

Ottawa River Coalition Meeting Minutes
November 15, 2018 Cambridge Center – 418 N. Central Ave., Lima

In attendance:

Mike Elwood, Hardin SWCD/NRCS
Nathan Davis, Allen Co. Engineer's Office
Sophia Fisher, Lima Allen Co. Reg. Planning Comm.
Kevin Cox, Perry Township
Roy Baldrige, LACNIP
Steve Kayatin, Allen Co. Sanitary Engineer
Tyler Black, Johnny Appleseed Metro Park Dist.
Sierra Slusher, Husky Lima Refinery
Leslie Riley, Tri-Moraine Audubon Society

Cory Gonya, Nutrien
Albert Suniga, Allen SWCD
Casey Heilman, Allen SWCD
John Hoffman, Alloway
Brett Allarding, ODOT Dist. 1
Eric Markley, Lima Utilities WWTP
Beth Seibert, Ottawa River Coalition
Joe Gearing, Allen Co. Engineer's Office
Pat Beam, Beam Designs

Welcome/Approve Minutes Chairman, John Hoffman called the meeting to order at 8:02 AM and welcomed the group. Self-introductions were made around the room. No additions to the agenda were requested. The minutes of the previous two meetings were presented for approval. *Motion by Kevin Cox to approve the minutes of the July 26, 2018 meeting. Motion seconded by Joe Gearing and carried. Motion by Eric Markley to approve the September 27, 2018 meeting minutes. Motion seconded by Joe Gearing and carried.*

Treasurer's Report Treasurer, Mike Elwood presented the November Financial Report, outlining receipts, expenses and account balances since the previous meeting. He also reported that an \$8,000 payment is due to Allen SWCD for the annual commitment to the Coordinator's position. *Motion by Mike Elwood to pay Allen SWCD \$8,000 for the Coordinator's annual commitment. Motion seconded by Kevin Cox and carried. Motion by Eric Markley to approve the November Financial Report. Motion seconded by Steve Kayatin and carried.*

Committee Reports

Executive Committee – Chairman, John Hoffman reported on four main topics. First he gave an update on the Allentown Lowhead Dam Removal, telling about a meeting with the County Commissioners to gain their approval for the project as the property owner of the east side of the dam. And the first public hearing was conducted yesterday with 11 in attendance and no objections voiced. There is one more public meeting next week. Dues for 2019 are recommended to stay at \$100 per voting member organization. The Annual Meeting will be conducted on January 12 at the City Club in Lima. And the 2019 Slate of Officers has been prepared with Cory Gonya of Nutrien as Chairman, Joe Gearing of the Allen County Engineer's Office as Vice Chair, and Sophia Fisher of LACRPC as Treasurer. John Hoffman went on to explain that additional nominations will be accepted from the floor, the night of the annual meeting.

Community Relations Committee – John Hoffman (with the help of Casey Heilman) walked the group through the Coalition website and challenged the members and partners to utilize it more. John also spoke of a recent workshop Alloway hosted where they showcased an ecosystem model. Pictures are on the Coalition website – www.thisismyriver.org

Stream Monitoring Committee

- Cory Gonya gave a regulatory update. He talked about the overall report on algae for Lake Erie for 2018, noting that even though the algae season is over, we did have a warm October. NOAA predicted harmful algal blooms to reach a score of 7 in 2018, on a scale of 1-10, and the season actually ended with a 3.8 score. Cory noted how this can be very much driven by spring rains, and even wind driven in the lake itself. Cory suggested that we can have the ORC website linked to the National Weather Service website so our members could easily monitor the progress.
- The WLEB Executive Order was back in front of the Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission on November 1st. This issue started with that body on July 8 and went to subcommittee. Cory reported that the November 1st vote by the 7 members was 3:4, and was therefore tabled until February. The primary reason it was tabled was that the rules of a distressed watershed had much focus on manure, but now includes fertilizer and the rules are still unclear. Cory feels the decision before that body today is “are those watersheds distressed”. Beth noted that the July and Sept minutes of the Coalition do detail this subject as it progressed over the summer. And she reminded that the new Governor could change things in February, including whether or not ODA Director Daniels may be reappointed. Cory reflected that one interesting fact that he has gleaned from all the discussion on the matter is that winter cover crops have been considered the end-all in best management practices, when in reality they are good at nitrogen removal but edge of field monitoring is not showing much phosphorus removal benefit. At Joe Gearing’s request an image of the eight WLEB distressed watersheds was displayed. He wonders if they are considering the TMDLs for each watershed.
- Beth Seibert reported that the invasive plant species Eurasian Watermilfoil was officially identified in the Ottawa River in Lima on October 29, thanks to Husky Refinery representative Matt Elkins. This plant is not known to be present in any flowing stream in Ohio. Its presence currently seems restricted between lowhead dams in Lima from the Central Fire Station on Main Street and all the way to the foot bridge over the river that links Faurot Park and Safety City, downstream of Collett Street. Nathan Davis asked, have made this public yet? Beth responded that it’s not being kept intentionally quiet, but no release has been made. It was agreed that many people have thought this mass was algae. Beth hopes they can study it more in 2019. There is no record of it being present in the Ottawa River in 2010 and 2011 when Ohio EPA conducted their last study of our river system.

Lowhead Dam Committee – Leslie Riley spoke of her ONU Field Biology students being out in the Ottawa River at the Allentown dam on October 16. They were collecting some baseline data above and below the dam. The students will be presenting some very preliminary data in December. John Hoffman asked if the students might want to present at an Ottawa River Coalition meeting next year. Cory Gonya reported to the group that they have been very busy with the Allentown Lowhead Dam. He reminded the group that the dam is a divider between partial and full water quality attainment in the Ottawa River. Full removal is being pursued, and all work will be performed from the west side and that access is owned by Dominion Energy. Beth Seibert reported that their next step is a pre-permit meeting on site with OEPA and USACE. Cory explained that the cost of removal is estimated at \$13,500 to chip out the concrete and use it for bank stabilization. Permit fees have not been defined yet. Beth went out and outlined the project with the Sugar Creek Township Trustees, American Township Trustees, Shawnee Township Trustees, and Elida Village Council. Cory noted that the Ohio EPA 401 Permit Section is suggesting that sediment sampling above the dam will need to be performed. Steve Kayatin reflected that

the small dam is really functioning more as a weir than a dam. Cory also spoke of how the mussels and expectations of ODNR Division of Wildlife may easily add over \$12,000 to the project cost.

Stormwater Committee

- Joe Gearing reported that Allen SWCD is in the process of log jam and debris removal in the Ottawa River as project maintenance. They are working their way downstream and have reached the Erie lowhead dam above the Lima WWTP. The Allen County Engineer is working on stormwater drainage improvements. He also reported that the bid closed on the City of Lima's Melrose stormwater improvement project. Construction of the equalization basin is on schedule. \$3.2 million was paid out to properly dispose of the contaminated soil from the site. The mud mat is now being installed.
- Beth Seibert reported that they are beginning to summarize the data from their summer dry weather stream outfall monitoring.
- Casey Heilman talked about several stormwater initiatives. They have enrolled several new groups in the Adopt-A-Roadway program. This is a twice a year commitment at a minimum, with some conducting weekly cleanups. There are now six individuals and 12 active groups participating. Casey also reported on the sale of 45 rain barrels this year and 19 rebates issued. And she has recently inventoried 86 trees that were planted in the City of Lima over the last three years through the tree rebate program.

Watershed Committee – Special Presentation by Pat Beam, Beam Designs

Pat has spent 42 years as a Landscape Architect in this watershed. He made this presentation to the Maumee River Basin Partnership of Local Governments (MRBLPG). Groups like theirs are very interested in how the Ottawa River Coalition has maintained the momentum to keep the organization together. Pat's response to that is a strong community commitment, and a common sense local approach. He reflected on how much of the Ottawa River watershed work began with the Ottawa River Corridor Plan and the original section of Riverwalk. Step 1 involved ODOT and ISTEAF funds. Kohli & Kaliher were involved all the way. And the Rotary Riverwalk Project got its beginning in the fall of 1991. More recently Pat has been involved in Phase III of the Ottawa River Corridor Project that focused on inventorying the plant life and removing the dead and invasive. Nearly three months was spent on the inventory alone. Two plant species in particular that were emphasized in the removal were Tree of Heaven, and Ground Honeysuckle. They have planted oaks, sycamore, maples, and redbuds. Upland areas were established as mesic prairie and woodland mixes in groundcover. Now they are native open meadows. A future controlled burn is in the plans with Geosyntec and Davey Tree to determine that point in time. Poor soil conditions was a considerable challenge with much concrete and bank rubble to deal with when the project started. The next Ottawa River project for Pat involves the Phase I and Phase II stream flow studies the City of Lima commissioned. This project has included analyzing the low head dams. In that process, Pat has been looking at the physical environment and aesthetic design solutions. Challenges include low water level and alleviating stagnation. Solutions being considered are notching the existing dams and removing sections. Habitat and oxygen restoration require careful consideration of natural stream bed function. Massive limestone boulders are recommended to create a stair step approach, not drastic drops. Lowering the water level at each dam will expose the stream bed, bars and plant materials. Another project that Pat showed pictures of were pond improvements at Faurot Park where aeration was incorporated along with fringe plantings of a variety of emergent plants. He also showed slides and talked about three other significant, local watershed and stormwater management projects – LCC Wetland Preserve, St. Rita's Campus and the UNOH Campus Expansion.

New Business

Motion by Mike Elwood to keep the 2019 voting membership dues at \$100. Motion seconded by Eric Markley and carried.

Member and Partner Reports

- Leslie Riley reported that the Tri-Moraine Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Counts will be conducted on December 15 at Grand Lake St. Marys and December 16 at Indian Lake. The club just finished up their fall birdseed sale. View their newsletter and website at <http://www.tri-moraineaudubon.org> for more information. All are welcome!
- Tyler Black gave an update on JAMPD projects. The first phase of the canal trail project from Spencerville north toward Delphos is wrapping up nicely with the second phase will begin in early 2019. He reported working with Pat Beam on a project at their Kendrick Woods park that is aimed at improving public accessibility, parking and the trail system.
- Roy Baldrige reported that LACNIP recently conducted their annual meeting which features Good Neighbor Awards and the Shirley Daley Community Leadership Award. Their Dancing With the Stars event attracted over 100 people and is expected to be repeated in 2019. In January they will have their annual board retreat for strategic planning.
- Allen County Sanitary Engineer Steve Kayatin reported that they finished the Springbrook sanitary sewer project, eliminating 85 septic systems. The Gomer sewer improvement project will eliminate 125 on-site septic systems. They are in the design phase for the second segment of the project to eliminate sanitary sewer overflows in Shawnee.
- Beth Seibert reported that she has been working with the Allen County Game Protector and the Allen County Sheriff to address the concerns of a Jackson Township landowner who wants to know if four-wheelers have the right to run the Ottawa River on his property. Kevin Cox asked if she would report those findings back here, as he would like to know the answer to that. Also, the Lima Area Chapter League of Women Voters is hosting a presentation on Lake Erie Dredging at the Allen County Red Cross Chapter House at 7:00 pm on Monday, November 26. The speaker is with Ohio EPA. All are welcome.
- John Hoffman reported that Alloway is engaged in a number of events. Today they have a display at a stormwater seminar. In December they will have a feature article on respirometry in the OWEA Biolsolids publication.

Motion by Mike Elwood, seconded by Kevin Cox to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 9:57 am. The next regular meeting of the Ottawa River Coalition is scheduled for 8:00 am on Thursday, March 28, 2019 at the Lima Allen County Regional Planning Commission Office, located at 130 W. North Street in Lima.

Minutes transcribed by Coalition Coordinator, Beth Seibert