



## **MINUTES**

### **Cuyahoga River AOC Advisory Committee Meeting November 19, 2015 Canalway Center, Cuyahoga Heights**

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

Present: Jennifer Grieser, Meiring Borchers, Bob Gardin, Mike Johnson, Claire Posius, Grace Gallucci, Kathleen Bradley, Jenita McGowan, Jane Goodman, Bill Hughes, Amy Brennan, Patrick Gsellman, Frank Greenland, Jan Rybka, Howard Simon, Ellen Brown-Armstrong, Laura Minnig (for Joe Hadley), Tom Denbow, Joe Gregory, Bryan Stubbs, Ana Burns (for Babette Gowda), Alison Ball (for Elaine Price)

Ex-Officio: Ed Wilk, Ted Conlin

Absent: Derek Schafer, Elaine Marsh, Rebecca McCleary

Staff: Kacey Zeiser, Peter Bode

Guests: Kevin Kratt, , Kevin Kayle, Scott Hardy

### **Quorum**

With 22 of 25 voting members present, a quorum was reached for any actions requiring a vote.

### **Welcome**

Chairwoman Grieser gave thanks to all Committee members and Subcommittee chairs for their hard work and dedication to the Cuyahoga River AOC Advisory Committee in its first year. The transition has gone smoothly because of everyone's great work.

### **Approval of Minutes**

J. Goodman explained the only change from the minutes distributed online was to change the location typo from "Cuyahoga Heights" to "Cuyahoga Falls." Hard copies distributed at this meeting reflect that change.

The minutes from the July meeting were approved unanimously upon a motion from A. Brennan and a second from F. Greenland.

### **Public Comment**

The meeting was opened to public comment. No comments were given.

### **Subcommittee Updates**

**Governance** - B. Stubbs gave a brief update for this Subcommittee, which included the next meeting date. The next meeting will be held on December 9, 2015 from 1-3pm at the NOACA Offices (1299 Superior Ave, Cleveland). The Subcommittee will be reviewing candidate applications for appointments to next year's Advisory Committee. Attendance for Governance Subcommittee members is must. However, all other Committee members interested in attending are welcome.

Public Outreach - C. Posius said this Subcommittee wants to and should be involved in publications and public documents. Once there are documents to review, the Subcommittee will hold meetings to discuss.

Strategic Implementation - F. Greenland reported this Subcommittee met in on October 19. At this meeting, the Subcommittee reviewed the delisting guidance document. The SIP Subcommittee created a comment letter, which will be sent to the whole Advisory Committee. This comment letter recommends finalizing the guidance document, as all previous comments made by the SIP Subcommittee have been addressed. T. Conlin says guidance document is ready to be finalized by OEPA. He suggests the Committee accepts the document as is. If, in the future, the Committee decides to propose other local targets, it can do so at that time. T. Conlin explained that declaring the intent to look at local targets will require a timetable for OEPA and slow the process for approving the guidance document. He recommends providing modified local targets at a later date, if that is what the Committee decides.

The Subcommittee also discussed the future direction for delisting. Two BUIs, local access and aesthetics, are ready for delisting. A few other BUIs are almost there. T. Conlin suggests the Committee delays delisting these BUIs pending the results of the Black River's attempt to remove these BUIs (fish consumption and eutrophication - algae). F. Greenland also noted there is potential to remove 2 HUCs, Mogadore and Furnace Run. The Subcommittee recommends delisting those HUCs. In the future, F. Greenland said the SIP Subcommittee will look at other BUIs, create management actions, and prioritize the actions. Next meeting will discuss these topics, as well as Tetra Tech's involvement and the local target issue. F. Greenland to circulate an agenda soon. The next strategic implementation committee meeting will be held December 15, 2015 at 9 am at EMSC (E 49th St, Cleveland, OH).

A question was raised about the exact process for removing HUCs and BUIs. T. Conlin clarified that the SIP Subcommittee has to find which are meeting targets and propose removal to the whole AOC Advisory Committee. Once the Advisory Committee approves to begin the process, T. Conlin will then prepare removal recommendation, which must be approved by central agency and regional agency. There are also public meetings and public comment period before final approval.

After this clarification, the Committee decided 2 BUIs and 2 HUCs are ready to be removed.

T. Conlin announced that he is already in the middle of the recommendation letter for the aesthetics BUI. However, he is stuck trying to write the evidence in the narrative, because there is nothing scientific that can support the argument. He believes a survey poll of the public on conditions of the AOC will provide the evidence he needs. Tetra Tech has been hired to help with this. The Committee made some suggestions on other sources to gather data for support such as spill reports from the US Coast Guard and floating debris reports from NEORSD. The Committee also suggested talking to those who utilize Merwin's Wharf launch and the rental place near Shooter's. T. Conlin could also talk to the County Dragon Boat Club and the Rowing Foundation. A. Brennan recommended the poll be administered to this audience.

Vice-Chair Borchers motioned to recommend pursuing the removal of the Aesthetic BUI. Vote was unanimously approved after second from F. Greenland.

A. Brennan motioned to recommend pursuing removal of the local access BUI. Vote was unanimously approved after second by J. Goodman.

Vice-Chair Borchers motioned to proceed with removal process of the two HUCs, Mogadore and Furnace Run. Vote was unanimously approved after second from F. Greenland.

T. Conlin requests that the process for removal of these BUIs happen at the same time due to one round of public meetings and comments will be easier.

F. Greenland finished his updates by saying those BUIs and HUCs were the easy decisions to remove. The rest could be good debate within the Committee for the rest.

Question was raised about communication between Subcommittees. Committee agreed if there was something ready to be messaged to the public, the Public Outreach Committee should be informed. NEORSRD will also help with the messages.

J. Goodman asked the question, "How do you tell what is NEORSRD CSO in the river or what is coming from Akron CSOs?" F. Greenland explained that all we know is that there is a load and it's coming in. It is hard to trace where the load is coming from. However, NEORSRD has new equipment that can do DNA analysis of the bacteria. P. Gsellman also confirmed the Akron Consent Decree is now an approved and enforceable document.

### **OEPA Update**

Chairwoman Grieser noted that these updates need to be included on the agenda for our meetings, although they haven't been in the past.

T. Conlin is the new coordinator for the Cuyahoga River AOC. He thanked E. Wilk for his work to date with this AOC. T. Conlin has been working on AOCs for 15 years, including the Black River and Ashtabula River. He has developed management action lists and successfully removed BUIs. He will rely on help from this Committee for knowledge of the Cuyahoga River and to fill data gaps. He is excited to show success in this river.

Tetra Tech has been hired to help fill data gaps, suggest where applicable targets might be, prioritize projects, etc. Kevin Kratt of Tetra Tech will help T. Conlin as the company has a gap contract thru March 2016.

### **Cuyahoga River Restoration**

J. Goodman reported that CRR last subgrant extension ended September 15. During this time, CRR carried out AOC-related activities that included:

- Working with subcommittees and aiding with secretariat services
- Website updates and newsletters
- Contributing to external working groups, like the Safety Task Force to create a brochure for the "less dangerous" locations for paddlers in the shipping channel
- Working with central Lake Erie basin collaborative
- Participating with the City's Year of Clean Water and Cleveland's Forest Tree Plan
- Updating maps and data
- Providing the annual report to Columbus
- Presenting the October symposium, which included AOC updates

CRR is currently in the gap grant period, which runs thru March 2016. This grant amount has been cut in half from the previous amounts; Tetra Tech was brought in to do the data crunching CRR does not have the capacity to do. The work plan for this grant includes:

- Ongoing support to the committee, i.e. helping Governance Subcommittee with next year's candidates and other general information gathering and back office work
- Creating fact sheets for delisting status for 10 of the HUCs, fact sheets for public officials and general public, and as many as 10 brochures for HUCs
- Maintaining the AOC website
- Writing and distributing newsletters

In addition to this work, CRR has worked on the following projects:

- Completing the install of the first round of new fish habitats
- Writing and applying for a new grant for removing impervious surfaces through volunteer training events and projects
- Executing canopy cover and riparian restoration trainings in the Black, Maumee, and Cuyahoga watersheds next spring
- Master habitat project implementation plan for Cuyahoga AOC
- Comprehensive habitat plan for the navigation channel
- The Cooperative Weed Management Area GLRI project

Questions were asked about the master habitat project implementation for the AOC. J. Goodman explained tributary groups should follow the format of the Stage 2 report and these plans should focus on the "what and how." This master plan is due by March. P. Gsellman requested CRR send out a form or table to help tributary groups make sure they are providing the correct information.

### **Announcements**

Subwatersheds: C. Posius invited everyone to the Friends of Euclid Creek holiday party, which will take place at the Mayfield Village Community Center, December 1 from 6-8pm.

B. Gardin provided updates on the Ikea development. He recently met with representatives from the store. He said the conclusion of those meetings was that if the company decides to build on that site, he will give them a letter of recommendation as long as Ikea mitigates as many acres of wetlands as possible. B. Gardin said he would provide the company a list of potential mitigation sites/projects. He realizes it will be hard to find the amount of acres for mitigation within the watershed. He also reported Big Creek is continuing work on their watershed action plan, primarily with funding from NEORSD.

Vice-Chair Borchers gave a brief update for the Mill Creek watershed. Recent projects for them include a grant to restore Wolf Creek area, an Alcoa grant to plant 300 trees at Mt. Zion for reforestation of the wetland, and a grant to install signage throughout the watershed.

J. McGowan announced the grand prize drawing for the Clean Water Sweepstakes and Tour is happening on December 9 at 5:30pm at Rustbelt Reclamation. The City also just published the long term tree plan for Cleveland. December 2 is first implementation meeting. The City is also working on an RFP for a tree inventory for street trees.

F. Greenland stated NEORSD should have a final ruling from the Supreme Court by the end of the year. H. Simon reported that he went to a recent Lyndhurst City Council meeting to encourage the city to not appeal the ruling. He expressed that it would have been helpful to have better data or facts to share.

A. Brennan informed the Committee that they are seeking a grant from the Gund Foundation to hire additional staff for West Creek and Chagrin River watershed partners. This staff person will be available to help other watersheds and act as a regional watershed service.

J. Goodman provided an update for E. Price. The County fish habitats have been installed, 36 structures on the lower part of the river. J. Goodman also provided an update on the annual Doan Brook meeting, which had about 100-120 people in attendance. The Doan Brook fishing derby that took place earlier this year engaged many people in underserved communities. She explained the event teaches kids how to fish and connects them with local fishing groups. In some cases, subsistence fishing is how these kids feed themselves. J. Goodman encouraged this group to think about an event like that in other areas. M. Johnson says he knows large refugee communities are subsistence fishing and eating fish that haven't been studied. Vice-Chair Borchers informed the group that he is working with CWRU students to create surveys to figure out the who, how, and why people are fishing.

#### Events

Kevin Kayle is presenting the results of his GLRI project, "If You Build It, They Will Come" on December 1 from 6-7:30p at the Watershed Stewardship Center. K. Kayle will detail the results of his four year project on fish populations in the lower river. J. Goodman will put the final report on the website or contact K. Kayle for a digital copy. One conclusion of the report is fish are using the shallow water habitats in this section of the river; however, there is a lack of these habitat areas.

The Great Lakes AOC Conference is being held March 2-3 in Dearborn, MI. Last year, travel was reimbursed by Great Lakes Commission, who will offer it again this year.

#### **Cuyahoga AOC Committee 2016 Meeting Schedule**

Dates for next year's meetings will be Jan 21, Apr 21, July 21 (tentative), and Oct 20. Chairwoman Grieser said the meetings will be at 3pm next year.

Chairwoman Grieser also proposed a half day meeting for the July date for a field trip to the Black River. The Committee liked this idea, but requested another date in July be chosen.

E. Wilk thanked the Committee for their hard work this year. He then passed the AOC hat to T. Conlin as the new Cuyahoga AOC coordinator.

#### **Adjourn**

B. Hughes motioned to adjourn at 10:29. J. Goodman seconded.  
Meeting adjourned at 10:29am.