

Ottawa River Coalition Meeting Minutes
July 23, 2020 Virtual Meeting 8:00 am

In attendance:

Beth Seibert, Allen County Commissioners
Matt Elling, Allen County Health Dept.
Jarrod Wehinger, Allen SWCD
Caleb Austin, Allen SWCD
Jessica Begonia, Alloway
Sophia Fisher, Lima Community Dev. Dept.
Mike Elwood, Hardin SWCD
John Schneider, LACNIP
Cory Gonya, Nutrien
Nate Tessler, ODOT Dist. 1
Boden Fisher, OSU Extension Allen County
Leslie Riley, Tri-Moraine Audubon Society

Joe Gearing, Allen County Engineer's Office
Steve Kayatin, Allen Co. San. Engineering Dept.
Casey Heilman, Allen SWCD
Lydia Archambo, Allen SWCD
Patrick Beam, Beam Designs LLC
Jim Morrissey, City of Lima Public Works Dept.
Roy Baldridge, LACNIP
Shane Coleman, LACRPC
Brett Allerding Curfman, ODOT Dist. 1
Clint Schroeder, OSU Extension Allen County
Kevin Cox, Perry Township Trustees
Haley Belisle, Ottawa River Coalition

Chairman, Cory Gonya called the meeting to order at 8:02 am.

Cory welcomed the group to the Virtual July Meeting. Usernames were called to determine who was in attendance.

No additions to the agenda were requested.

Cory announced that the Board of Allen County Commissioners was on the list of 2020 memberships to be approved. *Motion by Jim Morrissey to approve Board of Allen County Commissioners as a 2020 member. Motion seconded by Patrick Beam and carried.*

Cory introduced the meeting minutes from May 28, 2020. There were no requests for additions or corrections to the minutes. *Motion by Casey Heilman to approve the minutes of the May 28, 2020 meeting. Motion seconded by John Schneider and carried.*

Cory introduced the expenditure to remove the Allentown Lowhead Dam. This would use Ottawa River Coalition money to remove the dam. We have received special donations from Nutrien, Husky, and Allen County Sanitary Engineer's Department which has helped fund expenditures such as the Hydrologic and Hydraulic study, but it is likely that other funds will be needed to finish the removal of the dam. There is an estimated \$3,845.09 that has not been covered by special donations. Beth Seibert mentioned that the Executive Committee has discussed plans to pay for a portion of the dam removal with Ottawa River Coalition funds for over a year and this is not a reflection of any lack in fundraising for this project. *Motion by Beth Seibert to approve the expenditure to remove the Allentown Lowhead Dam. Motion seconded by Leslie Riley and carried.*

Treasurer's Report

July Financial Report – Treasurer, Sophia Fisher presented the July Financial Report, outlining receipts, expenses and account balances since the May report. *Motion by Mike Elwood to approve the July Financial Report. Motion seconded by Kevin Cox and carried.*

Committee Reports

Executive Committee – Chairman Cory Gonya reported on their virtual June 25 meeting where this agenda was prepared, and plans were made for the July virtual meeting.

- Financial Records Informal Audit Update – Beth Seibert discussed plans for a future informal audit of the financial records. Beth has spoken to Karen Sneary about performing an audit and plans will be formed to carry this out in this calendar year.
- Results of the Zoom Survey – Executive Director, Haley Belisle shared the results of a survey that was sent out to the 30 members who attended the May virtual meeting. This survey was intended to determine if ORC should invest in the paid version of Zoom which has no time limits on meetings. We had 13 responses with positive reviews regarding the quality and relevance of the previous Zoom meeting. Responses were split evenly between those advising to upgrade to the paid version of Zoom and those who stated that the free version is fine. The Executive Committee will take these results into consideration when determining this potential investment.

Community Relations Committee

- Roy Baldrige provided an update on the 2020 Ottawa River Cleanup. This year's cleanup has been rescheduled for Saturday, September 12th from 9 AM – 12 PM. Sign-in will be located at the American Red Cross building at 610 S Collett Street. Those under 18 years of age can participate if accompanied by an adult and after signing a waiver. More information can be found online at LACNIP's website (lacnip.org).
- Casey Heilman provided an education update. Allen Soil and Water Conservation District participated in the Shawnee Weekday event where the ASWCD interns created 75 individually bagged activities for children to learn about the river. Education events have been especially challenging this year due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Stream Monitoring Committee

- Cory Gonya provided an update on the Lima Equalization Basin CSO Project on behalf of Emily Kerber. The project is coming along and continues to advance every day.
- Cory Gonya provided a regulatory update.
 - Cory spoke of the updates to the Waters of the United States. These new updates clarified what the federal government does not consider WOTUS. This includes: groundwater, ephemeral features, diffuse stormwater runoff, ditches, prior converted cropland, artificially irrigated areas, artificial lakes and ponds, water-filled depressions, sand/gravel/fill pits, stormwater control features, groundwater recharge, water reuse and wastewater recycling structures, and waste treatment systems. In the past, Ohio has considered ephemeral features to be Waters of the State. Shortly after these federal updates, Ohio updated their regulations for permitting and modifications done to ephemeral features. They have now been combined with their Category 1 and Category 2 isolated wetland permit.
 - Ohio EPA recently released their 2020 Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report. This report details the different impaired water bodies and streams within Ohio, including the Western Lake Erie Basin (WLEB). Ohio EPA has announced that they would fast-track a TMDL for the Maumee River Watershed.
 - PFAS Regulation - Polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) regulations are in process. Ohio EPA has restarted testing for PFAS in drinking water supplied by non-municipal waters (such as private wells) and will later move to test municipal waters.

Lowhead Dam Committee – Cory Gonya gave an update on the Allentown Lowhead Dam Removal project. Removal activities are slated to begin at the end of August. Removal activities must be completed before it gets too cold in order to relocate Mussels before they burrow into the streambed. The current schedule has Degen Excavating mobilizing on August 26th and starting removal activities on August 27th. We will be organizing volunteer groups to help relocate mussels after the dam pool has dewatered. The group discussed possible additions to the volunteer event such as waivers and social distancing protocol.

Stormwater Committee

- Jim Morrisey gave an update on City of Lima projects. The City is wrapping up some of their storm sewer projects which has impacted the northern part of Lima. The railroad grade separation project is still moving forward and is about 97% complete. Melrose Phase II is moving forward, and curb/sidewalk should be installed in the next couple of weeks. The Schoonover dam project is moving forward and the bike path should be completed soon.
- Casey Heilman spoke of urban stormwater initiatives served by Allen SWCD. Due to COVID-19, most educational programs have been cancelled. Allen SWCD is hoping to collaborate with JAMPD for some virtual educational events. Casey spoke of the rain barrel sale and rain barrel rebate offered at ASWCD. Some 300 postcards were recently sent out to the public regarding information on the rain barrel sale & rebate.
- Haley Belisle spoke of ASWCD's summer projects. This was a rather condensed summer as the ASWCD interns joined later in the summer than normal and will be leaving sooner than normal. ASWCD interns will speak of the summer projects later in the meeting.
- Joe Gearing gave an update on Allen County Engineer projects. Joe reported that the county is working on the State Road bridge. ACE will be opening up bids on August 4th for a project in Shawnee. Ditch maintenance will continue their spraying projects on the petition ditches, cattails, and roadside ditches for the next couple of weeks. ACE intern has been focused on GIS mapping improvements.

Watershed Committee

- Allen Soil and Water Conservation District interns, Caleb Austin and Lydia Archambo, gave a report on their summer projects at ASWCD. The interns were able to help with an education event called Shawnee Weekday. They put together 6-7 bagged activities for 75 children, pre-K to 5th grade. This was a challenge as there are COVID-19 rules in place- such as the children not being able to share supplies. The interns have collected data on about 310 catch basins for the City of Lima and have placed 69 new steel markers on the storm drains that warn the public that the catch basin drains to the river. The interns have completed roughly 13 miles of outfall monitoring in the Ottawa River. They have found three outfalls of concern with exceedances of Phosphorus and/or Nitrogen. One unique aspect of outfall monitoring this year is that the interns completed this monitoring in the river near the Allentown dam and where the mussel relocation event will be taking place. The interns have also worked on floating wetlands in Faurot Park. They have improved upon designs from last summer and will be working on creating these new wetlands and placing them in the ponds in the next week.

New Business

Member and Partner Reports

- Beam Designs LLC – Pat Beam expressed his enthusiasm with the continued construction of the railroad grade separation project on Elm street as well as the Rotary amphitheater and RTA bus parking project. Beam Designs LLC recently had their first meeting for the Auglaize Bank Restoration and Trail project. Beam has also been working with landowners on the Sugar Creek Restoration inventory.
- Perry Township – Kevin Cox reported that Perry township will be having some temporary road closures due to road paving projects. Perry township may be expanding on one of their industrial parks with a plastic molding company. Kevin also reported on the upcoming county fair at the end of August and noted that there may be some changes this year due to COVID-19.
- Allen County Sanitary Engineer Department – Steve Kayatin provided an update on ACSED projects. West Central Ohio Veterinary Emergency Services is looking to switch to public sewer system. ACSED is in the process of executing the CMAR process for the design and construction of an improvement of the Shawnee II plant. The Shawnee collection system should be in the final phase of increasing capacity and reducing sanitary sewer overflows. The Gomer Sewer project is moving forward and should be going out to bid later this year. Steve expanded on the BOACC's approval of Assignment Assumption Agreement to take county water customers and putting them under the Allen Water District. This should allow for additional projects to happen and improve the ability to get public water to people in an easier fashion. There is an effort to initiate a Master Water Study Plan for the whole county.
- Lima-Allen County Neighborhoods in Partnership – Roy Baldrige spoke of the Lima City Mini Grant Program where the city authorizes a \$500 grant to neighborhoods and non-profit organizations to bring about improvements for the community. They awarded 7 grants this year. Activate Allen County also has a grant program to help with neighborhood improvements. LACNIP has nominated Country Club Hills Twin Lakes Neighborhood Association for a national award from Neighborhoods USA to recognize their efforts in improving upon their local park. CCHTL received the national second place 2020 NUSA Neighborhood of the Year Physical Revitalization/Beautification Award.
- Alloway – Jessica Begonia spoke of a recent article on Alloway's website which touches on their move to OEAMC and features drone footage of the building. The article also expands on their EnviroGo, respirometry, and microscopy analysis programs.
- OSU Extension Allen County – Boden Fisher provided an update for Allen County. Despite COVID-19 restrictions, they are still meeting with the agricultural community on best management practices, water quality, and agronomic productivity. They have been able to start their on-farm trials this year. Their office has been working on Agricultural Conservation Planning framework and have been able to develop some of those plans in Putnam county.
- Ohio Department of Transportation, District 1 – Brett Allerding Curfman spoke of their MS4 annual compliance inspection which took place last week at their Allen County garage.
- Allen County Health Department – Matt Elling provided an update on ACHD programs. Bill Kelly has retired from the Director's position. ACHD programs have primarily focused on COVID-19.
- Allen SWCD – Haley Belisle announced that ASWCD's open house and annual meeting originally scheduled for September 9th has been cancelled. Voting for Board of Supervisors will take place in-office.

Motion by Kevin Cox to adjourn the meeting. Motion was seconded by Joe Gearing. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 9:44 am. The next meeting of the Ottawa River Coalition is Thursday, September 24, 2020 at 8:00 am.

Minutes transcribed by Haley Belisle, Executive Director.