



## **Cuyahoga River AOC Advisory Committee**

### **MINUTES**

**10.16.2023**

Himelright Lodge @ Cascade Valley Metro Parks  
1212 Cuyahoga St., Akron, OH 44313  
Quarterly Advisory Committee Meeting (9a-10:30a)

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#### **Introductions**

##### **Attendees:**

Voting Members: Sarah Barrow (alt. for N. Lopez), Carly Beck, Ana Burns, Pamela Davis (alt. for J. MacDonald), Frank Greenland, Jennifer Grieser, Pat Gsellman, Joe Hadley, Scott Hardy, Bill Hughes, Julianne Kurdila, Stephen Love, Samantha Martin (virtual), Erica Matheny, Bryce Pulley, Elaine Price, Mike Sekerak (alt. for R. Brand), Megan Smith, Jordyn Stoll (virtual), Katie Wells, Tom Rayburn, Elaine Marsh

Ex-Officio/Resource: Matt Acre, Amber Bellamy, Hannah Boesinger, Kristin Hall, Brian Hinterberger, Leah Medley (virtual), Beth Sparks-Jackson (virtual),

Guests: Laura Bonnell, Donna Friedman, Ramsey Langford, Paul Trulio (alt. for E. Price), Heather Ullinger (alt. for P. Gsellman), Christina Znidarsic (alt. for A. Burns), Rebecca Wilkerson (alt. for M. Smith)

##### **Approval of Minutes of July 17, 2023**

*Motion to approve by B. Hughes, seconded by A. Burns. Motion passes with all in favor.*

##### **Public Comment**

##### **Presentation**

- Outreach & Engagement in the Cuyahoga AOC – W. Long Jones
  - No presentation was delivered this month. The Outreach Subcommittee will work to share presentation materials and information with the rest of the AOC Committee.

##### **Old Business**

- Vote on providing Letter of Support for BUI 4 Removal
- Cuyahoga Next – E. Price, T. Rayburn

##### **New Business**

- Great Lakes AOC Conference – N. Lopez, J. Stoll, K. Hall, P. Bode, H. Boesinger, L. Garrity
  - Updates and reflections shared by attending members. Noted there was good energy at the event, including a call-out for Cuyahoga AOC's recent BUI press coverage by GLNPO Director C. Koraleski. Goal of delisting all AOCs by 2030.

- Committee members who attended the 2023 Healing Our Waters Conference shared their experience and reflections from that event. There is an increasing DEI/EJ focus and representatives from other AOCs were impressed with the on-the-ground action we have here in the Cuyahoga.
- Recognition of retiring and departing members
  - Cuyahoga AOC Advisory Committee recognized members (R. Brand, A. Burns, F. Greenland, J. Shaw) whose terms have/are ending and thanked them for their service to the AOC.

#### **USEPA Great Lakes National Program Office Update – L. Medley**

- Ohio AOC Summit will be held November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023 from 9:00am-3:30pm at the Shipyards in Lorain, OH.
- Little Cuyahoga and the 185<sup>th</sup> St Spillway projects each received \$4.5 million in funding.

#### **Ohio Lake Erie Commission Update – H. Boesinger**

- H. Boesinger thanked the Cuyahoga AOC Advisory Committee for their hard work and support in preparing the BUI 4 removal documents. Beach Closings BUI will be the next one the Cuyahoga AOC focuses on.
- H. Boesinger provided MAP updates:
  - Canal diversion dam officially completed (dam removed + diversion pump operating). Brings us up to 3 MAPs completed – Cascade Valley, Sowinski Park, and Canal Diversion Dam.
  - Gorge Dam removal is funded and in progress. H. Ullinger (City of Akron) noted that the contract to do the site prep for the sediment relocation will occur on November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023. A public meeting will be held Wednesday, October 25<sup>th</sup>, from 6-7:30pm at the Main Branch of the Akron Public Library.
- H. Boesinger provided BUI Removal updates:
  - Beach Closings – anticipated removal 2024; Dredging – anticipated removal 2025; Fish Habitat/Fish Populations/Benthos Habitat\*- anticipated removal 2027/28.

\*These BUIs will not be removed until the MAPs are complete, and we will likely submit one report for all three BUIs.

#### **Facilitating Organization Update (Cuyahoga SWCD) – K. Hall**

- Cuyahoga SWCD is hiring a new Watershed Coordinator – current member of the Advisory Committee, N. Lopez, to replace K. Nitsch in facilitating role for the Cuyahoga AOC.

#### **Subcommittee Updates**

##### **Governance – E. Price**

- Advisory Committee application process update
  - Doodle poll will be sent out to find a day/time for Governance Subcommittee to meet and review applications received.
  - All applications are saved in the Cuyahoga AOC SharePoint folder.
- Mid-year Member Self-Engagement survey and review results – B. Hughes
  - Received 14 responses from Advisory Committee members. Generally positive feedback.
    - Q1 – Self-evaluation of participation: Average = 2.5 out of 4, where [4] meant over-extended.
    - Q2 – To what degree are you applying your skills: Average = Satisfied.
    - Q3 – How to improve AOC experience, key take-aways:
      1. Broader participation by members is needed in outreach events. This could be facilitated by holding more activities during the work week, not just weekends.

2. A broader outreach plan is suggested, beyond educators and environmental events. Plan should include targets e.g., groups we want to reach, including philanthropy, and target dates.
  3. More intentional efforts regarding diversity and equity are needed, especially in outreach efforts.
  4. Members are willing to share networks, so we should create communication synergies between AOC member agencies and others (i.e., share newsletter articles).
  5. Project successes should be shared through translation of the SIP projects into layperson terms and included in outreach communication to get the success out there.
  6. Host more mixers and mingle opportunities for AOC members to get to know each other better.
- Q4 – Is your organization aware and supportive: Average= highly aware and supportive.

#### Public Outreach – S. Hardy

- BUI Removal Celebration & Champion of the River
  - The event will be held Thursday, November 16<sup>th</sup> from 5-6:30pm at Collision Bend Brewing Co.
  - Event registration and other promotional materials will be sent out to all committee members the week of October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023.
  - 2023 Champion of the River awardee: Share the River
- Report-out on successful outreach events – Clean Water Fest, Healing Our Waters tour.

#### Strategic Implementation – F. Greenland

- Replacement Chair, Vice-chair
  - A new chair and/or vice-chair are needed to replace F. Greenland.
  - SIP Subcommittee meeting will be planned for late November/early December. The meeting will include a review of MAP status, BUI status, and upcoming sampling activities.

#### **Announcements pertinent to BUI delisting activities**

**Proposed 2024 meeting dates: Jan. 22 (virtual), Apr. 15, Jul. 15 (with field trip), Oct. 21**

#### **Adjourn**

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#### **Site visit at Cascade Valley**