



Cuyahoga River AOC Advisory Committee Meeting

October 10, 2017 – 8:30am

Notre Dame College, South Euclid , OH

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by Chairwoman Grieser at 8:30am. Quorum of 13 present.

Present (voting): Jennifer Grieser, Ellen Brown Armstrong, Kate Chapel (for H. Stark,) Jane Goodman, Patrick Gsellman, Frank Greenland, Joseph Hadley, Scott Hardy, Leila Jackson, Rebecca McCleary, Howard Simon, Bryan Stubbs, Jacquelyn Zevenbergen

Present (ex officio): Ted Conlin

Absent: Alison Ball, Meiring Borchers, Kathleen Bradley, Amy Brennan, Tom Denbow, Grace Gallucci, Joe Gregory, Jane Howington, Bill Hughes, Elaine Marsh, Claire Posius, Jan Rybka, Anthony Togliatti,

Staff: Andrew Klooster

Guests: Christina Zdnarsic, Heather Elmer, Ellie Rial, William Carlson, Katie Evans

The minutes of the July meeting were approved by unanimous voice vote.

Old Business

Chairwoman Grieser raised the subject of the re-evaluation of the AOC boundary: At the last meeting it was decided that the Strategic Implementation subcommittee needed to evaluate the feasibility of shrinking the boundaries to reflect reasonably accomplishable targets. At this time, the full Advisory Committee is not formally recommending reducing the area, and, so as to avoid getting distracted with the process such an adjustment would take, that will not be addressed at this meeting, but we will proceed using a mainstem-focused geographic extent for prioritization purposes until the SIP committee makes its recommendations.

She reported that the letters of support and the request for removal of the two BUIs: Public Access and Aesthetics – have been forwarded to OhioEPA. Ted will speak to that in his subcommittee report.

New Business

Subcommittee Updates

Governance subcommittee:

- The Governance Subcommittee met on September 20 at NOACA, and discussed the slate of nominees for next year, expiring terms, reapplications and new applications. It was noted that job changes by members have resulted in multiple members being affiliated with common organizations, and that some tweaking of membership categories, or policies, may be needed to broaden diversity and avoid duplicate or multiple representation.
- The subcommittee made recommendations for appointments and reappointments to the Advisory Committee.

- The election and installation of new members will happen at the January Advisory Committee meeting, date to be determined. Current members who have terms expiring and who are not recommended for reappointment will be notified.
- Subcommittee Chairman Stubbs reported – There are currently 25 members, not counting 3 resignations (Howington, Brennan, and Henry.) Joe Gregory requests that Ana Burns, who now serves as his alternate, be appointed in his place. 13 spots needed to be either reappointed or filled by new appointees for the next term. Re-applications from 8 existing members have been received, and 5 new applications have been submitted.
- Zevenbergen asked if there is a procedure to guarantee that, regardless of where someone works, if they represent a specific watershed group the group will be represented?
- Stubbs responded that the subcommittee approached it with this perspective: Everyone is always welcome to attend every meeting, but the watershed groups can have rotating input in terms of voting roles, otherwise the committee would be over-represented by watershed groups.
- Grieser elaborated: We do include the sponsoring organization in the application process, but we want people to be thinking about entire AOC and not just the watershed they are representing. We cannot represent every municipality on committee, either, and want to get away from focusing on particular areas. For example, we may have a representative of the Central Lake Erie Basin Collaborative represent watershed groups, someone from the Mayors and Managers association representing municipalities, etc. We need to all be thinking about a larger strategy to delist AOC.
- Stubbs reminded that the categories were put in place by OhioEPA, and we try to be fair, and will work on a policy that brings clarity to situations where double duty occurs.

Strategic Implementation subcommittee:

- Greenland reported that a SIP subcommittee meeting is set for October 26th. Two areas of focus are a.) prioritization of management actions and b.) getting down to the business of delisting – identifying the next series of things we can delist, based on guidance and data. He would like the work to center on knowing how close or far we are on a given BUI, what information or data we need, and how we get the resources to do that.
- Conlin suggested that the next BUI we could look at is fish consumption, but it is so tied to sediment contamination and he isn't sure that his agency wants to proceed with one without the other. It might be worthwhile to consider that the way the guidance is written only one fish species is holding us back from BUI and though it's not sampled in Lake Erie there is an advisory in the lacustrary. This suggests a rewrite of the guidance might be the best solution.
- Another possible BUI is Beach Closing/Recreational Access – the way the guidance is written it will take some effort to prove that the majority of the bacteria problem along the beaches or main stem is due to CSOs or storm water runoff, which would allow the “long-term control plan” criteria to be used to remove the BUI. If we can make that connection then we could work on trying to get rid of that one. Ted has a meeting on November 8th with the federal partners to try to figure out the bacteria problem and try to make the argument about recreational use.
- In terms of bacteria: CSO and storm water data is there. Urban storm water is always going to be a source. But there are long-term control plans in place all over area and only so much we can do – or better: what else can we do?

- Gsellman – Delisting doesn’t mean meeting every requirement, it means controls are in place to get there. The point was made that our storm water issues are seemingly typical of every urban stream in Ohio. But we need to prove that we are no different than similarly situated watersheds in other urban areas – maybe we are much worse. We have freshwater mussels in main stem of Cuyahoga so it cannot be all bad. We need to figure this out.
- A third potential removal is the Eutrophication or algae BUI, but Ted considers that this is even harder to do, even if we think that the only algae problem is in the Mogadore Reservoir HUC.
- There was general agreement that we need to fill in the gaps in data for things like fish tumors, dna testing of beaches and mainstem bacteria to identify the source, and updated data for the habitat and aquatic life-related BUIs.
- The SIP committee could look at those three right away.
- Zevenbergen asked how much difference the dam removals would that make toward the BUIs. How much closer are we towards delisting?
- Conlin - It will make no difference in fish consumption because the contaminants are in the fish tissues. Dam removal will not alter that much. It will help aid the migration of fish so may be beneficial for the fish population BUI.
- As for fish tissue, the Old River Channel had three sites tested for fish tumors and had the lowest results (3%) – lower than the main channel (7%) and much lower than Euclid Creek (12%). OhioEPA is trying to get help from GLNPO to understand the fish tumor problem. There were issues in Black River and Ashtabula where analysis showed fish tumors trending down towards delisting numbers but then went back up after further testing. No clear answers as to why. Federal partners have not given guidance on benthos and fish tumors. It’s a question of how much GLNPO can, or will, help with funding followup after-remediation sampling, or saying what the sample size should be, and the ages of sampled tissue should be.
- Stubbs asked where there are deficits in terms funding for addressing these BUIs and whether an organization like the Water Alliance could help. A priority list would be helpful. Given the ongoing work, how can we increase data collection and analysis. What other sources are there? Perhaps a foundation grant?
- Conlin said that the biggest asks and needs should be geared towards the lowest hanging fruit in terms of BUIs. Be able to state “here’s what we need, and here’s how much it will cost.
- Ultimately, it’s best to think of two uses of funding – one for studies and one for actions. There’s not a lot of funding for studies.

Public Outreach subcommittee:

- McCleary reported on the subcommittee’s August 22nd meeting, with outreach updates and event feedback and attendance. Ohio Sea Grant provided a fact sheet on the AOC. Jackie and Becky working on 2019 celebration. Haven’t set another meeting for next year yet.
- Hardy, who will be the new subcommittee Chair, suggested that something that would help is input from the larger committee in terms of specific tasks that the subcommittee can do to help achieve goals or further the mission.
- Goodman reported that the committee has made a redesign of the website and exhibit banner a priority to make it more of a public relations tool and less technical. She will adjust the subgrant work plan to accommodate the updates.
- Gsellman stressed that we do not change the functional part of website just the public face.

- A general discussion followed: Though it's Important, in terms of the broader messaging, to convey a message of "significant gains have been made but significant work remains" We do not want to send out false signals. Great recovery story but even after controlling for CSOs beach advisories will still occur. All delisting news has to be tempered with reality that nothing is going to be solved completely. Still have to be vigilant.
- Zevenbergen asked should outreach simply be about what we are doing or should it be educational to teach people things they can do to help us reach our goals?
- Goodman responded that outreach is telling people who we are and what we do, but education is teaching people what they can do. The committee does both. The AOC subcommittee should focus on the AOC and BUIs. We do not want, or need, to duplicate messaging that other groups are doing in educating about storm water.
- Brown Armstrong: Depending on the location of events we could have quite a few people not living in the AOC so that is where education comes in – message needs to home in on AOC.
- McCleary reported that more than seven tons of garbage were collected on National Public Lands Day.
- Stubbs mentioned the disconnect between this group's mission being working on delisting and the broader geography that acts on the system.

Ohio EPA:

- Committee wrote recommendation to remove two BUIs, OhioEPA submitted the request, and though we petitioned GLNPO to get to it before the end of the federal fiscal year they are still holding on to it. Expecting that it should be coming shortly.
- November 8th federal-state meeting. Hopefully have them more frequently.
- Changes made to state guidance document on how to remove BUIs and delist AOC. Mostly pertained specifically to Maumee. New removal target for degradation of benthos in dredged river systems for all AOCs. Probably not a huge impact on Cuyahoga AOC.
- Questions were raised about direct lake tributaries like Euclid Creek that aren't dredged. Ted responded that if degradation of benthos was tied to sediment contamination and the contaminated sediment could be removed by dredging, then it could be removed in Euclid Creek. Jane reminded that the RAP tried to remove a BUI in specific areas but was told that a BUI can only be removed when it meets the target across the whole AOC.
- Video – That can keeps getting kicked down the road. No purchase order to start working on it. July 1st was supposed to be start date and now it is October 10th. Soon hopefully. Met with script writer and video editor recently.

Cuyahoga River Restoration Subgrant Report:

- Full AOC meeting in July. Outreach subcommittee on August 22nd. SIP committee September 12. Governance committee on September 20th.
- Managed AOC nominee application process. Submitted previous quarterly report. Working on financials for past quarter.
- Andrew working on NEORS Green Infrastructure Grant for Polish American Cultural Center (CSO reduction into mainstem.)
- Met with Division of Forestry for invasive species funding.
- Partner work: Doan Brook, CLEB,

- Grant applications – GIG, green infrastructure/depaving grant in Buckeye, grant for reconfiguring fish cages in Cuyahoga, CAC grant for River Day and 2019 Cuyahoga River book and ebook
- Gave away around 150 trees on Saturday at Tinker’s Creek Watershed Fest.
- Planting trees at Astorhurst on October 28th.
- Helping communities fight riparian setback waiver requests.
- Memorial event for Phil.
- Presentation to water Management Association of Ohio on November 2nd
- US EPA and Tetratek had dredge reuse design charrette – for other Lake Erie direct tributaries and other AOCs who have traditionally put dredge in lake and now not sure where to put it.
- Helped with education signage for North Royalton Wetland Project
- Christian Science Monitor story of recovery. Press release on BUI removals. Plain Dealer on tree canopy and slipped in AOC.
- Worked with Irishtown Bend design team to implement fish habitat
- Updated webpages regarding BUI removal requests
- Webinar on federal budget impacts on our work.
- Have been talking with elected officials about protecting our ability to come up with local match funds which is what we really need to move these projects forward.
- Advocacy in Washington: Met with White House senior staff on infrastructure and tried to tie waterways into infrastructure. Reminded that we have a treaty with Canada to do AOC restorations. Met with Ways and Means as well.
- Started getting video together – shoot at Acacia; collecting pieces of footage.
- August e-news: 1777 recipients and almost 400 opens. Facebook page followers grew by 9% last quarter to 133 followers. Average of four shares per day. 403 to 422 on Twitter. Instagram 63 to 80 followers.
- Funding on track
- Working on annual report
- Sustainable Cleveland Summit focused on 2019 celebration– collected those ideas
- We have a fundraiser a week from Friday at Sheraton

2018 meeting schedule – consistent or move around? Consistency favored but can really impact some individuals if conflicting schedules. Anyone with potential conflicts contact Jenn soon.

Motion to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 10 AM.