



**Cuyahoga River AOC Advisory Committee**

**MINUTES**

**10.21.2024**

Watershed Stewardship Center – 2277 W Ridgewood Dr, Parma, OH 44134

Quarterly Advisory Committee Meeting (9-10:30a)

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**Welcome**

**Attendees:**

Voting Members: Carly Beck, Peter Bode, Donna Friedman, Jennifer Grieser, Heather Ullinger (Alt. for P. Gsellman), Joe Hadley, Scott Hardy, Bill Hughes, Whitnye Long Jones, Stephen Love, Pam Davis (Alt. J. MacDonald), Elaine Marsh, Samantha Martin, Erica Matheny, Elaine Price, Mike Sekerak, Megan Smith, Meghan Tinker Paynter, Katie Wells, Christina Znidarsic

Ex-Officio/Resource: Nichole Lopez (CSWCD – Staff), Ed Kender, Beth Sparks-Jackson, Curt Wagner, Sarah Barrow, Steve Holland

Guests: Crystal Davis (NPCA), Alex Kirchner (Summit SWCD), Bruce Kole (U.S. Coast Guard)

**Approval of Minutes of July 15th, 2024** – *Motion to approve by B. Hughes, seconded by C. Beck. All in favor with no abstentions.*

**Public Comment**

**Presentation**

- Crystal Davis – Senior Regional Director (Midwest), National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA)
  - NPCA is a non-profit organization that works to protect and preserve our nation’s natural, historic and cultural heritage for future generations through protecting cultural heritage, park funding, and landscape conservation.
    - Currently developing principles for outreach and engaging BIPOC communities.
    - Released 2024 Polluted Parks Report.
    - Re-establishing Midwest regional council.

**Old Business**

- Online Voting Process – N. Lopez
  - Governance subcommittee members suggested the notice of open online voting after the motion is on the floor acknowledging the important details, such as the link and deadline, for reference.
- Ohio State Fish Designation – Letter of Support – P. Bode
  - Request for letter of support will be incoming in the next couple of months.

**New Business**

- Updated Big Creek Study – J. Grieser

- I-71 Relocation & Restoration Initiative - opportunity to highlight issues in water management from ODOT and other entities.
- Request for Advisory Committee to review and return comments to SIP Chair (J. Stoll) and Vice Chair (C. Beck).
- BUI 10 Removal Celebration & Champion of the River Recap (10/17) – N. Lopez
  - Overall, the feedback was positive regarding the program's length and its impact in celebrating the efforts of local entities. However, there were suggestions for earlier planning to enhance the event. Other comments included a shoutout to Cleveland Metroparks for their trash management at Edgewater Beach.

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

### **OLEC Update – K. Patterson**

- Lake Erie Ohio Communities and Coastal Resiliency Grant – due Friday, October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024

### **Facilitating Organization Update (Cuyahoga SWCD) – N. Lopez**

- Brand Refresh & New Marketing Materials – SUMMARY
  - Display of current informational table with updated brochures, rack cards, tablecloth, poster, and giveaways.
  - Reminder to Advisory Committee on updated digital materials, including PowerPoint template, and proper implementation of the brand guide.

### **Subcommittee Updates**

#### Governance – E. Price

- Annual Member Mid-Year Self-Reflection Survey – OVERVIEW
- 2025 Applications & Election
  - Applications closed on 10/11 – scheduled to be reviewed by subcommittee on 11/18 @ 10:30a.
  - Applications are also available to the entire Advisory Committee for review before the General Elections in January 2025.
- 8/14 Meeting Recap

#### Public Outreach – S. Hardy

- 7/30 & 9/23 Meeting Recap
- OSU has funded a video highlighting the Cuyahoga River AOC restoration efforts in NEO. Filming of Advisory Committee members and resource organizations was recorded in August. It is scheduled to be published in the next couple of months.
- Latest News – NPR Article: ["The Cuyahoga River was so polluted, it used to catch fire. Now it's making a comeback"](#) (Oct. 12, 2024)
- 2024 Outreach Events – COMPLETED
  - CMP Party for the Planet (4/20) – J. Grieser, K. Wells
  - Spring Into Nature STEM (4/27) – P. Gsellman
  - CLE Drinking Water Festival (5/11) – M. Paynter, C. Beck, B. Berkely
  - CSWCD Student Symposium (5/20) – E. Price, C. Znidarsic, S. Hardy, E. Matheny, B. Hughes, P. Bode
  - Cuyahoga Connects (5/22) – S. Hardy, E. Price
  - 4 Mile 4 Water (6/8) – N. Lopez
  - TCWP Watershed Family Fun Day (8/17) – J. Kastanis, E. Matheny, B. Pulley

- One World Day (8/25) – M. Smith, D. Friedman, S. Martin
    - Great feedback to do it again!
  - Blazing Paddles (9/15) – S. Hardy, C. Znidarsic, P. Gsellman
  - NEORS Clean Water Fest (9/21) – M. Sekerak, T. Rayburn, J. MacDonald
  - Shaker Lakes Autumn Fest (10/5) – P. Bode
  - \*SAVE THE DATE\* Great Lakes Area of Concern (AOC) Conference – Sept. 16-18, 2025 in Toledo, OH
- Strategic Implementation – C. Beck
- 7/25 Meeting Recap
  - AOC Story Map Update
    - NEORS has offered to take the lead in reestablishing the story map of the MAPs on the website.

### **Announcements Pertinent to BUI Delisting Activities**

- Gorge Dam Removal – USEPA will be awarding the contract for sediment dredging in the next couple of weeks.
- 2024 Great Lakes Commission Annual Meeting (Oct. 8-10 in Rochester, NY) – attended by S. Martin.
  - Rochester Embayment AOC delisted!
- 2024 Great Lakes Conference (Sept. 26-27 in Chicago, IL) – attended by B. Hughes.
  - Highlights included the Milwaukee AOC Community Advisory Committee’s session “Beyond Hearing is Learning and Beyond Learning is Leading” – a closer look on their community focus approach.
- BUI 6 Benthos – B. Sparks-Jackson is submitting a proposal with USEPA to effectively compare lacustrine data and assess BUI 6 beyond ICI scores.
- Cuyahoga River Next – Subcommittee Updates:
  - Commerce – an opportune time throughout the entire stretch of the Cuyahoga River AOC with planning at the forefront with the City of Akron & Cuyahoga Falls (Merriman Valley Schumacher Master Plan), Flats Forward (Framework Plan for the Flats), and Cuyahoga Valley National Park (River Management 10-Year Plan; to be implemented in 2026)
  - Recreation – discussing a collective notification system for recreational participants. Next meeting will be on 11/1 @ HiHo Brewery from 1-3p.
  - Safety – to elevate representative from CVNP as chair and recruit an additional northern leader.
- Destination Cleveland, in partnership with local county visitation bureaus, to host a meeting on Oct. 22 at 3p to discuss the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail as a multi-day tourism destination.
- Next BUI removal is expected to be #7 Dredging Restrictions in 2025 – suggested for celebration to take place at Dike 14 / Lakefront Nature Preserve.
  - An ideal location as noted by J. Grieser due to its proximity and view of the CHEERS project.

**Cuyahoga AOC Committee 2025 Quarterly Meeting Schedule** – poll to be shared to determine 2025 schedule.

**Adjourn**