LITTLE FISH IN A BIG SEA

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Tonya Lewandowski – Senior Engineer ECT
Julie Kleinau – President Kawkawlin River Watershed Association
The Kawkawlin River Watershed
Understanding the Watershed

Historically agricultural landscape
Understanding the Watershed

Agricultural Nutrient Runoff
Understanding the Watershed

Fallen Debris / Sedimentation
Understanding the Watershed

Flashy river = Severe flooding
Outlet to Saginaw Bay - Location is Everything
Early Days of the Association

Originally called Kawkawlin River Watershed Property Owners Association (KRWPOA)

First meeting held in 1992
The Beginning [1992-1993]

- The idea of forming a group started with 10-12 neighbors on the river.
- The group was made up of politically involved river residents that wanted to do some good.
- Early meetings took place in their living rooms with drinks and snacks served.
What’s It Take?
Determining Purpose

Vision
- Cleaner River
- Property Values
- Sediment Removal
- Recreational Opportunity
- More Fish
- Safe Environment
- Better Access
- Expanded Partners
- Improve Navigation
- Reduce Vegetation

Mission
- Monitoring flooding issues impact
- Partnership of all stakeholders involved in the watershed (ex. farmers)
- Collaboration with government and NGOs to foster participation
- Change “basin” to “watershed”
- Promote presentation materials for wise use of water in the watershed
- Encouragement of education and awareness
Assigning Priorities

- River Safety
- Reduce Flooding
- Cleanliness
- Recreational Use
To Raise the Funds

Ideas, Process, Implementation

- Need to raise money to make changes happen
- Ideas to fundraise
  - Events
  - Need Committees
- Formalize annual dues for Association members
- Grants / Involving Gov’t
Determining Committees

- Brainstorming project goals and committee chairs
  - Environmental
  - Safety
  - Governmental
  - Outreach
Getting Started

First Fundraising Efforts – River Cleanup & Pancake Breakfast

- First River Cleanup held in 1995 on the first Saturday of June
- 40-50 tons of debris was pulled from the river
- A breakfast kickoff before everyone got dirty and tired became the plan
- The pancake breakfast began an annual tradition at Castaway’s on the river
- In 24 years, it has never rained on the first Saturday of June
River Cleanup Fun Facts

- Bay County Road Commission clears debris on Monday
- First couple of River cleanups averaged 40-50 tons of debris pulled from the river
- Strange things found in the river:
  - Washing machine
  - Carpeting (always difficult to deal with)
  - Underwear - mens & womens
  - 20 year old snowmobile with the key still at ‘on’ position
  - Every type of lawn ornament
  - Beer cans - bonus if full?
  - Every size of tire imaginable
KRWPOA Making Progress

Safety

- [1994-1995] Installed the first (now permanent) river/channel markers
- [2005] facilitated discussion the removal of abandoned oil pipelines on North Branch of river
- [2004-Present] Implementation of Weed Control, a program to control and eradicate invasive plants
- [2005] Speed limit for snowmobiles on the river set at 45 mph with input from whole community (both residents and snowmobilers)
- [2008] A weather station is mounted on Saginaw Bay Light #1 at request of KRWPOA members
Let the Fun Begin!

- [2009] Annual Membership Picnic
- [2011] Annual Poker/Pirate Paddle began - quickly successful fundraiser and raises awareness
- [2016] Annual Boat Light-Up Parade began
Growing Up

- [2012] Around this time, membership had blossomed to around 200 people

- [2013] Name changed from Kawkawlin River Watershed Property Owners Association (KRWPOA) to Kawkawlin River Watershed Association (KRWA) to gain broader visibility and support to obtain grants

- [2014] By-laws were updated and committees were rearranged into a shorter lister with broader scopes
Making a Purchase

- [2014] New Buoy Tender Boat - makes Safety tasks much easier
Politics and Gaining Ground

- State Representatives
- State Regulatory Agencies
Change is in the Air..

- [2015] Meeting with MDEQ and UM Flint representatives bring about a mission and a vision for the association

Our Mission

The Kawkawlin River will be recognized as a high quality resource for outdoor recreation that is strongly supported and promoted by community partners, and the Kawkawlin River Watershed Association will create a sustainable community throughout the watershed as stewards of its unique natural and cultural resources.

Our Vision

Promote the Kawkawlin River as a high quality resource to enjoy, protect, and preserve. Develop a community network of partners to raise awareness of watershed issues, improve water quality, increase recreational opportunities, preserve and enhance fish and wildlife habitat, and make the watershed a safe and enjoyable place to recreate and live.
WHERE WE ARE NOW

KAWKAWLIN RIVER WATERSHED ASSOCIATION
Annual Budget

- Membership Dues
- Local Events
  - Poker Paddle
  - Golf Outing
  - Fire/Ice Event
- Local Grants
- State/National Grants
- Appropriations Funding

Since 2014 over $2.1 million in funds secured for safety/environmental work in the river
Current Efforts

- Invasive Species Control
- Sediment Removal
- Green Infrastructure - plantings
- Erosion Control
- Debris Relocation
- Habitat Creation
- Existing Pipeline Removals
Completed Projects - Dredging at the Mouth
Projects in Progress

- North Branch
  - Debris Removal
  - Pipeline Removal

- Watershed
  - Erosion Control
  - Ag BMPs

- South Branch
  - Invasive Species
  - Sediment

- Tobico Marsh
  - Water Quality
Kawkawlin River Restoration Projects

- Partnership
- Combining Funding Sources
- Collaboration
- Outreach
- Recreation
- Water Quality
Tobico Marshland Revitalization -

A big step for KRWA as Fiduciary
Putting It All Together

Working with the local community and agencies
Green Infrastructure - Monitor Twp Park Improvements
Continually Improving

Retrospective BMP Analysis

- Conferences
- Information Sharing
- Collaboration
Let’s Make It GREAT - Seeking Improvement Opportunities