set up subcommittees to work on each part.

For systems not in compliance – we don't want to condemn them or anything like that. In homes not affording hook-ups (and these aren't just low income homes), we need to find financial support for all of these. For example, 80 year olds on fixed income for 20 years won't be able to afford a hook-up.

We need to figure out who is on what committee, look at short term and alternative solutions, too.

One problem is to identify an actual geographic area – the governance area – and who is going to be the collector?

We need to avoid putting dollar numbers out now; we need to study this. There's not an easy fix. The fix won't be the same across the board. And the 'fix' needs to be addressed area by area.

Finding money to help people is another thing we'll have to create because the money's not there. Rural Development is the only agency out there right now and they have no money either.

DNR, Dept. of Health, EPA, will only tighten regulations – we need something going – a plan to delay some of these. For example, a new regulation is that permitted facilities are now to be tested 4 times a month, which at \$150 per check, adds up to extra expenses for the permitted facilities. With a plan to talk to and work with the government about some of these issues, we can work together to establish regulations that this area can work with. We need a governance – an entity – that will be responsible for paying back the loans – maybe that should be a first priority. Are we talking all of the four counties or just lake front? Anywhere effluent can get to the lake is what we are talking about. We need to determine where our area will be.

How is a port authority funded? They are funded by a bond, for example, like the Community Bridge, the same principle of funding. A Port Authority (PA) can do many things. PAs can cross county lines. County Commissions would have to participate in the PA. Board members could be selected by the 4 County Commissions. Or, the state would appoint them through the Governor's office.

What do we want to create? A Cooperative or a Water Company? People would have part-ownership in a Cooperative. Would the pre-existing facilities be a part of this cooperative or stay separate? We may need to make new laws to create this legal entity.

Defining our Mission: Brainstorm Bullets from the chart paper:

- Address pollutants entering the lake
- Create and maintain a means of addressing pollutants entering the lake
- Sanitary sewer pollutants
- Worry about sewage first, before other runoff problems
- On-site sewage at the lake be the focus
- We are here to protect the lake
- Specific task force
- Also have an education component (to educate the Task Force, especially)
- IOWA already addressing big issue of "pollutants"

For a title, a motion was made and the vote was unanimous to keep “Four County Wastewater Task Force” as the title. **Email Jim Rogers with suggestions for a Mission Statement.** [secretary note: more on Mission Statements below]

Voting successes have happened when time was taken to educate the communities and work closely with the press to help keep people informed and so that people will understand the need.

LOWA is working on the big stuff like trying to reduce runoff into the lake; this Task Force needs to settle on its mission as more focused on the wastewater issue around the entire 4-county lake district.

We need numbers of septic on the lake shore. We also need numbers of those on the lake shore who are hooked on to a permitted facility.

Short discussion of need to clear up the issue of nutrient criteria from Truman Lake but was decided to be part of LOWA’s ‘big stuff’ and not really part of this Task Force’s mission.

The Task Force decided that having all four counties represented is very important and substitutes for the regular attendee can be and are encouraged to be sent when needed. The Task Force will meet quarterly but the subcommittees should meet as often as needed and report at the quarterly meetings. If something comes up, the Task Force can meet more often. Hopefully, the subcommittees will have some form of 4-county representation at their meetings, as well at Task Force quarterly meetings. Several commented that this could place a large burden on the counties and could result in a withdrawal of support due to an overload of meetings.

One subcommittee should be a “What kind of entity” committee that would look into what kind of legal vehicle, what rules and regs would go with each kind of entity, taxing, etc.

A need for more subcommittee members became evident. Task Force members are encouraged to round up some ‘volunteers’. Several, including Bev Thomas, said they could contact some. Jennifer Eblen from Waster Water and District T, Health Dept people, more from Benton, Morgan, and Miller counties, the Prosecuting Attorney or assistant who can advise as to what legalities are needed.

The Lake has lots of players, but we don’t seem to be all on the same team. The ‘Citizens’ group is focused on the short term and is informing the public on the good health of the Lake right now. The Task Force is focused on the long term health of the Lake and wants to take steps to ensure that the Lake will stay healthy. A suggestion was made to have Task Force meetings at different locations around the Lake.

Warren Witt, who is a member of both the Task Force and the Citizens group said he will get with the other task force group (Citizens) and make sure we aren’t duplicating efforts. He will make clear what each group does and how to maintain effort and resources.

Maybe it should be all one group – even though the 4 County Wastewater Task Force wants to focus on the long term, we might need to tackle some of it in the short term.

The 4 County Commissioners will get us names of more people.

Committees: Legal Entity

Osage Beach protects its system and needs citizen’s participation and approval to come in with another entity, especially it that entity combines water and sewer. Many of Osage Beach’s clients have private drinking water wells. In Camden County, each facility has its own debt. Osage Beach performs constant upgrades and maintenance and already

spends \$1 Million per year and has 9 people on staff in a department. It is a huge organization that replaces and repairs and Osage Beach has no overflows. They need to protect their system. Some other smaller entities can expand, but they're still not on the lake.

The Task Force could work with smaller systems first and help them expand and leave Osage Beach for later. If looking to the County systems for expanding, their districts are defined by their bonds so that presents legal issues. These issues are hard to disentangle and SRF is involved.

We need to combine in water for a cash flow.

What is DNR going to do about the private wells around the Lake? DNR doesn't regulate them. On the scientific side, when wells are near septic, one of them has to move. If we fix the septic issue, then the wells aren't a problem. But, a centralized water system can help carry the costs for the septic.

In a Mission Statement – Bullets from the chart paper:

- Wastewater will also involve other issues
- We tackle wastewater and leave rest for other groups or other time
- Osage Arm is on the draft 2010 303d List of Impaired Waters for nitrogen (N) and the Niangua Arm is on the draft list for phosphorus (P). N and P are from animal waste, stormwater issues, overflow from septic and effluent from wastewater treatment plants
- There are 419 permitted facilities; how many septics?
- Should we focus only on those septics out of compliance?

A Mission Statement needs to point to a social awareness – that's why education is so important – to address why someone with a good well or a good septic should still be interested and willing to participate. At the end, we'll need to sell this to the people so we will need a road show. A suggestion was made to email Jim where locations should be for the road show. However, then it was decided that this should be very generic and we'll make up the list later.

Committees: Bullets from the chart paper:

- Legal entity
- Funding – may be connected to legal entity committee
- Determine the district
- Include water?
- Education
- Scope – what areas?
- Federal and state agencies' roles
- Technical committee

Today is just constructing a message of what we want to do.

Do we want engineering firms on the Task Force or is that a conflict of interest? We could have them as Technical Advisors to the Task Force but not actually on the Task Force, and also include lawyers in that same category.

Where does LOWA fit into all this? More than just having passion for the Lake, LOWA has attracted lots of pro bono technical advise and LOWA can provide knowledge to build a solid foundation. Just let LOWA know how they can help! LOWA thanks everyone for being here today.

Who should lead this Task Force to best ensure success? AmerenUE was brought up and a 4 County Leadership Team (doesn't need to be the Commissioners) rotating the quarterly meetings between them was brought up also. The Task Force members present expressed a desire for Warren Witt, Manager of Hydro Operations for AUE, to be the Task Force leader. Warren said he would talk to his management as to how much he could take on with the Task Force.

Once a legal entity is decided upon, then we can go about setting up a Board with diverse representation.

People need to be able to trust that this Task Force is for the people, will stay public and not for profit, and will make every effort to provide sewer treatment at the cheapest possible price.

The meeting adjourned at 3:05 pm.

These minutes respectfully submitted by C. King Toole, LOWA Recording Secretary.
Reviewed and approved for posting on web for public interest by Donna Swall, LOWA Executive Director.