



## **MINUTES**

### **Cuyahoga River AOC Advisory Committee Meeting April 19, 2017 at 9:00 am Furnace Run, Richfield, OH**

The meeting was called to order by Chairwoman Grieser at 9:03am

Present: Jennifer Grieser, Meiring Borchers, Kathleen Bradley, Ellen Brown-Armstrong, Tom Denbow, Grace Gallucci, Jane Goodman, Frank Greenland, Pat Gsellman, Laura DeYoung Minnig for Joe Hadley, Scott Hardy, Elaine Marsh, Rebecca McCleary, Howard Simon, Jacquelyn Zevenbergen, Ted Conlin, Phil Hillman

Absent: Alison Ball, Amy Brennan, Joe Gregory, Jane Howington, Joe Hadley, Bill Hughes, Leila Jackson, Claire Posius, Jan Rybka, Harry Stark, Bryan Stubbs, Anthony Togliatti, JoAnn Banda, Bryan Hinterberger, Russell Brandenburg, Bob Hollis, Meg Plona, Lisa Petit

Staff: Nichole Vorisek

Guests: Robert Brand, Kevin Kratt, Katie Evans, Bill Zawiski, Jesse Heib, Mark Warman

### **Welcome**

Chairwoman Grieser gave a welcome and asked those present to introduce themselves. J. Grieser introduced Jesse Heib as a guest. Jesse has done a documentary film called "Gone Paddling!" which is about his 430 mile trip down the Wisconsin River on a paddle board. Summit Metroparks was thanked for hosting the meeting.

### **Approval of Minutes**

J. Grieser asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. All were in favor.

### **Public Comment**

The meeting was opened to public comment. J. Grieser made comment to thank Kacey Zeiser for all of her hard work throughout her time at Cuyahoga River Restoration. J. Goodman introduced new employee Nichole Vorisek. J. Grieser thanked public representatives for attending and volunteering their time to attend.

### **Presentations**

#### Hydrilla Update, Mark Warman Cleveland Metroparks

M. Warman gave update on Hydrilla status. Stated that Cleveland Metroparks has invested nearly \$100,000 on Hydrilla management from 2011-2016. Warman passed around sheet of all known areas where Hydrilla is seen, with some marked where the owner is willing to work with CMP for management strategy. M. Warman stated if anyone knew of a missing site to add it to his list. He explained the best pesticide CMP uses targets the green part of the plant and not the tubers which are most problematic. Advisory committee can help by: adding more sites to the list, scheduling training and spreading the word. Public outreach, are we telling people how not the spread it? (Example: washing boots if it

spreads that way) Question asked if there is consideration in bringing back a decontamination program. Mark will talk with the sewer district to do trainings with other water groups, today there are only 3 training programs in the state of Ohio that educate about Hydrilla and decontamination.

J. Grieser introduced Bill Zawiski for his presentation, stating this is only the beginning of a conversation.

#### Review of Geographic Extent of Cuyahoga AOC, Bill Zawiski, OEPA

Delisting starts with remedial action, USEPA has been putting pressure on all states to begin delisting since the whole point of an AOC is termination. Water quality report should be ready by the 2019 anniversary. Some watersheds (ex: Big Creek) are very urbanized and have challenges that might not be able to be overcome. This watershed has some of the best, if not *the* best, watershed coordinators, and the EPA struggles to manage without harming these groups or pushing them aside.

Question: Is the RAP hurting itself by delisting? What really defines the remedial action area? Is there an appropriate time or way to ask if we want to consider looking at different boundaries to the AOC? Tinker's Creek is meeting all criteria except for the physical barrier, which is a natural waterfall. Do we delist that area?

J. Goodman asked if we can still be looking at changing the target criteria, and removing subwatersheds, as well as removing physical boundaries. Zawiski stated the EPA has delisting guidance and they would probably not look favorably on delisting fragments of the AOC. The Cuyahoga navigation channel criterion was changed because it is federally designated and has a different standard. We need to set realistic boundaries regarding what you can fix. Some expectations might not be appropriate.

As for the impact on funding for continuing restoration and protection, the only funding compromised by delisting are those that directly fund AOCs. As some AOCs delist, the AOC-specific money gets larger for other AOCs.

We also need to consider what the people were thinking when they initially came up with the 43 AOCs. Are the OEPA's water quality standards designed to be reasonable and can you implement all necessary standards? F. Greenland stated he endorses shrinking the AOC. Zawiski asked how different is this AOC today from other water bodies situated in the Great Lakes region that are not an AOC? He stated that funding of AOC money to watershed groups is not equal to the money those received who are outside the AOC. J. Goodman shared an e-mail from Mark Loomis, our task group leader at USEPA, re where we are in terms of priority projects and the length of time it could take to accomplish. We should take another look at our priorities if new boundaries are drawn, and look at funding to hire a firm to do the work.

Mr. Zawiski: If we are formally going to ask for a redefinition of the AOC boundaries, it should be directed to Ted Conlin. If you are going forward as a group, come up with a physical justification. Ted won't seek funds until he knows it is necessary.

E. Marsh shared that there are 3-4 different things being discussed. The reason for the AOC in the beginning was because there was concern that the geography of the Great Lakes didn't allow dilution of toxic substances in sediments, biological chemicals of concern, and other considerations. Legacy Act funding is very small compared to GLRI, so if that's all we have to draw on, how do we continue our work?

J. Goodman suggested we officially ask OhioEPA to bring a rough drawing of a potential new AOC boundary, including physical barriers in tributaries, to the next meeting.

M. Borchers moved to so direct OEPA.

Discussion on the motion: Mr. Zawiski said that 6 months is a better time frame because contracting out takes time, and suggested to revise the motion to have the study look at barriers upstream and find a way to identify all barriers. Mr. Kratt stated we would need information such as how high/long culverts are in order to identify those types of barriers.

Ms. Goodman suggested that we'd like to move as quickly as possible on this, since management actions are currently based on the existing boundaries, and the list could change significantly if new boundaries are adopted. If the first step is identifying the boundaries, then that may be something OhioEPA could provide in a shorter time frame. J. Zevenbergen suggested alternative language.

Mr. Borchers withdrew his motion.

Ms. Goodman moved that: "The AOC Advisory Committee directs OhioEPA to identify the barriers in the Cuyahoga AOC that are preventing attainment, present them at the next AOC meeting, and deliver same to the Strategic Implementation Plan subcommittee."

Mr. Borchers seconded Goodman's motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Zawiski stated that OEPA will work with Tetra Tech to get that information.

### **Old & New Business**

J. Grieser stated there was an e-mail vote between this meeting and the previous meeting for her to sign a letter on behalf of the advisory committee to support water funding. That was approved. She also received a request for a letter in support of OSU Sea Grant, copies of which letter were distributed. Chairwoman Grieser hopes to have a vote on her signing the letter to Sea Grant today, to send out. Pam Davis moved to have the letter addressed to all Congressional representatives in the AOC. All in favor, motion passes.

Frank Greenland introduced the Management Action List that Tetra Tech developed, reported that the Strategic Implementation subcommittee reviewed it and passed a motion in their subcommittee to recommend that the Advisory Committee adopt it.

This was developed concerning our current boundaries. Any change in our boundary is going to take a while, so we can try to keep pushing it forward so we can make progress within the current. Ted Conlin has gotten calls from NOAA for some projects, and the hope is that we can keep chipping away at that management action list. Ms. Grieser acknowledges it is confusing that we are approving this management action list that has projects throughout the Area of Concern, but not to approve it will reduce the support that Mr. Conlin is starting to receive from other funders. Mr. Conlin stated his central office didn't see that there needed to be adoption of the management action plan at this time. Ms. Goodman moved to approve the report that includes the management action list in its latest form. All in favor, motion passed.

### **Subcommittee Updates**

### Public Outreach- B. McCleary

Everyone provide input on public outreach and what they are working on, including Project WOW, Wet and Wild. H. Simon is giving a presentation at the Natural History Museum; Ellen Brown-Armstrong is posting on the AOC Facebook page, and asks if you have activities, especially hands on volunteer activities, please share them.

### Strategic Implementation- F. Greenland

Held a committee meeting February 14<sup>th</sup> and he is very happy that the management action plan can be moved forward.

### **OEPA Update - Ted Conlin**

OhioEPA is funding a video about how bad things were, what caused the fire, how much things have improved, then it's going to focus on removal of the two dams.

They are ready to move forward with the removal of the aesthetics and recreation access BUIs. They won't add in Furnace Run until we see what happens with the realignment of the AOC boundaries. The public meeting and public notice will need to be set-up with his agency's Public Information Center.

A secondary video could be made because so much information could be added to the video for a larger program. Would the sewer district be able to fund it? Yes, but the question is how does it relate to AOC and work the sewer district does. Mr. Greenland said he needs to know the desires for a video, theme and what level of funding, if any, is coming from this group? What is the timeline for having an outline for the video that the OEPA is funding? Then we can identify if there are gaps and what they are, to determine if we need a second video. Mr. Conlin is unsure but will get that information back to us. The length of the video he is working on will be about 20 minutes. He needs suggested dates for meeting with PIC people. Ms. Grieser suggested a standalone meeting, after work. Mr. Conlin will get options for meeting dates that PIC will be able to do it, then will pass to CRR and then we will share them with rest of committee.

### **Tetra Tech - Kevin Kratt**

Contract goes through June, but there is not much funding left. Their last major work was to release the report in January, then receiving comments, so the March version is the final report. Are they adding to their work plan or increasing it (aka developing concept plans for the management actions?) He has not heard anything on that score.

### **Cuyahoga River Restoration - Jane Goodman**

Kacey left mid-March, Nichole just started. During the first quarter we finished up our last subgrant, and April 1<sup>st</sup> started our new one. Ms. Goodman spent time in Washington pushing for GLRI continuing funding, spoke with Senator Portman, who is very supportive, said that Senator Brown is the same way. She is working with the Port and USEPA Legacy Act folks to get The Old River Channel sediment remediation project moving. Loomis has replaced Bill Murray as the project manager. The Port is really upset about the delays, and we need this to happen to remove the fish tumor BUI. We staffed the Safety Task Force booth and talked about the AOC to a ton of people at the boat show. River Day is May 20<sup>th</sup>, with twice as many activities as last year. Among the new events this year is a Lockkeepers lunch with a CVNP ranger. River mile signs will be unveiled at Flats East Bank.

CRR has been working with the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission to transfer ownership of their fish habitats. We will try to get the boat in soon, to see if baby fish are floating in and around our habitats. Goodman presented with Akron to Institute of Journalists and Natural Resources. CRR submitted a new NFWF Grant for depaving projects in Kingsbury Run to reduce CSOs that go directly into the ship channel, and have heard that we'll get a new LEPP grant to build a Depaving database and get projects shovel ready. CRR is looking for money or assistance, or both, to continue fish habitat maintenance and monitoring.

The new OEPA subgrant work plan will include fact cards based on projects in the management actions report, fact cards for sub-watersheds, and working on grant applications to find funding, having the public meeting on BUI removals, building a YouTube channel and producing 4-6 minute videos on projects. Russ Gibson wants us to be doing public outreach and press outreach on projects. Footage will go into footage locker to be used in bigger videos. The sewer district sent out the schedule for the next open house so we will have an AOC table there. We plan to do presentations to local governments (at least 4). Jackie Zevenbergen and outreach committee members will have an AOC table at the May 6 Blue Heron event.

### **Events and Sub-watershed news**

Ms. Grieser reported that the AOC national Conference was upbeat. Last year we were in the 2021 "bucket" representing the year we expect to delist. The sooner your bucket year is, the more funding is directed your way. This year we were moved into the 2023 bucket, though we're not sure why. We had a good showing from Ohio areas of concern.

Ms. DeYoung Minnig went to Great Lakes Day in D.C. On the first day everyone talked about successes and how they got their funding and how important GLRI is. The second day was the same day the "skinny budget" came out, so the morale changed drastically. Infrastructure funding for water structures, not just roads and bridges, was the focus.

Ms. Grieser shared that May 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> is the Water Innovation Summit at Cleveland Convention Center, the featured event for the water hacking initiative. There will be a variety of speakers from Great Lakes states.

The July meeting (July 20, 2017 - CVNP Boston Store, 3:30pm - 5:00pm) is scheduled to have post-meeting socializing, and Ms. Grieser is hoping we can target some of the private sector entities we work with to invite them, either to the meeting and the socializing or just the piece afterwards (e.g. Dave Lanzola from Test America).

The October 17 meeting will be at Notre Dame College - Regina Hall, 9am - 10:30am, and is around the same time the Acacia restoration will be complete, so a tour of the site will be offered.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:11am.