



Cuyahoga River Area of Concern Advisory Committee

MINUTES

AOC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

April 8, 2019

Brushwood Pavilion, Richfield

Attendance

Members: Ana Burns, Jenn Greiser, Scott Hardy, Jordyn Stoll, Elizabeth Hiser, Kevin Kratt, Kate Chapel, Katie Evans, Howard Simon, Robert Brand, Dan B. Brown, Bill Hughes, Frank Greenland, Joe Hadley, Becky McCleary, Meiring Borchers, Elaine Price (for Alison Ball)

Ex Officio: Russ Brandenburg, Curt Wagner

Guests: Stacey Faile (OHM Advisors), Mark Loomis (USEPA), Lynn Garrity (OLEC), TJ Mack (Float the River), Victoria Mills (Doan Brook Watershed Partners), John McGovern (public, education K-12)

Staff: Carolyn Krause, Jane Goodman, Nikole Davis

Meeting opened 9:05

Introductions

Chairwoman Greiser clarified – we have two individuals here from from sewer district (but only one will be voting to maintain one vote per organization rule)

Approval of Minutes of January 22, 2019 – moved and seconded, motion passed unanimously at 9:09am

Presentations

Presentation by OHM Advisors Karlin Danielson & Nathan Zgnilec – Innovative Approach to Real-Time Bacteria Monitoring in NE Ohio: Seeking Your Input

Real time indicators of water quality

Monitoring equipment with realtime telemetry – can see data continuously

For managers and as public interface – whether water is safe for human contact and swimming
Approach comes from paper in South Africa tributaries – developing tools for rapid bacteria screening

Ecoli levels and tryptophan as parameter – tryptophan fluoresces, can monitor fluorescence levels

First project – Rouge river bacterial levels with tryptophan fluorescence compared to ecoli levels
Collecting readings every minute

Results – tryptophan peaks mirror flow peaks; optical brightener levels (from clothing treatment -indicates residential runoff instreams) levels dip due to dilution; 2 peaks possibly related to cso's upstream

Tryptophan is a good indicator of ecoli levels at baseflow; turbidity is a better measure in wet weather flow, where turbidity is less predictive; tryptophan is a new measurable parameter that may improve monitoring

Present water quality parameters on visual map, eg specific conductance, which is able to show leakage from a sewer line tha runs under the huron river during wet weather compared to base flow

Another project – Clinton R Watershed Information System, Macomb County Michigan

Using data and monitoring to set target levels of pathogens

Question from audience – how deep are kayak-mounted sensors; answer – can set at any depth, target depth ideally is 1 m because they need to be shaded but you can raise them when needed

Presentation today – opportunities in NEO, seeking input from regional stakeholders on how these types of studies would be most helpful to this area

YSI xylem, Cleveland Water Alliance

Want to hear where you have ongoing monitoring programs or areas of concern e.g. beaches with high levels, where these methods could provide value

Take questions:

Q from Mark Loomis – you present 2 things, 1 source control 2 real-time monitoring; which method(s) are actually valid? What do people actually need for decision making? Is real-time monitoring for an entire watershed actually worth it, compared to intermittent monitoring for a few sites?

A from Nathan Z – maintaining public heath, keeping people out of water when dangerous and letting them in when safe; one problem is that systems behave differently from season-to-season and storm-to-storm, so these tools may provide a better picture.

Presentation by Rachel Spadafore from EnviroScience: *Behind the Bulkhead Concept Plans*

Fish need habitat with river and pool morphology. In our design concept plans, our goals were to create differences in flow velocity and a variety of habitat to encourage macroinvertebrate diversity, shallow water which is key for foraging opportunities; increase fish reproductive opportunities and provide refuge from predators.

Scranton Peninsula West Site Concept Plan:

- Take advantage of existing bulkhead deficiencies to create stream-like habitat behind bulkhead, protection from shipping lanes, calmer water and shallow water habitat.
- Cut windows into naturally deficient areas of existing bulkhead allowing flow in.
- Natural streambank stabilization at the northern end of site. The northern stretch of the site is not behind bulkhead. Currently this section of streambank is natural, but heavily disturbed low-quality. This design will fill in the lower bank and cut back the top bank to create a 2:1 slope instead of the existing steep slope.
- Create shallow stream habitat behind the bulkhead. Install riffle morphology; the site has essentially no gradient change so this would be a “modified riffle” rather than a true riffle.
- Provide public access on landward site, leaving existing bulkhead in place.

Center Street Swing Bridge Site Concept Plan:

This site plan is very similar to the Scranton Peninsula site plan, but the site is not publicly accessible. The plan proposes to cut the bulkhead on the upstream side of site, and create wetlands behind the bulkhead for fish habitat and to filter contaminants.

Q – If the stability of the bulkhead is already compromised and you cut it more, how do you ensure you don't undermine it fully?

A – This plan is purely conceptual at this point; you would need to do a thorough engineering analysis before construction. From our survey we found that some areas are quite stable and could be cut without destabilization.

Q – Who owns the bulkhead?

A – Jane Goodman – Scranton Peninsula site is 80% owned by Geis partnership (Thunderbird development) 10% is a piece of parcel optioned to Great Lake Brewing where they intend to put beer garden. The Geis partnership is hoping that we (CRR nonprofit) will end up owning/taking title to the property long-term; this point is undecided. We have board meeting tomorrow to discuss how liability would be handled. There's CMAG grant funding to incorporate a trail into the development. The property owner agrees there would be option to pull edge back on land. The Thunderbird development will be mixed-use residential development with trail. The Carter Road bridge property is owned by the city of Cleveland. They just received the first presentation of the conceptual design plan but they're onboard with putting habitat on that property. Comment - Responsibility for bulkhead resides with property owner.

Q – Since plants need sunlight, has there been any discussion of the effect that installing buildings will have on sunlight availability for plantings?

A – It's a north-south property, the northern part is where development might be. Partial shade is beneficial for streams so it's not a bad thing as long as there's enough light for vegetation.

Q – Mark Loomis – If you build it fish will come, but is there an actual ecological need? Is there data that shows that fish are not able to get from the lake to streams and actually need this site as a stopover? Is this where we want habitat? Migratory birds like to show up, then you have bird droppings in that parking lot. Is it just nice or do we actually need it?

A – Rachel - EnviroScience was focusing on habitat connectivity; more connectivity is needed in the Cuyahoga River. This project doesn't have to just be here, similar projects could be implemented up and downstream using elements from the conceptual designs we made.

Jane Goodman – This is as needed as any other management action on the list. We know species diversity in the ship channel is less than it is on either end. It has been posited that this is because there's no shallow habitat. Sunfish might be able to reproduce in these sites.

Public Comment

Tori Mills from Doan Brook Watershed – Committee members are invited to stakeholder meetings about projects Doan Brook Watershed Partners are doing, planning and dreaming, including the Doan Estuary Feasibility Study. Ms Mills provided a handout with maps showing the location of this project. Stakeholder meetings will begin in May. Committee members are invited to attend and encouraged to spread the word. Anyone interested can contact Victoria Mills for more details by email mills@doanbrookpartnership.org or by phone 216.325.7781. Partners on the estuary project include the Port of Cleveland, Cleveland Metroparks, the sewer district and the City of Cleveland.

Max Herzog with Cleveland Water Alliance – We just completed a competition, Erie Hack, activating early stage technology solutions for Lake Erie water projects. The next competition is June 5 in Detroit. On June 20 the final competition is here in Cleveland. This competition will include presentations about the top 9-10 innovations from previous competitions. The event will be at Windows on the River on the west bank of the flats from morning to early evening (times TBD).

Old Business

Jenn Greiser - Between meetings the committee voted by email on the CRR Workplan Letter of Support. Since that vote, the Ohio EPA proposed adding more money to subgrant, so the committee will have to vote again between meetings on the updated plan. Jane Goodman will discuss this further during her report. Please don't reply-all when you vote.

New Business

Joy Mulinex has stepped down from the AOC committee because she's now on the state level and doesn't think it's fit to give more time to one committee than another.

Subcommittee Updates

Public Outreach Subcommittee Update

There are lots of upcoming events:

- Wednesday, April 10 – Earth Fest at KSU
- Saturday, April 13 – Rails to Trails at Merwins Wharf
- April 16 - River Rat Revelry in Cuyahoga Falls
- May 18 – River Day evening fundraiser for CRR at GAR. River Day daytime activities are listed at crookedriverday.org and on the CRR website (cuyahogariver.org).
- Saturday, June 22 – Anniversary Celebrations - River Festival in town; Merwins Wharf happy hour at 4:30
- July 9 - Ashtabula river tour
- Friday July 19 - BUI removal Fish fry, more information will be available closer to event

Jenn G – these are just the events where the AOC will have a presence. There are many more events that we can't be at.

25 different events, east bank, west bank, all over river, month leading up to anniversary weekend
A lot will be going on at Rivergate park, working on lineup of events on the day, including Water Trail designation ceremony.

Strategic Implementation Subcommittee Update – F. Greenland

SIP subcommittee has not met since last AOC meeting, and will meet before next meeting.

There's a lot going on with multiple BUIs, so we'll use the next meeting to provide updates. The first management action status report is about to come out. These reports will routinely track every project phase.

BUI 10 (recreational use) – We have looked at the guidance and data, and compiled data to match guidance, including TMDL bacteria levels for the Cuyahoga and Rocky Rivers, and the CSO control plan. The next step is to piece together data from different sources - Past TMDLs for Cuyahoga, complete list of actions for Cuyahoga.

As is the case with the fish consumption BUI removal, where it will be important to provide information to the public about following existing fish consumption guidelines, (there was a headline in the Plain Dealer that just said "fish safe to eat.") we need to make sure to educate the public that the eventual removal of BUI 10 doesn't simply mean, "beaches safe to use." People will still need to be aware of safety advisories for beach use.

OEPA/OLEC Update

Lynn Garrity – Ohio Lake Erie Commission Update

We're getting close to filling Chad's position. We had interviews, and the recommendations have gone to HQ. The job should be offered in the next few weeks, and the new hire will start onboarding by end of May. Will let the committee know who the "new Chad" is as soon as possible.

Wants to emphasize AOC priorities:

The priority from OEPA's standpoint is completing the management action list for all BUIs. If the committee wants to add any more actions to list, do it soon. We need to see:

- Continual progression of BUI evaluation and determination of BUI removals.
- Completion of management actions as applicable, including those currently on the list and any added to list.

OEPA just received the report on the algae BUI from TetraTech. We're looking at guidance and targets and will work with SIP to present that info and figure out next steps.

Summary of BUI status

BUI	Status	Tentative Timeline
1 – Fish Consumption	Removed	
3 – Fish Populations	Management actions, evaluation of OEPA data	2019-2024
4 – Fish Tumors	2019 FWS sampling study	2019-2023
6 – Benthos	Management actions, evaluation of OEPA data	2019-2024
7 - Navigational Dredging	Evaluation of data	2019-2020
8 – Eutrophication	Evaluation of BUI conducted, recommendation of removal review	2019
10a - Beach Closings	Initial data assembled by NEORSD, state initial review	2019-2020
14	Management actions, evaluation of OEPA data	2019-24

The focus in 2019 will be BUIs 8 (eutrophication) and 10a (beach closings).

The Governor's office is very interested in what we're doing right now. Lynn's new supervisor, Joy, is working very closely with governor's office.

We're starting to track management actions. This is a way to stay on board with what everyone else is doing. There are 16 actions currently on the list. Half are in design-development phase, and for the other half we're assembling data and figuring out how to proceed. OEPA will provide quarterly updates to the AOC committee on all projects. These reports are also provided to state and federal levels. OEPA will send requests to all action implementers for a very brief snapshot for those quarterly reports. Lynn will send everyone a table that was too small to read on her powerpoint slide.

The Canal Diversion Dam /Route 82 Dam removal could be the first shovel ready project.

Mark Loomis update

A congressional metric is how many AOCs have all their BUIs complete. Some metrics have no actions/management actions on the ground, only monitoring needed. For example, for the fish tumors and deformities BUI, it's very unlikely we will remediate a site to contribute to removing this BUI. Will check with Lynn and the new coordinator, walk through decision making process of budgeting with new management action projects, and present a 15 minute walkthrough to the AOC.

On September 11-12, the AOC Conference for all the Great Lakes AOCs will be in Cleveland. Registration should be set up in the next month or so. The agenda is in the works. This event will showcase the Cuyahoga AOC. There will be a dinner cruise on the Cuyahoga, and a field tour the day before (Sept 10). Around the beginning of May will have rough agenda and registration.

There will be a poster session, which is an opportunity to highlight projects and research. Request members to reach out to students, anyone you know who may want to present a poster.

Q – Will there be an application for the poster session?

A – Yes, there will be but it's not up yet.

Q – Will there be themed topics?

A – Yes, this will be available on the agenda in May. There will be some panel-style discussions, not just presentations all day long. The speakers will be local as much as possible. There will be breakout tables for with a half hour for specific BUIs, etc.

J Goodman Update on what Cuyahoga River Restoration did for the AOC in the first quarter of 2019 (January – March)

Tonight –Gorge dam update at 6:30p at the Cuyahoga Falls Natatorium

Tomorrow Jordyn and staff will be at KSU's Earthfest

Introduced new part-time staff member Nikole Davis

Will have an AOC table at the April 20 event at the Zoo

First quarter presentations to a few city councils; Cleveland last Tuesday April 2 with Matt and Jim Ridge, University Heights and Bratenahl. Carolyn has built a database with the dates and times of all the municipalities' Council meetings, will coordinate with Outreach committee and anyone else to help do AOC update presentations to councils.

Presented to Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative – fish habitat design project with students; Western Reserve Resource Council; Metroparks watershed stewardship volunteers.

Setup with Coast Guard at boat show, talking to people about the AOC and fish habitat

Film festival – 3 days, gathering people's thoughts on AOC and water in general, and had a very diverse group of people at this event.

City Club of Cleveland forum – getting more diversity in environmental work

March Outreach committee meeting

Working on expanded AOC subgrant workplan to 18 months through the end of September 2020, which means preparing for a possible 2020 AOC symposium, potential additional BUI removals, and work on habitats on the management actions list, do or get a few more conceptual designs possibly at 2-3 more sites on Arcelor Mittal property.

Will be redesigning the AOC website; have a group that wants to do it for us, we design they build.

Had lots of talks with tori about doan brook estuary

Developed signage for West Creek where 3 watersheds meet along Beachwood park trail

Working with CLEB on NPS-IS plan for Cleveland-Cuyahoga River HUC12

A lot of media; stories with Ideastream; Stormwater Magazine article; American Rivers; last Friday interview with NYT reporter approaching story from travel angle, WTAM radio interview yesterday; more media scheduled.

Have been asked to do many walking and water tours for conferences coming in after June; setting aside some OEPA subgrant funds for boat rentals or tickets to do those tours.

Spent 2 weeks in Washington DC for Great Lakes days and National League of Cities environmental advocacy committee; visits on the hill, met with congressional staffers and representatives.

Announcements pertinent to BUI removal activities

Most events already covered

F Greenland - Have MAP tracking sheet, know what's moving and what's not, need to find out why ones not moving aren't. What do we do as design process unfolds?

Lynn Garrity – will check in on which projects are or aren't proceeding; may not proceed on every project on list depending on funding and results.

F Greenland – stormwater masterplans are underway locally and regionally, will shed more light on benefits of certain projects.

L Garrity – OEPA is working on factsheets for 50th anniversary, river-specific not AOC-specific; highlight work and progress of Cuyahoga

Cuyahoga AOC Committee 2019 Meeting Schedule:

July 9, time tbd (fieldtrip to Ashtabula AOC, meeting location to ride bus, tbd) working with Jill Bartolotta with Ashtabula; will poll who wants to carpool, will provide buses from a central location, lunch and meeting

Oct 8, 9am - Trailside Program Center in Brecksville reservation (disregard location in agenda, that was a typo)

Cuyahoga River named as most improved river – American Rivers

Ideastream and WCPN has an entire schedule of related programming through end of June. Jane will send around.

Jenn Greiser – have had requests from Senator Brown's office for suggestions for legislation he could sponsor acknowledging 50th anniversary. Please contact Jenn and Jane if you can help with this.

Last item – after meeting take group picture of AOC advisory committee members and ex-officio

Motion to adjourn, moved, seconded, passed, meeting adjourned 10:37

AGENDA

Quarterly Advisory Committee Meeting

Introduction

Approval of Minutes of January 22, 2019

Presentation

- OHM Advisors (Karlin Danielson & Nathan Zgnilec) / Cleveland Water Alliance (Max Herzog) – Innovative Approach to Real-Time Bacteria Monitoring in NE Ohio: Seeking Your Input
- EnviroScience (Rachel Spadafore or Julie Bingham) – Behind the Bulkhead Concept Plans

Public Comment

Old Business

CRR Workplan Letter of Support

New Business

Subcommittee Updates

Governance – B. Stubbs

Public Outreach – S. Hardy

Strategic Implementation – F. Greenland

OEPA/OLEC Update

L. Garrity, Ohio Lake Erie Commission

J. Goodman, Cuyahoga River Restoration

Announcements pertinent to BUI delisting activities

Events

June 22: Lots of fun!

June 24th, 1-5pm: River Rally fieldtrips (Join us at Merwin's at 4p)

July 19, 4-7pm: Celebration of BUI 1 (Fish Consumption) Removal @ E. 55th

September 10-12: Great Lakes AOC Conference @ Windows on the River

Cuyahoga AOC Committee 2019 Meeting Schedule:

July 9, time tbd (fieldtrip to Ashtabula AOC, meeting location to ride bus, tbd)

Oct 8, 9am (~~Brushwood Lodge @ Furnace Run, Summit Metroparks~~) Trailside Program Center, Cleveland Metroparks Brecksville Reservation

Adjourn