

April 3, 2024
ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Executive Committee
Meeting Summary

Attendance

Rob Kastner	Wayne Soil and Water Conservation District
Wesley Carder	City of Canton
Stephanie Deibel	Summit Soil and Water Conservation District
Tony Demasi	City of Cuyahoga Falls
Dominic DiSalvo	City of Ravenna
Ron Etling	Portage County Board of Commissioners Appointee
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
Dan Joseph	City of Akron
Ross Nicholson	Summit County Department of Sanitary Sewer Services
Justin Rechichar	Portage County Health District
Ali Rogalski	Summit County Public Health
Patricia Vanah	Ohio EPA
Sylvia Chinn-Levy	Ohio EPA
Chris Biro	Ohio EPA
Gordon Cromley	Portage County Water Resources
Will Duck	Portage County Health District
Stephanie Dyer	Eastgate Regional Council of Governments
Pat Gsellman	Environmental Design Group (Akron Waterways Renewed!)
Katherine Holmok	Kimley-Horn (Engineering, Planning, and Design Consultants)
David Kohlmeier	CTI Engineers, Inc.
Marissa Tomin	Ohio EPA
Bill Zawiski	Ohio EPA
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 March meeting summary was accepted as transmitted.

Discussion Items

"Update on Ohio EPA's most recent water quality survey work for the Tuscarawas River and Sugar Creek and select tributaries"; Bill Zawiski, Water Quality Supervisor, Ohio EPA Northeast District Office, Division of Surface Water

Mr. Zawiski gave an overview of Ohio EPA's January 2024 *Biological and Water Quality Study of Sugar Creek and Select Tributaries* and February 2024 *Biological and Water Quality Study of Tuscarawas River and Select Tributaries*. He noted that the Sugar Creek watershed was surveyed and sampled in 2017 and the Tuscarawas River watershed was surveyed and sampled in 2017 with follow-up sampling in 2019 and 2023. He discussed how each of these watersheds were assessed for recreation, human health, and aquatic life uses using Ohio EPA's methodology. He summarized the findings for the beneficial uses assessed in the surveys. He noted that, on average, improvements

between the 1998 and 2017 sampling were documented across the board among all indices measured in the Sugar Creek mainstem and tributaries. He explained that the recreation use designation of the Tuscarawas River and 24 tributaries were assessed by sampling for *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) bacteria, adding that fourteen of 25 mainstem sampling sites and all twenty-four tributary sampling sites were in non-attainment of the recreation use designation. He noted that the human health beneficial use designation of the Tuscarawas River was assessed by analyzing fish tissue collected from four sections in the river to determine whether contaminant levels present would warrant fish consumption advisories, adding that the average concentration of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in fish tissue samples remain in non-attainment for human health water quality criteria, and two upper watershed assessment units were impaired due to hexachlorobenzene. He explained that the aquatic life use designation was assessed at 30 locations along the mainstem of the Tuscarawas River and 63 tributary locations, adding that of the 63 tributary sites sampled, 33 were in full attainment of aquatic life use designation; and 21 of the 30 mainstem sites were in full attainment of this beneficial use designation.

Mr. Zawiski's presentation concluded with him fielding many questions from the ERTAC.

"The development of a nine-element nonpoint source implementation strategy (NPS-IS) for the HUC-12 Fish Creek-Mahoning River watershed in Mahoning and Columbiana Counties and a small area in northeast Stark County, including the City of Alliance"; Stephanie Dyer, Environmental Program Manager, Eastgate Regional Council of Governments

Ms. Dyer explained the elements of a NPS-IS and gave an overview of Eastgate's development of a NPS-IS for the Fish Creek-Mahoning River watershed. Her presentation covered the following topics:

- Nonpoint source implementation strategy planning
 - A comprehensive analysis of the causes and sources of pollution
 - Specific nonpoint sources as defined by water quality data
 - Focuses on what need to be done to meet attainment statuses
 - Allows Ohio EPA grant dollars to be used when a project is identified in a NPS-IS
 - Living document that can be updated with new data, projects, etc.
- General NPS-IS plan components
 - **Summarize** watershed characteristics
 - **List** causes and sources of impairment
 - **Identify** critical areas
 - **Establish** goals and objectives
 - **Develop** sound projects
 - **Implement** the projects, make them a reality
- Summary of Fish Creek watershed characteristics
 - Background information – Upper Mahoning River watershed, 56.67 square miles, etc.
 - Land use
 - Water quality characteristics
 - Ohio EPA 2006 *Biological and Water Quality Study of the Upper Mahoning River*
 - Ohio EPA 2011 *TMDLs for the Upper Mahoning Watershed*
 - Ohio EPA's 2022 *Integrated Report*
- List causes and sources of Fish Creek watershed impairment
- Identify critical areas (where impairment is present, e.g., priority unsewered areas)
- Establish goals and objectives, e.g., overall population/health of fish, macroinvertebrates, etc.
- Develop projects, e.g., stream/wetland restoration, stormwater management, septic systems
- Implement Fish Creek watershed priority projects; identify project leads; apply for funding

Ms. Dyer's presentation concluded with her thanking the ERTAC for the opportunity to speak at this meeting. Mr. Hadley asked if an Ohio EPA-endorsed NPS-IS has a 'shelf life'. Ms. Dyer answered that a NPS-IS does not have a shelf life; it's a living document that is expected to be updated with new data and projects, as new data becomes available and new projects are identified. Mr. Hadley asked if Ms. Dyer could provide a ballpark figure for the cost of developing an NPS-IS. Ms. Dyer indicated that the cost to develop one is about \$10,000.

Consideration by the ERTAC of a Recommendation to the NEFCO Board

*Consideration of an Amendment to the Clean Water (208) Plan to create a new Sterling Facilities Planning Area and to change the existing wastewater prescription to serve the Sterling area in Milton Township in Wayne County **ACTION REQUESTED** (transmitted with agenda mailout)*

Mr. LaPlante went through the specifics of this amendment request from the Wayne County Office of Environmental Services (WCOES). He showed slides of amendment Figure 1 (amendment location map) and explained that the requested amendment is being driven by the Sterling area having a high rate of failing septic systems, as determined by the Wayne County Health Department and Wayne Soil and Water Conservation District. He noted that the amendment would allow WCOES' planned construction of a publicly owned wastewater treatment plant and sanitary sewer to serve the Sterling area to be consistent with the 208 Plan prior to receiving permit-to-install approval by Ohio EPA. He further noted that the new facility is being designed to handle all flow and loading from the Sterling area. He showed a slide of amendment Figure 2 (map of existing wastewater prescription) and Figure 3 (map of proposed new FPA boundary and prescription) side-by-side. He explained that with the proposed amendment, a new Sterling FPA boundary would be created, sharing a common boundary with the west side of the Rittman FPA. He added that the proposed amendment will also change the current prescription from "Areas that will be Served by Home Sewage and Semi-Public Sewage Disposal Systems (cream)" to "Areas Expected to be Served with Sanitary Sewers within the next 20 Years (orange)". He further added that the proposed amendment would create a new Appendix 3-56- Sterling FPA in the Plan, as transmitted with the agenda mailout. He went over the six local governments/government agencies that would be affected by the amendment and explained that WCOES sent a request-for-comment letter to them on February 26, 2024, and all six indicated that they either agree with the amendment or have no objection to it. He also noted that the legal notice was published in the Wooster Daily Record on February 27, 2024, and no inquiries or comments were received by WCOES during the required 15-day public comment period.

Mr. LaPlante said that NEFCO staff recommends approval of this amendment. Ms. Vanah asked why the proposed new Sterling FPA boundary doesn't conform to parcel boundaries. Mr. LaPlante and Chair Kastner explained that this is because some of the affected parcels are very large and Wayne County desires to preserve farmland. After hearing no further discussion, Chair Kastner asked the ERTAC if there was a motion to recommend approval of the amendment by the NEFCO Board. Mr. DiSalvo made that motion. Mr. Etling seconded it. There were no objections or abstentions from the ERTAC. The motion carried.

NEFCO FY2024 Work Program

Ongoing annual 201/208 facilities planning area update: Data being sent by NEFCO to participating MAs

Mr. LaPlante reported that MA participation in this year's FPA update is higher than the participation in last year's first annual update. He noted that all four county MAs have indicated that they will participate in the update, as did the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District and Cities of Aurora, Canton, and Twinsburg. He reported that the NEFCO staff has been updating its interactive online map to reflect the nine update areas that were approved by the NEFCO Board on December 20, 2023. Once that has been completed, the GIS shapefiles will be sent by NEFCO to the participating MAs so they may map their proposed FPA updates in NEFCO's required format.

Ohio EPA completes its review of NEFCO's FY2025 water quality management planning contracts draft work programs

Mr. LaPlante reported that Ohio EPA has indicated that it completed its review of NEFCO's submitted draft work programs for our agency's two water quality management planning contracts with Ohio EPA. He noted that Ohio EPA is in the process of scheduling a meeting with NEFCO and the other five areawide planning agencies to go over the next steps for the contracts.

Venue secured for June 5th ERTAC meeting; venue still needed for August 7th meeting; input requested

Mr. LaPlante said that Shady Hollow Lodge in Sand Run Metro Park has been secured for the June 5th ERTAC meeting. He noted that Mike Johnson with Summit Metro Parks has agreed to give a presentation on Summit Metro Parks' recent acquisition and restoration of the Valley View area of Cascade Valley Metro Park at the June meeting. Mr. LaPlante thanked Ms. Hanna for her suggestion that resulted in this venue and presentation being secured. He added that a venue is still needed for the August 7th meeting and asked for the ERTAC's input in finding a location for that meeting.

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

Mr. Hauber reported that the Summit County Engineer's Office is hiring a stormwater specialist/MS4 permit inspector and he referred the ERTAC to the Summit County Engineer's website for the specifics of the position. Mr. Demasi reported that the City of Cuyahoga Falls will hold River Clean-Ups on May 18th and June 21st. Mr. Demasi also reported that the city recently performed preventative maintenance on its rain garden project. This resulted in at least 180 pounds of invasive plants being removed from the rain garden. Ms. Deibel reported that Summit SWCD recently launched its chemical and biological monitoring program for the Cuyahoga River and Tuscarawas River watersheds. She noted that Summit SWCD's website is currently down but will have more information on the program once it's operational again. Mr. Rechichar reported that the Portage County Combined General Health District is hosting a community health fair and open house today, April 3rd, from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., at its offices at 999 East Main Street, Ravenna, Ohio. He noted that there will be food trucks, activities, giveaways, and funding information for homeowners with failing septic systems at the event.

Information items requested

Mr. Etling requested a copy of selected articles.

Ohio EPA Public Notices requested

No copies of Ohio EPA public notices were requested.

Ohio Environmental Legislation Recently Signed or Introduced

No Ohio environmental legislation was recently signed or introduced.

Other Business

There was no other business.

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 May 1, 2024, at The Natatorium (Hopewell Room) 2345 4th Street, Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio.