

Ottawa River Coalition Meeting Minutes
Jan 20, 2022 Hybrid Meeting 8:00 am

In attendance:

Beth Seibert, Allen County Commissioners
Nathan Davis, AC Engineer's Office
Dept. Anna Cotterman, Allen SWCD
Teresa Adams, Allen SWCD
Kim Stiles, Allen Water District
Megan Hurd, Alloway
Matt Elkins, Cenovus
Bryant Kesler, City of Lima Public Works Dept.
Adam Haunhorst, LACRPC
Russ Decker, Nutrien
Clint Schroeder, OSU Extension Allen County
Haley Belisle, Ottawa River Coalition

Joe Gearing, AC Engineer's Office
Matt Elling, Allen County Health
Casey Heilman, Allen SWCD
Lydia Archambo, Allen SWCD
Jessica Begonia, Alloway
John Hoffman, Alloway
Emily Kerber, City of Lima Utilities
Tyler Black, JAMPD
Cory Gonya, Nutrien
Boden Fisher, Ohio Department of Agriculture
Leslie Riley, Tri-Moraine Audubon Society

Chairman, Joe Gearing called the meeting to order at 8:05 am.

Joe welcomed the group to the Virtual January Annual Meeting. Online members introduced themselves.

No additions to the agenda were requested.

Treasurer's Report

2021 Financial Report – Executive Director Haley Belisle presented the 2021 Financial Report, outlining income, expenses, and account balances for 2021. Error noted in the Financial Report where one line needs updated from “2020” to “2021”. *Motion by Clint Schroeder to approve the 2021 Financial Report as corrected. Motion seconded by Adam Haunhorst and carried.*

Nominating Committee Report

Executive Committee – Chairman Joe Gearing presented the following slate of officers, each to serve a one-year term, beginning today:

- Chairman – Joe Gearing, representing the Allen County Engineer's Office
- Vice Chairman – Tyler Black, representing the Johnny Appleseed Metropolitan Park District
- Treasurer – Clint Schroeder, representing Ohio State University Extension - Allen County

The Chairman asked for nominations from the floor. *Motion by Russ Decker to close nominations and elect the slate as presented. Motion seconded by Cory Gonya and carried. Nominations closed. Slate of officers was elected as presented.*

Award Presentations

Member Organization of the Year – Nutrien Lima Nitrogen

This award recognizes the one member-organization that demonstrated the most outstanding leadership, support, and other contributions over the past year to the Ottawa River Coalition programs and efforts. Nutrien is the world's largest provider of crop inputs and services, playing a critical role in helping growers increase food production in a sustainable manner. Nutrien produces and distributes around 27 million tons of potash, nitrogen and phosphate products world-wide and we are very lucky to have a plant located right here in Allen County. Nutrien Lima Nitrogen has been a close partner with Ottawa River Coalition over the years. Over the past two years, they have supported us through Covid-impacted Good Friday Fish Fry's. Not only through their sponsorships, but also with their time and good will. A significant portion of our 2021 GFFF volunteers were Nutrien workers and their families. These volunteers were much appreciated during the execution of our first drive-thru Fish Fry and were eager to help wherever necessary. Russ Decker, the special projects manager at Nutrien Lima Nitrogen has been an invaluable member over the last year and especially so during our GFFF. Nutrien helped us secure media releases before and during the fish fry which no doubt led to such a large turn out! Congratulations to Nutrien Lima Nitrogen as we name them our 2022 Member Organization of the Year.

Volunteer of the Year – Jessica Begonia

This award recognizes outstanding service and contribution to Ottawa River Coalition programs or activities during the past year. Jessica joined Alloway in 2011 and is now their Director of Marketing. It is no surprise that one of our most involved organizations would produce one of our most involved members! Jessica has shown herself time and time again to be fundamental in the execution of Coalition programs and efforts. Jessica is a frequent participant in our meetings and has provided thoughtful and valuable insight and guidance for many of our activities. When a call is given asking for volunteers or partners, Jessica always answers with enthusiasm and effectiveness. Her ideas and her advice has helped establish and form the basis for many Coalition programs and we couldn't be more grateful to have her as a member. Congratulations to Jessica as we name her 2022 Volunteer of the Year.

Outstanding Watershed Partner – Adam Haunhorst

This award recognizes an individual who has made a significant contribution to the long-term efforts and changes needed in the watershed to improve water quality. Adam provided substantial help to the Coalition after the removal of the Allentown Lowhead Dam. After the Coalition removed this dam in 2020, we were presented with an eight-thousand dollar fee with FEMA to submit changes to the floodplain map. Adam worked very closely with the Executive Committee and with FEMA to help guide us through this process. Adam's efforts greatly impacted the Coalition after his research found that we would be exempt from the normal process of having to submit this map revision and therefore exempt from this hefty fee. Adam's contributions have helped solidify the "Removal of the Allentown Lowhead Dam" as a significant step towards water quality improvement in our watershed. Congratulations to Adam, we are proud to name him our 2022 Outstanding Watershed Partner!

Watershed Improvement Award – Gary Werling

This award recognizes efforts by an individual that has improved water quality in the Ottawa River watershed. Gary Werling is a local Allen County native who grew up in Harrod. He first joined Allen Soil and Water Conservation District in 1978 as a Drainage Technician and served in this capacity for nearly 30 years before he became the District Administrator in 2004. Gary then served as District Administrator for Allen SWCD for over 17 years before his retirement in December of 2021. The Allen Soil and Water Conservation District promotes the wise use, improvement, and maintenance of the soil, water, and other natural resources in Allen County. Through his time at Allen SWCD, Gary oversaw the installation and maintenance of a broad range of conservation practices. Gary's dedication and commitment to his work has undoubtedly contributed to water quality improvements in our Ottawa River watershed. Congratulations to Gary as we name him our winner of the 2022 Watershed Improvement Award!

School to River Program Update

Allen SWCD Stormwater Coordinator, Lydia Archambo, thanked the Coalition for their contributions to the School to River Program. Lydia uses the School to River funds to enable classes and groups to experience the stream by provided things such as bus transportation and porta-potties. This has been another hard year to get classrooms/groups into the stream due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Director's Report

Haley Belisle gave the Director's report. "Another year on the books! I was hoping to be able to give an update on a "normal year" but we will try again next year. Although, through 2021 we were able to host all of our regular and executive committee meetings thanks to virtual technology. We were also able to see our 19th annual Good Friday Fish Fry. Although this wasn't our typical Fish Fry as we hosted a drive-thru only option, we still sold over 1100 meals and profited over \$8 thousand when you include our generous sponsorships from Nutrien, Alloway, Guardian, and Allied and the private donations from our members. As this was my first Fish Fry to coordinate, I couldn't give a big enough thank you to all of our volunteers and especially to Casey Heilman and of course Beth Seibert as they guided me through this. This year we also saw the closing chapter of our Allentown Lowhead Dam Project. With the delightful news that we do not need to pay the \$8,000 fee to FEMA, we can wrap up this project and look forward to the water quality improvements in that area and we are already sampling great macroinvertebrate species inhabiting the streambed where the lowhead dam used to be located, which is a great sign. This year also saw our first online auction and Halloween PSA. Anne Decker was such a huge help during these programs and designed a couple of posters and a radio ad for us to help spread our Halloween PSA to school-aged children. Our PSA focused on river safety and helping to keep our storm drains clear of trash and debris during the Halloween Trick-or-Treat season. This PSA was shared with nearly 8,000 children from 23 different elementary and middle schools in the local area as well as some Trunk-or-Treat events. Over Halloween weekend, we conducted our first online auction. Items were donated from our long-time partner, Carol Bertrand as well as some private donations from our other members. This auction was much smaller than our normal silent auction at the Fish Fry, but still brought in a much needed \$300 before the end of the year and exceeded our initial goals. The Coalition continues to stay updated on Ohio EPA's Maumee Watershed Nutrient TMDL as they finalize the Loading Analysis Plan. Recent discussions on the Maumee TMDL has inspired the Coalition to form a new committee in 2022 focusing on outreach

concerning Point-Source and Non-point source pollution and will be looking to help support H2Ohio and other conservation programs. If anyone is interested in joining our new committee, please reach out to me and if you see me soliciting you to join, please consider joining this new and exciting outreach project. This year we also look forward to our 20th annual Good Friday Fish Fry on April 15th from 11 AM to 6:30 PM at the Allen County Fairgrounds. It is our intention to have this event as a sit-down dinner with a to-go option. We still might see some slight changes to the fish fry this year, but it will still feature that delicious fish dinner from Lock Sixteen. We will soon be discussing pre-sale and online tickets for this year as well as the silent auction. We are currently looking for any sponsors that are interested in advertising their business or organization during the fish fry on informational pieces or possibly those online/presale tickets. We are also looking forward to the advancement of the Beth Seibert Environmental Scholarship which is looking to announce a winner for a 2022 fall scholarship! Thank you all again for your hard work this year and I look forward to what we can accomplish this year.”

Motion by Teresa Adams to adjourn the January meeting. Motion seconded by Clint Schroeder and carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:05 am. The next meeting of the Ottawa River Coalition is Thursday, March 24, 2022 at 8:00 AM.

Minutes transcribed by Haley Belisle, Executive Director.

