



**Cuyahoga River AOC Advisory Committee
MINUTES
10.20.2025**

The Natatorium – 2345 4th St, Cuyahoga Falls, OH 44221

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

Welcome – Mayor Don Walters

Introductions

Attendees:

Voting Members: Sarah Barrow, Carly Beck, Peter Bode, Zach Cebula, Donna Friedman, Jennifer Grieser, Pat Gsellman, Scott Hardy, Bill Hughes, Tom LaPlante, Whitney Long Jones, Stephen Love, Joe MacDonald, Erica Matheny, Elaine Price, Bryce Pulley, Mike Sekerak, Megan Shaeffer, Megan Smith, Heather Ullinger, Katie Wells

Ex-Officio/Resource: Hannah Boesinger, John Timmons, Joshua Kocik, Matt Shanks, Nichole Lopez (CSWCD – Staff)

Guests: Mackenzie Kaser, Gabriella Eisel, David Passarelli, Bruce Kole, Anna Pankalski, Emily Bacha, Jim Ridge, Don Walters, Moneen McBride

Approval of Minutes of July 14th, 2025 – *Motion to approve by K. Wells, seconded by E. Matheny. All in favor with no abstentions.*

Public Comment

Presentation

- Cuyahoga Falls River Loop Project – M. Kaser, Assistant City Engineer
 - Coming Labor Day 2026, the RiverLoop will be a new Downtown Cuyahoga Falls attraction with scenic walkways, points of interest, and accessible paths connecting Front Street to Broad Boulevard and Oakwood Drive.

Old Business

- LOS Request for Mayfield Sands NOAA Great Lakes Fish Habitat Restoration Partnership Grants – J. Grieser
 - Application was submitted on Sept. 1st for phases 3-6.
- USGS Research Financial Support for M. Acre – J. Grieser
 - M. Acre expressed increased confidence in continued funding for his work, but is awaiting federal budget approval. The process remains on hold for now.
- Healing Our Waters GLRI Field Trips – N. Lopez

- Held on Aug. 26th, the event was an amazing success. There were 57 participants, including Rep. Emilia Sykes and Rep. Veronica Sims. There was also exposure from both Signal Akon and Spectrum News.
- 2025 State of the Great Lakes, The City Club of Cleveland – B. Hughes

New Business

- Cross-Agency Partnership Summit (Sept. 16-18 @ Toledo, OH) – Multiple Members
 - It was a well-attended event with strong representation from the Cuyahoga River AOC.
 - It provided valuable insights on progress and remaining work across all AOCs, including the scale of unfunded GLLA projects across the region.
 - It also offered opportunities for feedback on agency work and collaboration across state and federal partners.

USEPA GLNPO & OLEC Updates – H. Boesinger

- Suse LaGory has returned from administrative leave.
- Muskegon Lake AOC was delisted earlier this month, bringing the total number of delisted Great Lakes AOCs to eight.
- GLNPO has carryover funds and is continuing to work during the federal shutdown.
 - No updates on GLRI funding.
- The Black River AOC recently removed two BUIs (Degradation of Fish Populations and Loss of Fish Habitat), only Degradation of Benthos BUI remains.
 - The target is to remove the final BUI in 2026 and delist in 2027.
- The Lacustrine Benthos sampling was completed by EnviroScience. The data is currently being processed and the Benthos BUI target evaluation is expected to occur this winter by USFWS, USGS, and the state.
- OLEC announced the Lake Erie Community Grant Recipients (all in NEO!) and is now accepting applications for the LECG Large Grant until December 19th, 2025.
- Management Action Projects (MAPs) Updates
 - E. 185th Spillway – USACE is still working on the right-of-entry agreement and Geotech surveys with the railroad. Construction is delayed again until 2027.
 - Station Road – USACE will be handling additional design work to create scalable and ready-to-implement plans utilizing the \$50K remaining, which includes:
 - Hydrologic and Hydraulic DDR update and finalization
 - Conceptual cross-sections for two streambank stabilization measures
 - Planting plans aligned with design
 - Rough Order of Magnitude (RoM) cost estimates for two targeted stream bends
 - East of Boston Mills Ski Area – USEPA decided not to proceed with the project as a MAP. The project area is currently meeting designated BUIs. The design work is complete and will be updated on the MAP list as ‘design only’.
 - Mayfield Sands – Awaiting NOAA grant decision, but that will likely be delayed due to the government shutdown. Additionally, the project has previously been ineligible for GLRI due to being on a private golf course, but a funding request has been submitted to GLNPO for Phase 3.
 - Gorge GLLA Sediment Cleanup and Dam Removal – sand dredging has begun in upper dam pool with silt dredging starting in a couple of weeks. There have been stability concerns for the Front St. Bridge

and funding is needed to rebuild. GLNPO is open to supporting the additional project, but a funding gap is still anticipated.

- CROC – environmental data collected by USACE is expected to be completed by the end of the year. Multiple project delays are currently driving delisting timeline.

Facilitating Organization Update (Cuyahoga SWCD) – N. Lopez

- Financial Overview & Reporting – the facilitating grant of \$157,500 has expended 34% of its funds, with 50% of the project timeline remaining.
- Groundwater Training – all members (or their alternate) are encouraged to participate in the workshop and should notify N. Lopez of their registration date as soon as possible.
- NEORS D ‘Thank You’ Card – the signed card will be sent to the GIS team as a small token of gratitude for rebuilding the MAPs story map.

Subcommittee Updates

Governance – K. Wells

- Mid-Year Self-Reflection Survey – 84% of members participated. The results will be reviewed and shared with the Executive Committee before the end of the year.
- The 2026 Advisory Committee Applications are currently open and are scheduled to close on Oct. 31st. All current members whose terms are expiring will need to submit an application for potential re-election.
- The subcommittee has discussed and agreed on the proposed revisions of the Operating Procedures.
 - B. Hughes provided a summary of the changes, such as clarification on alternate designations and the definition of a vacancy.
 - *Motion for the Advisory Committee to adopt the updated Operating Procedures (as revised Oct. 8th, 2025) by B. Hughes, seconded by C Beck. All in favor with no abstentions.*

Public Engagement – S. Hardy

- A big accomplishment this year as all committee members participated in outreach events. Many thanks were extended to members who participated in recent events:
 - Watershed Family Fun Day (8/9) – E. Matheny
 - One World Day (8/24) – K. Wells, M. Tinker-Paynter, E. Price, M. Smith, J. MacDonald, J. Grieser
 - CMP World Water Week (8/27) – J. Grieser
 - NOACA Water Quality Subcommittee Meeting (8/19) – K. Hall
 - NEORS D Clean Water Fest (8/20) – N. Lopez, M. Sekerak, H. Ullinger, P. Gsellman
 - Sturgeon Fest (10/4) – Z. Cebula, S. Love, S. Hardy
 - Shaker Lakes Autumn Fest (10/4) – P. Bode
- 2026 Biennial Symposium
 - The target date for the event is mid-late March.
 - Any recommendations for venues and/or speakers are welcomed.
 - A request for sponsors will be made in the next couple of months.
- Champion of the River

- It was decided that the next Champion of the River will be honored during the symposium next year.
- Nominations are currently being collected, and a poll will be shared to vote on the awardee.

Strategic Implementation – C. Beck

- Members were reminded to utilize and share the story map.
- The next meeting will be scheduled for early December to discuss more detailed MAP updates, the official change to the MAP list, and master project list within the AOC.

Announcements Pertinent to BUI Delisting Activities

- NEORS D shared their ICI scores upstream and downstream of their Southerly WWTC as part of their NPDES permit. Results show fish scores reaching Exceptional Warmwater Habitat.
- Cuyahoga River Next – recent discussions with Vision for the Valley and Summit Metro Parks have centered around potential technology to measure flow for public safety.
- The City Club of Cleveland will be hosting another forum on Oct. 28th on The North Coast Era: Lessons from Public Waterfront Leaders.

Cuyahoga AOC Committee 2026 Quarterly Meeting Schedule – TBD

- Members were asked to share any potential conflicts before next year's meeting schedule is determined.

Adjourn