

**Ottawa River Coalition Meeting Minutes**  
**July 26, 2018    Allen County Sanitary Engineer's Office    8:00 AM**

In attendance:

Beth Seibert, Ottawa River Coalition  
Steve Webb, Guardian Lima  
Mike Elwood, Hardin SWCD  
Mike Caprella, City of Lima Utilities Dept  
Steve Kayatin, Allen County Sanitary Engineer  
Pat Beam, Beam Designs  
Travis Fillhart, Allen County EMA  
Brett Allerding, ODOT Dist. 1  
Kim Stiles, Allen Water District

John Hoffman, Alloway  
Casey Heilman, Allen SWCD  
Roy Baldrige, LACNIP  
Cory Gonya, Nutrien  
Carol Bertrand, Tri-Moraine Audubon Society  
John Schneider, LACNIP  
Tom Berger, Allen County EMA  
Tyler Black, Johnny Applesseed Metro Parks  
Thom Mazur, Lima Allen Co. Reg. Planning

Chairman John Hoffman called the meeting to order at 8:00 am and welcomed everyone. Self-introductions were made around the room. No additions to the agenda were requested.

The minutes of the March 22 and May 24 meetings were presented for approval. *Motion by Steve Kayatin and seconded by Tom Berger to approve the minutes of the March and May meetings. Motion carried.*

**Treasurer's Report** – Treasurer, Mike Elwood presented the September Financial Report, outlining receipts, expenses and account balances since the previous report. *Motion by Carol Bertrand to approve the July Financial Report. Motion seconded by Thom Mazur and carried.*

**Committee Reports**

Executive Committee – John Hoffman reported that they had met June 21 to prepare for this meeting and make plans for the Saturday, January 12, 2019 Annual Meeting. That event will be conducted at the City Club again with the guest speaker being John Hoffman. He will be speaking on his trip to Malawi and the *Water For People* program. John also led off the discussion about the Coalition's June 22<sup>nd</sup> bus trip to the Blanchard River Demonstration Farms Network. John noted how he was amazed at the farming technology. The group learned about farm practices being modified to reduce Phosphorus runoff and impact s to Lake Erie. Grid sampling is one of the tools being utilized where soil sampling is done on such a scale that fertilizer is only being applied specifically where and in amounts needed. They viewed edge of field monitoring stations for surface and subsurface runoff. And on one farm industrial waste slag is being used as a Phosphorus filter bed. A two-stage ditch was also featured on that farm. The hog farm that was visited outlined their waste management practices and how it is applied to the soil based on nutrient need. They also constructed a wetland on their farm. Casey Heilman spoke of how impressed she was with the cleanliness of the hog barns. During this discussion John had the Blanchard River Demonstration Farms' impressive website on the screen as a visual and suggested that those who were unable to attend the tour at least visit <https://blancharddemofarms.org>

Community Relations Committee – John Hoffman drew everyone's attention to the screen and the Ottawa River Coalition's website [www.thisismyriver.org](http://www.thisismyriver.org) and invited everyone to use this tool more to their benefit and the benefit of the organization.

## Stream Monitoring Committee

- Pat Beam provided an update on Lima's Consent Decree Tree Planting Project. He reflected on a recent project wrap-up meeting with Mike Caprella and the Davey Resource Group as the initial stage of the project comes to a close. Trees and plantings are growing very well with 90% meeting expectations. Some invasive plant pressures have to be addressed. Pat spoke of how in the three years, he finds the transformation just amazing. Mike noted that the City did receive official notice from USEPA that they have given final approval to the project. But he reminded the group that the City has a 25 year maintenance requirement for this project.
- Cory Gonya provided a regulatory update on Lake Erie issues. He reported that there are some good predictive models out there now for harmful algal blooms (HABs), but one of the best predictors/correlations/factors seems to be spring rainfall. They use a 1-10 scale and in the Fall of 2017 we hit an 8. This year 5-7.5 is the predicted range – faring slightly better than 2017. But 2018 still looks like it will be a rough HAB year for Lake Erie. In 2016 the dry spring largely contributed to a score of 3. Cory reflected on how 85% of the Phosphorus load is from nonpoint sources – not publicly owned treatment works (POTW) or industrial discharges. Some examples of nonpoint sources are agriculture, septic systems, and urban runoff. Fifteen days ago Ohio Governor Kasich issued an executive order that eight watersheds in the Western Basin of Lake Erie be declared distressed and requiring farmers to develop and implement nutrient management plans. Cory noted that this includes all of our local watersheds – Ottawa, Blanchard and Auglaize Rivers. Kasich put the Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission over the decision and they have referred it to committee after the suddenness of having the matter thrust upon them and receiving considerable push back from the ag community. Ohio Dept of Agriculture would be the administering agency of such rules and they suspect a mandatory compliance deadline of 2020. Earlier this year, OEPA Director Craig Butler announced that Ohio has not been able to make enough progress on the International Joint Commission's 40% Phosphorus Reduction Goal for Lake Erie. Cory reported that the Ohio state legislature desires to tighten regulations to help Lake Erie, but that bills are entering the legislature and dying. Although a separate Lake Erie funding bill did pass the Ohio legislature earmarking funds for ag, nonpoint sources, etc. Cory also gave a brief update on the Waters of the United States issue, noting that the rule put forth in 2015 was repealed. There were a couple legal gaps in the repeal process. A new rule is expected out in early 2019.

Lowhead Dam Committee – Beth Seibert reported that we are still waiting on a decision from the Allen County Commissioners, on counsel of the Allen County Prosecutor's Office, as to whether or not they are the entity allowed to give permission for the Allentown dam removal as the east side property owner. The plan is still to see that concrete structure removed in the summer of 2019.

Stormwater Committee – Beth Seibert reported that the summer interns had helped them accomplish quite a bit of dry weather illicit stream outfall monitoring in the Lost Creek subwatershed and the Ottawa River main channel. Casey Heilman has been promoting the Adopt A Roadway Program throughout the County and the City of Lima Tree Rebate Program. Beth introduced Casey as Allen SWCD's new Community Outreach Coordinator. Casey joined that staff in early June.

Watershed Committee – Lima Allen County Regional Planning Commission Executive Director Thom Mazur gave the group an overview of the 2040 Allen County Transportation Plan Report. He

presented a list of 137 recommended transportation projects that, all totaled, have a \$270 million cost. 48 of those are bridge projects and 15 are bicycle or pedestrian projects. The first 20 projects on the list are already approved and funding has been dedicated at a total cost of \$48.6 million. Thom noted that projects take much time to develop with things like environmental impacts, funding needs, and political will as important prioritization influences – and all such hoops have to be completed. Thom essentially serves as the broker and manager of the process, seeing projects through to being funded. Federal funding is restricted to higher order roadways such as state highways. The total list of recommended transportation projects is a wish list. He gave the example of the Bluelick Road underpass and how it has been on the list for 30 years. Performance measures are largely influenced by factors that enhance safety. Thom explained that ahead of 2012 Allen County was recording 4100 to 4300 crashes per year. But since that time 1 in 5 crashes has been removed, although the statistics have been inching back up since 2016, with an increase in especially serious injury crashes. 2016 crash statistics do seem to have a correlation with cell phone use. Thom also spoke of how Allen County ranks #1 or #2 in Ohio (among similar sized communities) in pedestrian or bicycle crashes. The enforcement side of that issue is difficult and nonexistent, especially for local police depts. Considerable fiscal constraints limit local transportation funds with only about \$9.4 million being generated annually at the local level. Thom's office is hosting two public meetings in August on this 2040 Transportation Plan. He also invited letters in support of particular projects. Carol Bertrand asked if the Bluelick Road underpass issue could be solved with advance warning signage. Thom responded that many truck drivers today are just not as professional as in past eras. The signs are there now. Also trucks have changed in size since that structure was installed. Therefore freight friendly projects are one local emphasis.

### **New Business**

Mike Caprella, Lima Utilities Director presented an overview of their CSO Capture Project that is currently under construction at Simmons Field. The goal is to take the overflow events of the combined sewer system from 35 to 40 per year, down to five. A large portion of the City of Lima is a combined storm and sanitary sewer system. Overflow structures were built into the system to limit flooded basements. So this project aims to keep water from reaching the river and is "storage on steroids". When completed, this 13 million gallon tank will be 400' long, 200' wide, and 24' deep. At a cost of \$40 million dollars, it is NOT an inexpensive fix. One of the project objectives has been NOT to mess with the Lima Locos field/diamond. Also, Simmons Field is the site of an old landfill, so a lot of boring had to be done in the first stages as they anticipated contaminated soil. Today, they are down to rock, with a 15' depth of soil having been removed. Only what constituted one truckload of contaminated or hazardous material was found and removed from the site. An environmental company tested every load of material. Mike's presentation today featured a series of pictures captured on July 5. Now that they have reached bedrock it is a whole new ballgame. When this project is done, a layer of soil 8-10 feet deep will be placed back over top of the concrete tank system. The area will be returned to grass with the exception of a few access hatches and a pump station. The concrete walls will be three feet thick in order to prevent water table pressure influence. A diversion structure in the sanitary sewer will operate based on flow height. Three, ten million gallon/day pumps provide for an air handling system that includes carbon filters to minimize odors. When they get to the concrete pouring phase, the trucks will be coming in and out of the Kibby Street entrance. Mike explained that funding assistance from the State of Ohio's Water Development Loan Fund Authority is providing \$13 million dollars at zero interest. The rest of the project is being financed at a low interest rate of 1.4%. A thirty-year note conducted as deferred-time, wrap-around debt is affording the project and our community an incredible savings. This has resulted in less impact to user rate hikes. Mike

went on to tell the group that the second “don’t mess with” priority for this project has been the public access to the Riverwalk. A bridge structure over the river will tie into the wastewater feed. So as that is constructed, public access to the Riverwalk is prevented. The general contractor for this project is Peterson out of Wapakoneta and they are very qualified at managing wastewater construction projects. Mike reported that the fun part of the project starts now as a 25’ depth of bedrock must be removed through blasting and this limestone is hard and solid. Blasting will begin August 6<sup>th</sup> and the public will be informed prior to that date. A company out of Wisconsin is contracted to handle that part of the project with blasting scheduled to occur at the same time every day. Steve Kayatin noted that blasting technology these days can be fairly quiet. Mike said that seismographs are being utilized to monitor the site. Cory Gonya agreed and noted that local industry does use this subsurface earth sensing technology on their own sites. Mike told the group that local Emergency Management is being notified with their blasting plan specifics. A horn alert system on the site will be utilized and early blasting is expected to have the most impact. The Riverwalk will be closed adjacent to the site from August 6, 2018 through the Spring of 2019. There are no funds in their project for street improvements. Carol Bertrand noted that the rock removed from the site is going to National Lima and Stone that there is a suspected resale value. Cory Gonya asked about the landfill cost extent and Mike responded that it has been pretty much within their expectations. They budgeted \$4 million for that and have spent about \$2 million so far. John Hoffman thanked Mike for bringing this report to the Coalition members and partners.

#### Member and Partner Reports

- Thom Mazur asked if Douglass Degen’s replacement at the Allen County Engineer’s Office had been named. No one could confirm that any such announcement has been made.
- Steve Kayatin reported that Allen County is conducting similar work to Lima in addressing stormwater overflows. Their recent focus has been on a four to five year project in the Shawnee sewer sub district. They are not removing the overflow structures, rather they are remediating or minimizing the 25 year and greater storm events. The first phase was completed last December at a cost of \$16 to \$17 million. The Shawnee wastewater plant can handle 10 million gallons/day. The second phase will be a risk assessment then design/build. The project completion goal is 2020 and was the result of an Ohio EPA decree. Steve introduced Kim Stiles of the Allen Water District. He is recommending Ottawa River Coalition membership to that body. Steve also noted that a sewer project on Yoder Road was first identified through Allen SWCD’s illicit discharge detection and elimination dry weather screening work. A Cable Road north sewer project that presented itself as an odor problem has finally had the source identified. A Gomer sanitary sewer project is in the funding and investment phase, while a project in the Springbrook area is in the construction phase.
- Tyler Black reported that Johnny Appleseed Metro Park District has renovated their Farm Park Bicentennial Barn and renewed that logo to the structure. He is hoping that a couple trail projects will wrap up this fall. Kendrick Woods is having one mile of additional trail installed. The Miami Erie Canal Towpath Trail is hopefully going out to bid next week. This first phase involves 3.4 miles of path extending north from the Village of Spencerville. The second phase will extend that 6 miles more to the north towards Delphos. An open house event for the Lauer Historical Farm has been announced for August 12<sup>th</sup> from 1-5 pm. This unique new park facility is located at 800 Roush Road and is open by appointment/reservation.
- Pat Beam is working on quite a few projects – one for Johnny Appleseed Metro Park District and three with Ohio Dept of Natural Resources. He also made a recent

presentation to the Maumee River Basin Partnership of Local Governments on various watershed and conservation projects that he has designed. The presentation did feature a number of projects located in the Ottawa River Watershed, as well as the Ottawa River Coalition as an organization. He reflected on what a marvelous example of a successful community collaboration that the Coalition is!

- Mike Caprella reported that they are getting ready to start a large sewer lining project within the next 30 days at Charles and Jameson. This \$5 million project features a 72" spiral.
- Carol Bertrand reported on the June 21<sup>st</sup> open house and dedication that they held on a 17 acre prairie restoration project at OSU Lima. Tri-Moraine Audubon Society paid for the project's permanent signage. On September 4<sup>th</sup> their monthly programs for 2018/2019 will resume. The national theme is "Year of the Birds". Jackie Augustine leads their regular programming and two featured speakers this year are Jim McCormack and Tom Hissong.
- Tom Berger introduced Allen County EMA's new Deputy Director, Travis Fillhart. He joined that staff three months ago. Travis is a graduate of Bowling Green State University and has worked for Ford's Security Team and Bath Fire Dept.
- Roy Baldridge reported that the Lima Rotary Club is celebrating a new President – Paul Swartz. He noted three major projects that the club is undertaking, including a downtown amphitheatre, boardwalk renovations at Kendrick Woods, and support to a bikeway connection between the Ottawa Riverwalk, Country Club Hills neighborhood, and the OSU/Rhodes campus. He also reminded the group that National Night Out is August 7<sup>th</sup> with five different local celebrations – downtown Lima hosted by Lima and LACNIP, Shawnee Township, Elida, Allen Co Sheriff at the fairgrounds, and Country Club Hills/Twin Lakes neighborhood.
- John Hoffman reported that Alloway is working with the OEAMC on respirometry research – wastewater treatment plant respiration of microorganisms oxidizing waste. Considerations of the study include weather proofing, automation, etc..

*Motion by Tom Berger, seconded by Thom Mazur to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried and meeting adjourned at approximately 9:45 am. The next regular meeting of the Ottawa River Coalition will be held on Thursday, September 27<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 am at the Ada Village Office located at 115 W. Buckeye in Ada, OH.*

Minutes transcribed by Coalition Coordinator, Beth Seibert.