

June 1, 2022
ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Executive Committee
Meeting Summary

Attendance

Mary Helen Smith	Portage County Health District
Wesley Carder	City of Canton
Tony Demasi	City of Cuyahoga Falls
Dom DiSalvo	City of Ravenna
Kevin Givins	City of Orrville
Patrick D Gsellman	City of Akron
Genny Hanna	City of Akron
Bob Hempel	Wayne County Health Department
Trevor Hunt	City of Barberton
Rob Kastner	Wayne SWCD
Jenn Kiper	Wayne County Planning Department
Ross Nicholson	Summit County Department of Sanitary Sewer Services
Ali Rogalski	Summit County Public Health
Tia Rutledge	Portage County Water Resources
Paige Seech	Stark County Health Department
Patricia Vanah	Ohio EPA
Chuck Hauber	Summit County Engineer's Office
Doug Darrah	ECS Limited
Matt Lascola	GPD Group
Joe Hadley	NEFCO
Tom LaPlante	NEFCO

Chairwoman Smith called the meeting to order

Public Comments

There were no comments from the public

Meeting Summary

The May meeting summary was accepted as transmitted.

Discussion Item

“Cuyahoga River Dam Removal and Bank Stabilization”; speaker: Matt Lascola, P.E., Project Manager, GPD Group

Mr. Lascola's presentation addressed the past and future removal of dams on the Cuyahoga River and bank stabilization after dam removal. The agenda covered why dam removal is important for water quality; the Middle Cuyahoga River story; Cuyahoga Falls case study – post dam removal; and the scheduled Gorge Dam removal. Topics covered included:

- Historical relevance of dams: run-of-river dam outbreak during the Industrial Revolution
- Functionality of dams
 - Dams with purpose
 - Dams forgotten (abandoned)
- Reasons to remove dams
- Needed partnerships and stakeholder engagement to remove dams
- Cuyahoga River aquatic life use attainment status in 1984
 - Middle Cuyahoga River in non-attainment
- USEPA initiatives and funding
 - Improve the water quality of the Cuyahoga River

- Remove beneficial use impairments
- Restore aquatic habitat
- Delist the Middle Cuyahoga River from the Cuyahoga River Area of Concern
- Restore river health and function
 - Remove dam structures
 - Remove dam pool impoundments to restore free-flowing, sediment transport
 - Remove accumulated sediment to restore riffle/pool complexes and habitat
- Provide funding mechanism
 - Water Resources Restoration Sponsorship Program (WRRSP)
 - Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI)
- Free-flowing recovery of the Cuyahoga River
 - Kent Dam removed in 2004 (actually, altered--to drain the dam pool; dam is still there)
 - Munroe Falls Dam removed in 2006
 - Two dams removed in Cuyahoga Falls in 2013
 - Gorge Dam to be removed in 2025; design to be completed in 2023
- Cuyahoga River aquatic life use attainment status in 2008
 - Full attainment, except where dams existed in Cuyahoga Falls, Akron, and Brecksville
- Cuyahoga Falls dam removal case study—LeFever Dam
 - Restoration approach: bank stability risk assessment—post dam removal
 - Bank Assessment for Non-point Source Consequences of Sediment (BANCS)
 - Bank Erosion Hazard Index (BEHI)
 - Near Bank Stress (NBS)
- Bank Stabilization at Riverfront Parkway in Cuyahoga Falls
- Gorge Dam removal—progress update
- Gorge Dam removal partners
- Overview of Gorge Dam removal

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

Consideration by the ERTAC of a Recommendation to the NEFCO Board

Regarding NEFCO sending a letter to U.S. EPA Administrator Michael Regan voicing support for the City of Akron's proposed third amendment to the federal consent decree regarding combined sewer overflows abatement; Patrick Gsellman, P.E., Akron Waterways Renewed Program Manager, City of Akron (letter from Akron's Mayor to U.S. EPA Administrator Regan was provided with the agenda)

Mr. Gsellman went through the specifics of the City of Akron's requested third amendment to the federal consent decree, to which U.S. EPA Region 5 had initially objected. He reported that after this month's ERTAC meeting agenda had been mailed on May 25th, the City of Akron's amendment request was approved by U.S. EPA Region 5; therefore, action by the ERTAC recommending that a letter from NEFCO be sent to U.S. EPA Administrator Regan voicing support for the amendment is no longer needed. Mr. Gsellman indicated that the City of Akron would likely request a letter of support from the NEFCO Board in about three months, when the requested amendment is published in the Federal Register. Mr. Hadley asked whether U.S. EPA's recent approval of the amendment request would need approval by a federal judge. Mr. Gsellman replied that it indeed would need a federal judge's approval, but only after it has been published in the Federal Register.

NEFCO FY2022 Work Program

Staff to solicit from NEFCO's members environmental/water quality projects suggestions

Mr. LaPlante referenced his May 25th memo to the ERTAC and NEFCO members that was included with the agenda mailout regarding this item. He explained that to demonstrate that there is a need for NEFCO to receive additional state and federal funding from the next biennium budget and 604b funds, staff is soliciting additional water quality/environmental project suggestions from the ERTAC and NEFCO members. He asked ERTAC members to send him their projects suggestions, which should not only range from 208 Plan maintenance, such as 208 Plan updates and amendments, and nutrient loading reduction projects, such as the Portage Lakes Management Study, but can also include projects that provide source water protection of public drinking water, especially from "emerging contaminants", lead service line inventories, stormwater projects, and brownfield studies. He indicated that he would compile all suggested projects that he receives and evaluate the feasibility of each one being completed with NEFCO's existing resources, which may not allow all or any suggested projects to be initiated or completed but can demonstrate to the state that more funding is needed for such projects to protect the region's water quality and the environment in general.

Areawides/Ohio EPA collaborative project on sewerred and unsewerred areas data collection and mapping; demonstration of draft map of priority unsewerred areas

Mr. LaPlante reported that NEFCO staff is finalizing an internal review of the draft map of this collaborative project's priority unsewerred areas (PUAs) for the NEFCO region. He gave the ERTAC a brief demonstration of the map, which is an interactive online map that is overlaid on NEFCO's interactive online 208 Plan map. He demonstrated that the map has a measurement tool that allows the user to measure the distance from a PUA or mobile home park (MHP) to areas that are currently served with sanitary sewer, and it includes low-to-moderate income data and other data that can be easily queried by clicking on a PUA or MHP. He noted that as an Ohio EPA contract deliverable, NEFCO's GIS specialist would be sending the shapefiles for the map to Ohio EPA's GIS specialist prior to the June 27th OARC water quality subcommittee quarterly meeting with Ohio EPA. Ms. Rutledge and Chairwoman Smith suggested that NEFCO share the map's shapefiles with the wastewater management agencies (MAs) and health districts. They indicated that the MAs could use the map when prioritizing sewer projects and completing funding applications; and the health districts could use it to help abate public health nuisances caused by failing household sewage treatment systems and to help guide their decisions regarding dry weather stormwater screening locations. Mr. Hadley indicated that he would support NEFCO staff's sharing of the shapefiles with the region's MAs and health districts. Mr. LaPlante indicated that this could be done after staff submits the final product to Ohio EPA.

Canal Diversion Dam Removal project: status of pump start-up

Mr. LaPlante reported that the screw pump start-up was on May 12th, and it was deemed successful by the project team; however, on May 23rd, the project owner's representative reported that the project suffered an unforeseen setback when the discharge end of the pump station became obstructed with debris from the river, causing a back-up of water, which caused erosion and the base of the control panel to cave-in. He noted that by May 27th, Friends of the Crooked River's (FOCR's) contractor had stabilized the control panel; however, the contractor still needed to order some electrical parts that are needed, and a delivery date for those parts is uncertain. He indicated that because of this, FOCR notified NEFCO that a fourth extension to the U.S. EPA grant's project and budget period end date, which is June 30, 2022, will be needed; and NEFCO will formally apply for the extension through U.S. EPA once FOCR determines a projected new end date and notifies NEFCO of that date.

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

No items were requested.

Ohio EPA and Ohio Department of Health Public Notices requested

While no Ohio EPA or Ohio Department of Health public notices were requested, Mr. Hadley reported that after the meeting agenda was mailed out on May 25th, the Ohio EPA sent a request for proposals (RFP) on May 31st for Section 319 subgrants. He noted that proposed projects must be identified within an approved 9-element HUC-12 nonpoint source implementation strategy (NPS-IS). He further noted that the deadline for project applications is July 6, 2022.

Ohio Environmental Legislation Recently Signed or Introduced

Mr. Hadley briefly discussed HB 385, which would prohibit waste discharge into certain Ohio waters and would impose large fines for violations. Chairwoman Smith and Ms. Vanah briefly discussed HB 464, which was introduced to eliminate the public water system asset management program. Mr. Hadley noted that the focus of the sponsor of HB 464 was due to the asset management program's impact on private businesses.

Other Business

Mr. Hadley expressed his condolences for the recent death of the ERTAC's past vice chair, Jim Greener, whose long environmental career included being a manager for Ohio EPA and the engineering division manager for Portage County Water Resources, and who was an asset to the NEFCO region's water quality.

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 July 6, 2022, at The Natatorium, Hopewell Room, 2345 4th Street, Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio.