

December 4, 2024
ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Executive Committee
Meeting Summary

Attendance

Rob Kastner	Wayne Soil and Water Conservation District
Wesley Carder	City of Canton
Tony Demasi	City of Cuyahoga Falls
Ron Etling	Portage County Appointee
Mike Fritz	City of Wooster
Kevin Givins	City of Orrville
Eric Gorczynski	City of Kent
Genny Hanna	City of Akron
Chuck Hauber	Summit County Engineer's Office
Bob Hempel	Wayne County Health Department
Patrick Jeffers	City of Twinsburg
Jenn Kiper	Wayne County Planning Department
Ross Nicholson	Summit County Department of Sanitary Sewer Services
Justin Rechichar	Portage County Health District
Ali Rogalski	Summit County Public Health
Pete Wearstler	City of Alliance
Dan Joseph	City of Akron
Julie Reis	Summit County Public Health
Paige Seech	Stark County Health Department
Patricia Vanah	Ohio EPA
Gordon Cromley	Portage County Water Resources
Stephanie Deibel	Summit County Engineer's Office
Patrick Gsellman	Environmental Design Group (Akron Waterways Renewed!)
Elizabeth Johnson	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Huntington District
David Kohlmeier	CTI Engineers, Inc.
Ken Woodard	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Huntington District
Joe Hadley	NEFCO
Tom LaPlante	NEFCO

Chair Kastner called the meeting to order.

Public Comments

There were no comments from the public.

Meeting Summary

The November meeting summary was accepted as transmitted.

Discussion Item

"U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Programs and Authorities"; Elizabeth Johnson, Interdisciplinary Planner, USACE Huntington District

Ms. Johnson gave an overview of USACE missions: Navigation, flood risk management, ecosystem restoration, regulatory, recreation, emergency management, international and interagency support, and water supply. It also covered authorization and special authorizations for USACE to undertake studies and projects under various Sections of the Water Resource Development Act (WRDA). She covered the appropriations or funding for these studies and projects through the President's Annual Budget, Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act, Continuing Resolution Act, and Work Plans. She was accompanied by Mr. Woodard, the Hunting District's Chief of Plan Formulation. Ms. Johnson took a deep dive into six of USACE's core programs and authorities and its ability to provide

funding for the design and construction of wastewater treatment facilities and drinking water supply, storage, and treatment facilities, as well as other water resource projects. She presented details on USACE studies, programs, and services, and its available funding for drinking water and wastewater infrastructure projects. Topics covered include:

- Feasibility Study (An assessment of a proposed water resource project's engineering feasibility, economic justification, environmental acceptability, and federal interest)
- Continuing Authorities Program (65 percent USACE/35 percent applicant cost-share)
 - To plan, design, and construct water resource and ecosystem restoration projects
- Interagency Non-structural Floodplain Management Services ('Silver Jackets' program)
 - Collaborative rather than cost-shared
- Floodplain Management Services (100 percent federally funded, up to \$150,000)
- Planning Assistance to States (Section 22) (50/50 cost-share or 100 percent federal if applicant is classified as an economically disadvantaged community)
 - Technical assistance for water resource and related land resource development plans
- Watershed Planning (Section 727) (100 percent federally funded to 75/25 cost-share)
- Continuing Authorities Program (has nine authorities providing benefits to public entities)
 - Section 14 (Emergency streambank erosion protection for public facilities; \$10 million limit per project)
 - Section 103 (Storm driven wave protection; \$10 million funding limit per project)
 - Section 107 (Navigation improvements, e.g., dredging; \$10 million limit per project)
 - Section 111 (Mitigation to shore damage attributable to navigation works)
 - Section 204 (Regional sediment management and beneficial use of dredged sediment)
 - Section 205 (Plan, design, construct flood control projects; \$10 million per project)
 - Section 206 (Plan, design, and construct projects to restore aquatic ecosystems for fish and wildlife; \$10 million limit per project)
 - Section 208 (Snagging and clearing of logjams for flood control; \$0.5 million limit)
 - Section 1135 (Modifications to previous USACE projects to improve the environment; \$10 million limit per project)
- Section 594 Ohio Environmental Infrastructure
 - Design and/or construction assistance to small communities for carrying out water-related environmental infrastructure and resource protection and development projects, including:
 - Wastewater treatment and related facilities
 - Combined sewer overflow abatement
 - Drinking water supply, storage, treatment and related facilities
 - Surface water resource protection and development
 - Seventy-five percent of the total project costs are eligible for reimbursement
 - How to apply: Submit project proposal application through the Small Communities Environmental Infrastructure Group (SCEIG) Finance Committee

Ms. Johnson's presentation concluded with her and Mr. Woodard, the Hunting District's Chief of Plan Formulation, fielding many questions from the ERTAC.

Consideration by the ERTAC of a Recommendation to the NEFCO Board to approve the FY2025 Clean Water (208) Plan FPA update (memo and 4 PDFs of 32 FPA update maps were transmitted with the agenda mailout on November 27th) ACTION REQUESTED

Mr. LaPlante went through the specifics of this year's annual update request from several of the region's wastewater management agencies. He noted that the 30-day public review and comment period ran from September 30th through October 29th with no substantive comments received by NEFCO. He showed slides of maps of the eleven facilities planning areas that have a combined total of approximately 55 update areas consisting of about 721 wastewater prescription updates and one FPA boundary modification. He noted that the 55 update areas are plotted on the 32 FPA update

maps that the ERTAC received with the agenda mailout. He showed slides illustrating that the 32 PDF maps are representations of the exact proposed updates that were submitted by the MAs, but they contain update related details that cannot easily be seen due to scale limitations of those maps. He noted that because of this, NEFCO's interactive online 208 Plan draft update map should be viewed in conjunction with the PDF maps. He also showed a slide of the requested minor text-only update to the "Area Served" section in the 208 Plan's Chapter 3 Appendix 3-33-Springfield No. 91 FPA. He noted that all affected MAs were contacted by the MAs requesting the updates and none objected. He added that NEFCO staff recommends approval of the final draft of the FY2025 FPA update and asked for the ERTAC's recommendation to the NEFCO Board to approve the FPA update. Chair Kastner asked if there was any further discussion from the committee. Hearing none, he asked if there was a motion to recommend to the NEFCO Board to approve the FY2025 FPA update. Ms. Kiper made that motion. Ms. Rogalski seconded it. There were no objections or abstentions. The motion carried.

NEFCO FY2025 Work Program

Initiation of an update of Clean Water (208) Plan Chapter 5: "Management of Nonpoint Source Pollution and Stormwater Runoff"; status of coordination with stormwater entities

Mr. LaPlante reminded the ERTAC that as part of NEFCO's FY2025 contracts with Ohio EPA, staff is beginning an update of this 208 Plan chapter. He reiterated that this is an opportunity for the region to tell staff what's needed in this chapter; what it should contain. He indicated that NEFCO has begun to reach out to the stormwater program managers and coordinators of the counties and health districts to discuss one-on-one any needed changes to their existing stormwater management programs, much the way the health departments identified in the first Chapter 4 update in the early 2000s what they needed ODH to do, leading to the 2015 Sewage Treatment System Rules to be developed and adopted by the agency. He added that Ohio EPA NEDO's stormwater program supervisor has provided NEFCO staff with the necessary contact information for the region's stormwater entities and a list of hurdles/issues to program implementation, noting that there are common themes for all MS4s as well as some region-specific issues.

Ohio EPA Director sends NEFCO's and the other Areawides' submitted 208 Plan updates from 2023 to Governor for certification

Mr. LaPlante reported that Ohio EPA Division of Surface Water staff recently indicated to NEFCO staff that the Areawides' submitted 208 Plan updates from 2023 have cleared the agency's management and director reviews and that the director has sent the Areawides' submitted Plan updates, including NEFCO's, to the Governor for certification. He added that Ohio EPA DSW staff are hopeful that the Governor will certify the updates soon, noting that once these 208 Plan updates have been certified by the Governor, Ohio EPA will send them to U.S. EPA Region 5 on his behalf, to be considered for approval. He noted that when U.S. EPA approves the certified updates, they will be incorporated into the state's water quality management plan.

Friends of the Crooked River recognizes NEFCO and other partners of the Cuyahoga River Canal Diversion Dam Removal Project with 'Dam Buster' award

Mr. LaPlante mentioned that at its annual meeting on November 12, 2024, Friends of the Crooked River (FOCR), a local non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and restoring the benefits of the Cuyahoga River since 1990, presented NEFCO with its 'Dam Buster' award. He showed a slide of the award and added that FOCR presented the award to NEFCO and other partners in recognition of their contributions in removing the Cuyahoga River Canal Diversion Dam in 2020. He noted that FOCR made about 20 of the awards from actual pieces of the removed 1952 concrete Canal Diversion Dam mounted on a wooden base. He added that the 1827 Pinery Dam that was also removed from the river under the project was a few yards upstream from the Canal Diversion Dam and was constructed from wooden timbers. He reminded newer ERTAC members that in 2019, NEFCO applied for, and was the recipient of an \$800,000 grant from the U.S. EPA Region 5 Great Lakes National Program Office that helped fund the project. He added that Ohio EPA provided \$900,000 in Supplemental

Environmental Project (SEP) funds to help fund it; FOCR was the subrecipient of NEFCO's grant, the recipient of Ohio EPA's SEP funds and was the local implementor of the project.

Summit SWCD to host a community meeting to discuss its NPS-IS for the headwaters of the Tuscarawas River region; details: December 3, 2024, at 6 p.m. at the Springfield Township Town Hall, 2459 Canfield Road, Akron, OH 44312

Mr. LaPlante shared this meeting announcement with the ERTAC agenda mailout on November 27th and noted that the meeting was held yesterday. Ms. Deibel indicated that she attended it, and she gave a brief report on the turnout and the topics discussed.

Reports from ERTAC members (a chance for members to report on activities or problems affecting their communities)

There were no reports from ERTAC members.

Information items requested

Messrs. Demasi and Etling requested a copy of selected articles.

Ohio EPA Public Notices requested

Mr. Demasi requested a copy of a selected Ohio EPA public notice. Mr. Hadley mentioned that another Ohio EPA public notice came in yesterday regarding free brownfields technical assistance grants (TAG) for up to \$20,000 being available to support small, rural, or disadvantaged communities. He noted that January 31, 2025 is the deadline to express interest for Ohio EPA to submit a TAG application to USEPA on behalf of small, rural, or disadvantaged communities, and March 2025 is the TAG application deadline.

Ohio Environmental Legislation Recently Signed or Introduced

While no Ohio environmental legislation was recently signed or introduced, Mr. Hadley expressed his sympathy with the recent announcement of the death of Ohio Senator Kirk Schuring. He noted Senator Schuring's longstanding support for the NEFCO region, especially for his home county, Stark County; and his efforts of trying to secure funding for the U.S. 30 corridor and his friendship with Stark County Commissioner Richard Regula.

Other Business

Mr. Hadley asked ERTAC members to provide staff with any discussion topics they'd like to hear at future meetings. He thanked Mr. Demasi and the City of Cuyahoga Falls for hosting the ERTAC meetings in 2024.

ERTAC Contact Hour Course List

Chair Kastner drew the ERTAC's attention to the list.

Next Meeting

Chair Kastner said that the next meeting would be held at 9:00 a.m. on **January 8, 2025** at The Natatorium, Hopewell Room, 2345 4th Street, Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio.