

OWRC SACG Meeting

Minutes

February 13, 2019

9:00 AM

OWDA

MEETING CALLED BY	Brian Hall, OEPA- DSW
TYPE OF MEETING	OWRC Quarterly
ATTENDEES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brian Hall, OEPA - DSW • Emily DeLay, OEPA - DSW • Lincoln Stanley, USDA • Lynn Garrity, LEC • Jerry Rouch, OEPA - DEFA • Steve Ferryman, OEMA • Greg Nageotte, ODA • Keith Banachowski, USGS • Ken Heigel, OWDA • Annie Van Blaricom, ODSA
	Next meeting May 8, 2019 at OWDA

AGENDA TOPICS

WELCOME AND REVIEW OF THE MEETING NOTES

B. HALL

DISCUSSION	Brian Hall conducted the meeting which started at 9:00 AM. Brian welcomed everyone and asked if there were any comments on the previous notes. There were no comments.
CONCLUSIONS	None.

STATE OF OHIO HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

S. FERRYMAN

DISCUSSION	Steve Ferryman provided an overview of the states recently updated Hazard Mitigation Plan (that has not yet been blessed by FEMA) that is used to identify risk associated with natural hazard and strategies for protecting people and property. The presentation provided an overview of the plan and what is involved with in dealing with and recovering from hazardous events.
CONCLUSIONS	Additional discussions will take place since there are similar requirements between the different agencies in dealing with federal funding and how the agencies could work together to coordinate applying for these funds.

PROGRAM UPDATES

SACG MEMBERS

DISCUSSION	<p><u>OWDA:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 39 loans in January • SCEIG – a person from RCAP has taken the initiative to go out and look for alternative solutions for failing small systems. Bringing new ideas to the group.
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- OWDA will help with shared resources for OEPA's initiatives. Want small communities to come together and manage their systems as one, or connect, etc.

ODA:

- ODA's new Director is Dorothy Pelanda.
- Directors of ODNR, OEPA, ODA have been meeting once or twice per week to come up with some water quality goals for the Governor's office.
- Just announced an RFP for watershed grants this year. Offering up to \$40,00/year for 3 year grants, for coordination activities, stakeholder outreach, planning, acquiring funding, and primarily trying to accelerate the implementation of priorities in those watersheds. Currently have 9 grants, funded 6 last year. Can fund up to 4, or possibly more if we get requests for less than \$40,000. This is a statewide offer. Last year projects include: Swan Creek with Lucas Co. SWCD, Kilbuck Creek in Holmes Co., Buckeye lake from Perry SWCD, direct lake tributaries from Cuyahoga SWCD, and East Fork of Little Miami with Clairmont SWCD who are partnering with a few neighboring districts.
- Watersheds in Distress rules were placed in To-Be-Refiled (TBRed) status with JCARR. At July meeting, the commission tabled the designation of Lake Erie watersheds that had been recommended until after the rules are developed. Since the rules are TBRed, everything is on hold.
- Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission meeting coming up during the Ohio Federation SWCD meeting February 25th and 26th. Don't expect any action on watersheds then, just regular business.
- Clean Lake 2020, SB 299, Ag expects their programs to be announced soon as they are planning training with some SWCDs. Talked about a working lands buffer program, maybe through Lake Erie CRAP. Already distributed \$3.5 million for SWCD operations technical assistance, and \$1.2 million has already been dispersed. Hopeful that some of this money can be spent on SWCD pay increases as there have been a lot of people leaving for better jobs.
- Looking at exemptions to the watersheds in distress requirements in SB1. SB1 is all about daily conditions of the soil, frozen or saturated, etc., but GLSM for example has different restrictions on when they can apply.
- Annual WMAO will be November 13 and 14 at Crown Plaza.

USDA:

- Still recovering from the 35-day federal government shutdown.
- With the new administration the position of undersecretary was eliminated but has now been added back on from the 2019 Farm Bill. This gives USDA a little more leeway and autonomy.

USGS:

- Some gages when down during the federal government shutdown, but some people were allowed to go out and fix them. No data was lost, and there weren't any huge flood events or nutrient issues at the time. If this would have occurred in March or April, it would have had a much more substantial impact.
- Also still recovering from the Federal government shutdown with the day to day

operations.

- Water Resources Monitoring (subgroup of OWRC) meeting is Thursday, March 21st. The agenda has been sent out. Last meeting that was held was at ODNR, and last year was the largest event that we've had.
- Water science center – IN, OH, KY; IN and KY have had cooperator meetings where they invite all of their cooperators in and give USGS presentations. OH will participate in KY and IN.
- MICHINDOH Aquifer in northwest Ohio has a proposal to coordinate an effort to map out the aquifer, with USGS being the lead. This would combine geologists and hydrogeologists from IN, OH, MI. There would be some sort of federal matching for funding. This is drawing attention, but there is no specific movement right now.

OEMA:

- New director at Ohio EMS, Department of Public Safety: Tom Stickwraith. He was the director for a short time previously.
- Busy for the last couple months pulling together information for the emergency management accreditation program. A group of 8 people from around the country from local EMAs came in and evaluated the state EMA program. They did not give the stamp of approval but need more information to be submitted within a 30-day period. This is a 5-year re-accreditation schedule.
- Disaster was declared in April last year. When there is a disaster declaration, EMA receives funds in the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). The amount of funds received is based on the federal response to the event. Need to have around 20 million dollars in damages statewide before Ohio can apply to receive FEMA federal funding. When EMA applied to FEMA for this Presidential Disaster Declaration, the state estimated around 60 million in damages. A year later, FEMA hasn't even funded half of what is needed project-wise as a result of the disaster. The current cost estimate for these needed projects is over 100 million.
- HMGP is based on FEMA's total estimated cost of the disaster damage, so it's difficult to run the program not knowing the total estimate of the damage. Sounds like it will be around 20 million dollars instead of 8 million dollars to be allocated to the program, in which case that money will need to fund projects from now until October (18 months after the event). Looking for project ideas.
- Submitted PDM and FMA projects to FEMA in January. Whatever projects not funded by these programs will probably be funded by the extra money in the HMGP. We will also go out for an application period statewide to try to spend this money, but it will be a heavy lift.

OEPA – DEFA:

- New director – Laurie Stevenson. Her most recent role was Deputy Director for Business Relations and Chief of DEFA.
- Old Director, Craig Butler, is now Chief of Southeast District Office.
- We anticipate that one of Director Stevenson's priorities will be Harmful Algal Blooms and The Western Basin of Lake Erie in general.
- In 2018 the wastewater and drinking water revolving loan funds awarded 800 million

dollars' worth of projects with OWDA's help. 575 million went through water pollution control loan funding program, and 225 went through the water supply revolving loan account.

- More projects funded than ever before. 380 projects last year between These two programs and OWDA's program. 600 open loans with OWDA right now.
- One of the biggest drinking water loans awarded so far has been awarded to the City of Toledo for a project that will directly address the problems that they had in 2014. It is a 40 million-dollar projects and will enhance their treatment for HABs and cyanotoxins.
- Nomination period for drinking water program is through March 1, 2019, and we expect 300 to 500 million dollars of project requests that have to be scored and ranked. The nomination period for the wastewater program will be at the end of the summer in August. Estimate 1.6 to 1.7 billion dollars' worth of requests.
- The Agency is putting on a sustainability conference on April 17th at the Hyatt Regency in Columbus. This is the second sustainability conference that our Agency has put on, the first was in Fall of 2017. The audience that we are trying to attract is both the business community and the government community (any non-business member).

Lake Erie Commission:

- Lake Erie will be a priority with this Administration.
- New LEC Director – Joy Mulinex. Will be based in Cleveland in the Governor's Office.
- AOC program working beneficial use impairment (BUI) removals. One impairment designation was removed recently from the Cuyahoga for fish consumption. Have about 26 BUIs under the AOC that we continue to work with the local groups to remove.
- Focus in the coming year will be the Astabula River because there are only two BUIs remaining.
- Hosting the Great Lakes AOC conference in Cleveland on September 11 and 12, 2019.
- Next round of Lake Erie protection fund grants are available, due date is May 10. Trying to bump the funds up to a 50,000 grant rather than a smaller grant.
- GLRI coordination – trying to get this back up and running. Coordinating with various agencies who receive GRLI funds from USEPA or their federal partners. Begun to identify the lead at GLNPO and contacts from each agency.
- Action Plan 3 from USEPA will be coming through soon, tentatively scheduled to release this in 2019.
- Ohio Domestic Action Plan (DAP) – received a 2.4 million dollar grant from GRLI to help with the DAP implementation and working with some grants for soil and water districts for the nutrient stewardship program, and some nonpoint source implementation strategy plans for the first year.
- Working on 2018 water monitoring summary with USGS and OEPA for the coming year.
- 10 million dollars' worth of projects in Lorraine, Toledo, etc.
- 2 research projects with the Toledo Port on agriculture reuse right now. Those were funded through the Lake Erie Protection Fund last year.
- Next LEC meeting is March 20, 2019 in Toledo at the National Museum of Great Lakes.

DSA:

- New director is Lydia Mihalik, former mayor of Findlay.

- Alternative Stormwater Infrastructure Loan Program Brownfield Loan Program – last year we have hardly any submissions but this year they are flooding in.
- 4 million dollars of program income from US EPA Brownfield Revolving Loan Fund, which has been closed out. Trying to focus on small communities or smaller projects that have a hard time with OWDA's program or sites that may not need to go through the VAP program for the money.

OEPA – DSW:

- Last year the lawsuit about Lake Erie impairment was dismissed. The Environmental Law and Policy Center sued U.S. EPA because Ohio did not list the open waters of Lake Erie as impaired. We declared the open waters impaired in the 2018 integrated report, and the ELPC then tried to sue based on OEPA not providing a specific date of when a TMDL would be completed. The federal judge recommended the dismissal of the lawsuit. Last week, the ELPC sued US EPA saying the state needs to do a TMDL for Lake Erie. OEPA is trying to allocate loadings for the sub-watersheds, which is a huge step toward to doing a TMDL.
- Sampling the Upper Auglaize watershed this year. It is our main watershed of focus this year. We haven't been there for 17 years. New TMDL rule requires us to do stakeholder outreach. Meeting in March to discuss where we are planning to go and give the public the opportunity to let us know where they think we should be sampling in the watershed. We would like to go back to some of the spots we were 17 years ago, but now we are required to have a signature of consent for property access and there are concerns that property owners might not give consent to be on property.
- Our Water Quality Certified Professional rules and Credible Data program rules are out for interested party review. February 25th is the comment deadline.
- 319 RFP has been extended the RFP to mid-March for the 2.5 million in grants we give out to nonpoint source types of funds. Usually able to fund 10-15 projects per year.
- Methane gas digesters take animal waste, biosolids, and other industrial wastes to be put in digesters and create methane that they turn into electricity – we have 8-10 in Ohio, but several will be expanding their storage ponds to accept more waste. One in Wayne County is requesting approval for a 10 million gallon storage pond, and one in Morrow County just got a PTI for a 20 million gallon storage pond, and there is another proposed in Greene County. There is a lot of angst among the public for some of these proposals.
- TMDL rules adopted in early February and become effective February 15, 2019.

PUCO:

- HB422 passed and should become effective in April. This legislation addresses the mechanism under which public utilities recover their costs of acquiring municipal waterworks and sewage disposal systems. Also, if anyone has an interest in the cases open before the Commission, Dorothy (Bremer) can provide updates.