

July 7, 2021
ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Executive Committee
Virtual Microsoft Teams Meeting Summary

Attendance

Mary Helen Smith	Portage County Health District
Ynes Arocho	Ohio EPA
Nathan Coey	City of Wooster
Stephanie Deibel	Summit Soil and Water Conservation District
Becky Foster	Wayne County Board of Commissioners
Gail Gifford	Portage County Regional Planning Commission
Genny Hanna	City of Akron
Bob Hempel	Wayne County Health Department
Trevor Hunt	City of Barberton
Patrick Jeffers	City of Ravenna
Dan Joseph	City of Akron
Rob Kastner	Wayne Soil and Water Conservation District
Jenn Kiper	Wayne County Planning Department
Joel Montgomery	City of Wooster
Ross Nicholson	Summit County Department of Sanitary Sewer Services
Tia Rutledge	Portage County Water Resources
Pete Wearstler	Wayne County Planning Department
David White	Summit County Engineer's Office
Scott Ellsworth	Stark County Metropolitan Sewer District
Patrick Gsellman	City of Akron
Greg Tracy	City of Barberton
Richard Harrison	Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission (ORSANCO)
Joseph Hadley, Jr.	NEFCO
Tom LaPlante	NEFCO

Chairwoman Smith called the meeting to order

Public Comments

None.

Meeting Summary

The June meeting summary was accepted as transmitted.

Discussion Item

"Protecting the Ohio River Basin Watershed"; Richard Harrison, P.E., Executive Director, Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission (ORSANCO)

Mr. Harrison presented an overview of the Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission's (ORSANCO's) water quality programs for protecting the Ohio River and its tributaries. He described in great detail the surface water quality sampling and assessment activities implemented by ORSANCO, which is an interstate commission of eight states and the federal government that was formed in 1948 to restore and protect the Ohio River. His presentation included an overview of ORSANCO's source water assessment and protection program for the many public water systems that use the Ohio River as its source water. Topics covered included:

- Who is ORSANCO?
- Ohio River background

- ORSANCO programmatic approach to water quality
- ORSANCO special projects
- Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Compact (between 8 member states, including Ohio)
- Compact's water quality approach
- ORSANCO's Mission: To protect the interstate waters of the Ohio River Basin (District)
- Ohio River facts
- Ohio River overall use report card
- Sampling sites (shown on slides of watershed maps)
- Keeping our drinking water safe with the organics detection system (ODS)
- How common are spills into source waters nationally?
- ODS VOC monitoring instrumentation
- Current ODS analyte list
- Is it safe to swim?
- Contact recreation monitoring
- Can I eat the fish?
- Annual biological assessments
- Ohio River harmful algal bloom (HAB) events
- ORSANCO PFAS Project

Mr. Harrison's presentation concluded with him fielding questions.

NEFCO FY2021 Work Program

208 Plan Chapter 3, draft Policy 3-6a and 3-6b; status

Progress report on the draft Policy

Mr. LaPlante reported that by using a revision approach that included introducing brief guidance sections to clarify any ambiguous phrases in Policy 3-6a and 3-6b, the wastewater planning dispute policy, NEFCO staff completed a draft of the revised Policy. He indicated that after NEFCO staff distributed the draft Policy to the ERTAC Policy subcommittee for its review on May 26th, and at the same time distributed it to some of the larger management agencies that recently spoke with NEFCO staff and either agreed with or had no objection to NEFCO's Policy revision approach, three sets of suggested edits or comments were received by the June 17th deadline and incorporated into the draft Policy. He added that on July 2nd, NEFCO staff distributed the draft Policy mark-up with all the suggested edits or comments and NEFCO staff's responses posted in the draft's right margin to the ERTAC Policy subcommittee and the select MAs that provided input.

NEFCO staff and ERTAC Policy subcommittee to meet directly after this meeting to discuss the subcommittee's possible endorsement of the draft Policy

Mr. LaPlante noted that when NEFCO staff distributed the draft Policy mark-up to the ERTAC Policy subcommittee and select MAs on July 2nd, staff also reminded these entities that they were invited to the ERTAC Policy subcommittee meeting that would directly follow the July ERTAC meeting, and staff included the subcommittee meeting agenda, which he went over. He explained that after discussing any additional suggested edits and comments at the meeting, the group would discuss a possible endorsement of the draft Policy by the subcommittee and select MAs to present to the ERTAC for consideration of public notification of the draft Policy.

Portage Lakes Management Study (PLMS) – Phase 6

NEFCO staff is incorporating suggested technical edits received at the June 24th partners meeting into the draft management plan

Mr. LaPlante informed the ERTAC that NEFCO's watershed planner, is continuing to incorporate comments received at the June 24th partners meeting into the draft management

plan. He added that comments being incorporated include technical comments received from one of the partners.

Current, on-going, and upcoming PLMS – Phase 6 activities

Mr. LaPlante went over the current, on-going, and upcoming PLMS – Phase 6 activities. He mentioned that current activities include NEFCO staff compiling existing, limited limnological data to provide information and a framework for an upcoming sampling program. He talked about how on-going activities include discussing the Plan roll-out and NEFCO staff and partners setting up an online discussion forum for the partners to share information about the Lakes and updates. He explained that upcoming activities include NEFCO staff researching efforts by other lakes management organizations to help the partners establish a Portage Lakes management program; and participating in the development of a curated online website map for submission of photos and observations. He added that staff would provide technical support based on existing material for up to four other meeting topics of interest.

Next PLMS partners meeting to be held on August 26th

Mr. LaPlante reported that after some introductory comments about the partnership as an evolving collaboration, allowing the sharing of resources, expertise, and information, a lot of the next PLMS partners meeting, which will be held on August 26, will be focused on on-going and upcoming activities. He noted that at this meeting, the partners will discuss implementation of the management plan, managing aquatic plants and rollout of the plan, which will include at least one public meeting and a public comment period before asking the NEFCO Board to endorse the final draft PLMS Management Plan.

Chairwoman Smith asked whether NEFCO is able to create and share fact sheets and information about best management practices identified in the PLMS, such as the aquatic vegetation control measures around docks, to help other lakes experiencing HABs within the region. Mr. Hadley responded that he liked Chairwoman Smith's idea of educational materials coming out of the PLMS; and added that NEFCO staff will look into whether such educational materials have already been developed from previous years of the study. He indicated that he would also have staff look at what Ohio EPA and other state agencies are doing in terms of educating people on the threat of HABs to their local waterbody. He added that NEFCO would look into providing the PLMS educational materials to other areas outside of the Portage Lakes for distribution.

Areawides/Ohio EPA collaborative project on sewerred and unsewerred areas data collection

Initial call for sewer line data from the management agencies

Mr. LaPlante reminded the ERTAC about the specifics of this collaborative project that he first reported on at the May ERTAC meeting. He explained that for this first phase, NEFCO staff will be contacting all the management agencies and county health districts for data that is needed for the project. He requested that the management agencies in attendance begin the process of providing NEFCO with currently available sewer line data. He explained that the sewer line data should identify any sewer lines that are force mains or private sewers, which are typically inaccessible for additional connections. He further explained that if the sewer line data isn't GIS compatible, the management agencies will be sent a link from Ohio EPA to upload the data after informing NEFCO staff of the incompatibility issue; and added that Ohio EPA would then convert the data to a GIS format and send it to NEFCO. He noted that NEFCO staff would then overlay the sewer line data with the 208 Plan's "areas currently served with sanitary sewers".

Initial call for priority areas for needed sewer connections or HSTS upgrades from the health districts

Mr. LaPlante requested that the health districts in attendance begin the process of identifying any priority areas for needed sewer connections or HSTS upgrades based on the potential for public health nuisances, stormwater monitoring results, and other factors, such as age of systems, parcel size and soil suitability for onsite systems. He noted that priority areas for needed sewer connections are generally common knowledge to the health districts; and that the health districts are not being asked to do an in depth analysis of priority areas for needed sewer connections. He added that the health districts only need to roughly delineate their priority areas by highlighting or outlining them with a marker on a map, then provide the maps to NEFCO staff. He explained that Ohio EPA will likely prioritize sewer connections and HSTS upgrades in low-to-moderate income areas, especially in areas with smaller parcels with unsuitable soils for on-site replacement systems. He further explained that the agency has indicated that no distance from existing sanitary sewer is too far to extend sewers to priority areas, so the health districts shouldn't use distance to sewer as a factor in determining priority areas for needed sewer connections. He added that Ohio EPA has indicated that POTW capacity upgrades may also be funded if they are needed to extend and connect sewer to the highest priority HSTS areas.

Canal Diversion Dam Removal Project

Friends of the Crooked River to give an overview of the project, status report, and final steps at the August 4th ERTAC meeting

Mr. LaPlante reminded the ERTAC that NEFCO is the recipient of an \$800,000 grant from US EPA for the Canal Diversion Dam Removal Project; and Friends of the Crooked River (FOCR) is the subrecipient whose contractors removed the dam last year. He reported that FOCR has been focused this year on installing the screw pump that will supply water from the Cuyahoga River to a historic section of the Ohio and Erie Canal. He announced that at the August 4th ERTAC meeting, FOCR will give a technical overview of the project, a status report, and the final steps for the project. He added that the project end date, as stated in the US EPA grant, is October 31, 2021.

FY2022 Water Quality Management Planning contracts with Ohio EPA

NEFCO is awaiting execution of the contracts by Ohio EPA

Mr. LaPlante reported that NEFCO is awaiting approval of its two FY2022 water quality management contracts with Ohio EPA, the first being the contract that amounts to \$75,000 that NEFCO anticipates receiving from the state through the biennium budget for its FY2022 208 Plan maintenance work; and a second contract that amounts to roughly \$52,000 that NEFCO receives from the state in federal 604b funds for its nutrient reduction planning work, which includes Phase 6 of the Portage Lakes Management Study. He further reported that these 604b funds also support NEFCO's participation in the quarterly Ohio Association of Regional Councils (OARC) water quality subcommittee meetings. He mentioned that at the OARC water quality subcommittee meeting that was held on June 21st, Ohio EPA reported that one of six sets of Areawide contracts had been executed; two Areawides submitted signed contracts that are awaiting the governor's signature; and three sets of Areawide contracts were still undergoing Ohio EPA review.

Future ERTAC meetings to be held in person; details

Mr. LaPlante reported that the exception to Ohio's Open Meetings Act that allowed public meetings to be held virtually was not extended to the end of 2021 despite some legislation being introduced that would have allowed that extension. He further reported all future ERTAC meetings will be held in person, and that the City of Cuyahoga Falls has generously agreed to

continue hosting the meetings after a long hiatus in response to the state's COVID-19 public health orders, which were rescinded on June 18th.

Election of ERTAC Chair and Vice Chair; if interested in running pls contact Tom LaPlante

Mr. LaPlante mentioned that this is the time of year when we elect new ERTAC officers. He mentioned that Mary Helen Smith has expressed an interest in continuing as the ERTAC chair; and Rob Kastner has expressed an interest in continuing as vice chair. He asked anyone else that is interested in serving as ERTAC chair or vice chair to please contact NEFCO staff. After some discussion from Chairwoman Smith, Vice Chair Kastner, Mr. Hadley, and Mr. LaPlante, it was decided that the election of ERTAC chair and vice chair would officially take place by vote at the August 4th in-person ERTAC meeting.

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

None.

Information items requested

None.

Ohio EPA Public Notices requested

None.

Ohio Environmental Legislation Recently Signed or Introduced

Mr. Hadley gave a brief report on HB 168, which proposes to remit from the State Fiscal Recovery Fund to repay unemployment advances, to provide funds to support improvements at pediatric behavioral health care facilities, to establish the Water and Sewer Quality Program, and to make appropriations. He also gave an update on the status of HB 175, which proposes to deregulate certain ephemeral water features under various water pollution control laws. He noted that a week or two ago, the chair of the House committee that has been guiding this bill decided not to move forward with it because he wanted to see whether he could strike a balance between the opponents and supporters of the legislation. He added that the House committee will get back together to discuss this bill in the fall when the Ohio General Assembly returns from recess. Mr. Hadley also mentioned that there were no changes to the state's funding of the Areawides after the Governor signed Ohio's biennium budget.

Other Business

Chairwoman Smith requested that NEFCO staff invite Patricia Vanah from Ohio EPA to the August ERTAC meeting so the committee can meet Rich Blasick's replacement.

ERTAC Contact Hour Course List

Chairwoman Smith drew the ERTAC's attention to the list.

Next Meeting

Chairwoman Smith said that the next meeting would be held on August 4, 2021, at The Natatorium in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio.