Proposed Oversight?

Entities that address watershed and sewer-shed management in the PDP and Judy’s Branch watersheds are fractured, siloed, and separately ineffective and under-resourced. Resources and capacity are stretched thin due to a declining tax base drawing primarily from the residents (who are primarily low-income, minority residents) most impacted by water flowing from upland portions of the watershed and through their neighborhoods. As property values and tax base have declined, fees have risen to keep up with maintenance needs. Climate change with extreme weather more frequently affects the region. It is exacerbating and accelerating the stormwater problems in the American Bottom and the uplands above it. The current system has become inequitable and oppressive, while improvements and maintenance have not kept up with the needs for many decades. Upland communities whose stormwater and polluted runoff flows downhill into the American Bottom have been essentially off the hook, leaving the lowland residents and communities to deal with the upland stormwater without contributing financially. In addition, residents and businesses have to navigate through multiple entities with different authorities, rules, fees, and points of contact.

A new entity could be set up to provide points of contact for various areas in the neighborhood. For example, the former Centreville community, which has been extremely impacted by flooding and sewer issues, could have a particular staff or board point of contact/liaison to ensure the residents there have direct input.

New Oversight Entity:

Create umbrella entity for regional stormwater*

Oversight board of residents could be elected(?) by “wards”. State needs to be a part of the oversight, especially in the beginning as the entity gets established. Recommend IEPA, IDNR, Attorney General, IEMA. Other agencies that should be oversight participants and coordinating bodies include USEPA, USACE, FEMA, DOJ [Civil rights], HUD. (For example, make the Flood control district the umbrella organization over stormwater management, Mississippi River levees as it has the larger authority and tax base.)

Such entity should also prioritize hiring residents from the watershed. Job training for stormwater management should be funded through sources such as EDA, USEPA.

- Flood Control District Council? (would need to update legislation and possibly change to council appointments to election instead(?))
- MESD?
- American Bottom WWTP?
- US Army Corps of Engineers?
- Other entities?
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*Case study entities that address these issues across boundaries: St Louis Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD), Chicago Metropolitan Water Reclamation District, Denver Southeast Metro Stormwater Authority, Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District, among others.

Responsibilities:

- Levee certification
- Management of canals and ditches
- Wastewater management of American Bottom systems
- Stormwater management improvements and maintenance
- Water quality management- NPDES, MS4, green infrastructure
- Land use review - set stormwater policies
- Pump station maintenance, security, and management
- Address resident and community issues as they arise
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