

## **Benton County Riparian and Wetlands Project 2009-2011**

### **Advisory Group Charge**

**Project Goal:** Create a program to plan for streams, riparian corridors and associated wetlands, for water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, erosion and flood control, farming and similar purposes. The program will operate proactively through map inventory updates, education and outreach, incentives, partnerships and result in land use code changes to meet program goals. The program will focus on the unincorporated areas where Benton County has land use jurisdiction, and will need to comply with and implement State planning rules and Benton County's Comprehensive Plan. Areas outside of direct county jurisdiction (e.g. farms) are vital areas for building partnerships and provide information and outreach.

**Project Background:** This project is a phased, 2-year grant funded project by EPA Region 10. The project will be led by the Benton County Community Development Department. The Board of County Commissioners holds the authority to approve the final Riparian/Wetland Program.

There are three components of the project: 1.) Mapping and Updating Inventory, 2.) Riparian/Wetland Program Options Analysis, and 3.) Outreach and Education. Each component has timelines that overlap, where one component of the project works to complement others.

**Advisory Group:** The Benton County Riparian and Wetlands Advisory Group membership will be selected by Benton County Community Development with approval by the Board of Commissioners, with the intent of constituting a diverse range of people interested in working to build consensus to help achieve the Project Goal.

**Advisory Group Work Objectives:** The role of the Advisory Group is to provide consensus recommendations to Community Development Staff that will facilitate throughout the process, and a consensus recommendation on the final program prior to public hearings for program adoption; to ensure the program is workable, effective, and acceptable and achieves the goals.

The Advisory Group will meet monthly or as necessary to:

- Provide input on finalizing the Scope and Objectives of the Project,
- Help set priorities and identify data sources for the mapping and assessment of current riparian/wetland conditions (GIS, [LiDAR](#), and other applicable data),
- Review staff-produced options for how to structure program elements and provide recommendations,
- Provide input to the determination of the scope and goals of ground-truthing field assessments,
- Identify information gaps of importance for future work to enhance the County riparian/wetlands program.
- Review drafts and provide input on program elements, including outreach materials, land use code, incentives, etc.

- Provide a recommendation on elements (primarily land use code) that will be considered for adoption by the Board of County Commissioners.

In agreeing to serve on the Riparian and Wetland Advisory Group, members agree to the following:

1. To work constructively to achieve Project Objectives.
2. To be objective, solution-oriented, fair and respectful. Advisory Group participants and County Staff are authorized to ask a participant to remove themselves from the group if these expectations are not being met.
3. The Advisory Group is composed of members from diverse backgrounds and perspectives. Open, respectful communication and shared learning will be critical to the success of the Advisory Group.
4. Staff will develop all work products, and will lead Advisory Group meetings.
5. Meetings will be open to the public.
6. Advisory Group members are appointed. Each member may choose an alternate to attend occasional meetings in the event the primary member is unavailable.
7. Subcommittees may be formed to address specific issues.
8. The duration of the project is expected to be from November 2009 to July 2011 with Advisory Group meetings anticipated to occur monthly; occasionally there will be longer periods between meetings.