



**A Framework for reorganizing and implementing
Ohio's Remedial Action Program**

In Support of Ohio's Areas of Concern



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Preface

This document was prepared in response to a recognized need to re-align activities of local "RAP" groups and Ohio EPA Lake Erie Program staff in order to accelerate the implementation of restoration projects within Ohio's four Areas of Concern. The framework contained herein proposes the necessary clarification of responsibilities that are needed to realize improved AOC Program effectiveness that will lead to improved environmental conditions and removal of Beneficial Use Impairments within Ohio's designated Areas of Concern.



Introduction

The Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA) is an agreement between the U.S. and Canada to address key environmental health issues in the Great Lakes. The most recent Agreement (September 7, 2012) reaffirms actions necessary to restore and delist Areas of Concern (AOCs). The Great Lakes Water Quality Protocol of 2012 specifically addresses Areas of Concern in Annex 1 (the 1987 GLWQA addressed AOCs in Annex 2). The GLWQA identifies fourteen different beneficial use impairments (BUIs) which are defined as a reduction in the chemical, physical or biological integrity of the Waters of the Great Lakes. The GLWQA requires development of Remedial Action Plans (RAPs) to identify the BUIs and causes, development of criteria for restoration of the beneficial uses, implementation of remedial measures, monitoring of the effectiveness of remedial measures and confirmation that restoration of beneficial uses is being achieved. Each of the 43 AOCs contains at least one BUI that represents an extraordinary problem that is measurably worse than most waters in the Great Lakes. The 2012 GLWQA requires progress reporting every three years on the status of BUIs in each AOC, the actions completed or initiated in each AOC during the reporting period, and the remaining actions required in each AOC for removal of the BUIs.

There are four AOCs in Ohio: the lower two miles of the Ashtabula River; the entire Black River watershed; the lower 46.5 miles of the Cuyahoga River, including all tributaries and the adjacent shoreline; and the lower 22 miles of the Maumee River, including several adjacent watersheds that discharge directly to Maumee Bay and Lake Erie. Figure 1 shows the location of Ohio's AOCs.

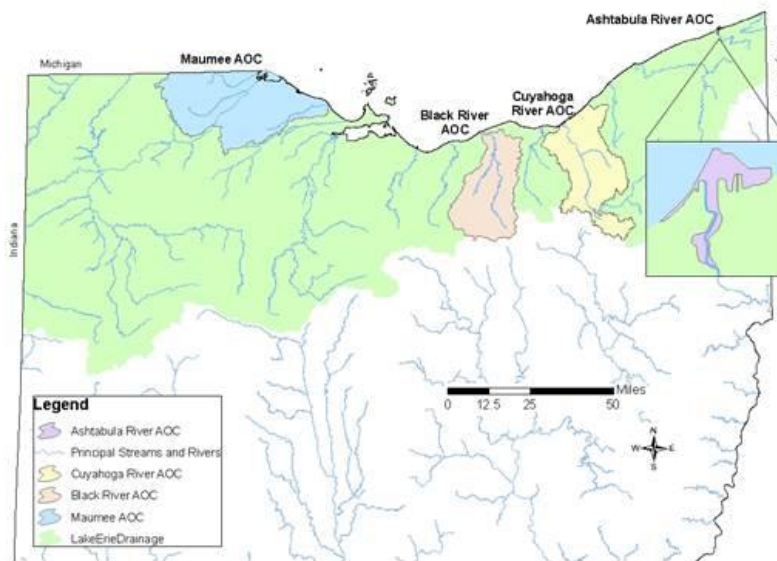


Figure 1 – Location of Ohio Areas of Concern (AOCs)



In Support of Ohio's Areas of Concern

A Framework for reorganizing and implementing Ohio's Remedial Action Program

Ohio's Area of Concern Program Framework

Restoring Ohio's four Areas of Concern (AOC) involves collaboration among US EPA's Great Lakes National Program Office (GLNPO), other federal agencies (e.g., US FWS, US ACE), Ohio EPA, Ohio DNR, and local governments, park districts and others. However, the heart of Ohio's Program lies with the local individuals who have come together from public and private sectors to help "steer" the restoration process of the rivers that flow through their communities by developing a Remedial Action Plan (RAP). AOC Advisory Committees (as these groups will be referenced henceforth) also serve as liaisons with their specific communities and most importantly with the residents of the Area(s) of Concern.

Established more than 20 years ago, the Remedial Action Planning Process in Ohio has transitioned from active planning to varying levels of implementation. In recent years, the establishment of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) provides unprecedented opportunities to increase implementation of needed management actions. Restoring AOCs is a binational commitment in the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement with Canada and restoration of AOCs has been a highlighted priority.

Ohio's four AOCs provide unique opportunities—they also provide substantial challenges. The Ashtabula AOC is showing considerable improvement following completion of several

Ohio's Areas of Concern



Ashtabula River

Black River

Cuyahoga River

Maumee River

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dredging and restoration projects leading to the removal of three BUIs in 2014. All restoration actions have been completed and it is anticipated that the remaining BUIs will be removed as the river system continues to recover. Efforts to restore the Cuyahoga AOC have focused on habitat restoration (dam removal) and dredging while the city of Lorain has completed several very large habitat restoration projects within the Black River. Finally, the Maumee AOC continues to evaluate and remediate contaminated sediments and restore habitats while continuing to address other challenges across this complex AOC. One commonality shared across the state is the presence of dedicated local communities who understand the economic and environmental benefits of vibrant and healthy riverfronts and harbors.

An initial step toward accelerating progress in the AOCs involved a thorough review and revision of Ohio's BUI Restoration Targets. Ohio EPA worked with technical experts within and outside of the agency to develop targets that are measurable and aligned with the AOC program objectives. Local RAPs were provided an opportunity to review and comment on the draft document and will also have the opportunity to work with Ohio EPA to develop local targets if needed.

Reinvigorating the RAP process was identified as a strategic priority for the Division of Surface Water in January 2014 when the program was shifted to the Nonpoint Source Management Section. In order to take advantage of the opportunities presented through the GLRI, Ohio's AOC program must evolve and become more effective and efficient. Improving how we coordinate with the local and federal partners better positions local communities to achieve their vision of a restored river and a healthy waterfront.

In order to identify opportunities for improvement within the AOC Program, Ohio EPA's Lake Erie program staff completed a series of evaluation exercises to identify issues needing to be addressed. Following is a summary of program review and assessment activities that have been completed since January 2014:

1. Interviews with District and Central Office Ohio EPA staff
2. Interviews with members of two local RAP Facilitating Organizations
3. Review of current work plans and AOC Support Grant Agreements
4. Individual RAP website reviews and evaluations
5. Improved coordination with US EPA's Great Lakes National Program Office

A strategic consequence of this program review is our proposal to "drop" the RAP terminology, changing instead to Area of Concern (AOC). This change more closely aligns our strategic focus to a geographic area rather than a "process or plan" as RAP implies. Throughout this document readers will notice the use of AOC in many places where "RAP" would previously have been used. Another key outcome is a clearer definition of roles and responsibilities. This framework identifies a local AOC Advisory Committee and a local AOC Facilitating Organization and how the two will work together.



This framework will be applied to all of Ohio's AOCs with the exception of the Ashtabula River AOC where all needed management actions have been completed. Ohio EPA will work with the existing AOC Advisory Committee to facilitate delisting the Ashtabula AOC.

The framework is designed to provide clarity and guidance for local AOC Facilitating Organizations, the local AOC Advisory Committees and Ohio EPA's AOC program staff. Minimum performance expectations are provided to establish consistency within the program and lay the foundation for effective interaction between the groups. This framework also identifies the roles and responsibilities of Ohio EPA's AOC Coordinators and Lake Erie Program Coordinator.

Local AOC Advisory Committee

At the heart of any successful watershed restoration initiative is a body of local people who are invested and passionate about the health and welfare of their watershed. In Ohio's Areas of Concern, this type of local group is the AOC Advisory Committee (or Coordinating Committee). Ohio's four AOC Advisory Committees were extremely important during the early days of EPA's Lake Erie Program, serving as the groups who worked with others throughout their AOC to draft the initial Remedial Action Plans (RAP). Following a surge of planning and research activity during the early years of the program the vibrancy of the local AOC Advisory Committees waxed and waned as funding support varied. AOC Advisory Committees have often been very engaged, vociferous and highly functional but at other times much less active and effective at soliciting public input and facilitating implementation.

The local AOC Advisory Committee performs the crucial task of advising state and federal partners on which projects are needed to restore their Areas of Concern. This Advisory Committee also is an important liaison with the local AOC Community. Their roles may vary from time to time but their engagement is critical for successful implementation of recommended restoration projects and especially for ensuring that the public has a voice in the AOC process.

Ohio EPA requires a minimum of eight highly active and engaged Advisory Committee members. In some Areas of Concern the local Advisory Committee may be as large as 30 people or more. Regardless of overall size, the committee should maintain approximately equal representation across the member categories (local government, business/industry, academic institutions/non-profit organizations, and general public). Ohio EPA District AOC Coordinators may only serve as ex-officio members of a local AOC Advisory Committee.



Roles and Responsibilities of a Local AOC Advisory Committee

The local AOC Advisory Committee performs the following functions and roles needed to successfully restore a designated Area of Concern:

- Develops rules of order, bylaws and other processes by which the AOC Advisory Committee will conduct AOC-related business. Establishes quarterly meeting schedules as well as creating any AOC committees and/or subcommittees that may be necessary to conduct appropriate AOC-related business. Ohio EPA recommends the use of temporary project teams rather than standing committees or subcommittees.
- Identifies strategic priorities within the AOC to encourage completion of management actions leading to BUI removal and AOC delisting. Helps to focus local implementation actions within identified critical areas that will contribute to BUI removal and AOC delisting.
- Establishes and approves annual goals, objectives, and work plans for the subcommittees.
- Serves as a local AOC liaison with Ohio EPA, US EPA and other state, local and federal partners on program, policy, projects and financial matters. Promotes regional and inter-agency cooperation on management actions being implemented in the AOC area.
- Ensures that all persons engaged in the AOC Advisory Committee operates in full compliance with Ohio Ethics Laws.
- The local AOC Advisory Committee represents the voice of the AOC community. The Committee's meetings are to be conducted with transparency consistent with Ohio's sunshine laws, open to the public, announced in advance and provide for significant opportunities for public input, involvement, education and engagement.

The fundamental roles of this local AOC Advisory Committee are to facilitate community involvement, public input, provide advice and input to state and federal agencies on issues of local concern and to encourage the implementation of management actions and plans designed to restore the AOC. The AOC Advisory Committee should be comprised of representatives of local governments, land managing conservation organizations with vested interests in the AOC such as Ducks Unlimited, Nature Conservancy, Land Trusts, Park districts, state agencies (with written authorization from that agency's leadership), local soil and water districts, local watershed organizations and other important stakeholders such as community organizers, and members of the general public with vested interests in the watershed.

Local AOC Advisory Committees should conduct core AOC mission-driven activities in support of a vision that their AOC-watershed is a regional asset worthy of restoration, remediation and protection. Many different entities will be engaged within the AOC, however the local AOC Advisory Committee will serve as a unified voice for advancing progress toward BUI removal and AOC delisting.



In local AOC Facilitating Organizations that are 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations, the local AOC Advisory Committee may not be that organization's Board of Trustees, Executive Board or other body motivated by the business of the non-profit organization. However, with the exception of the chair, individuals from the Facilitating Organization's board or staff may participate as members of the AOC Advisory Committee. A local AOC Advisory Committee must be a stand-alone entity with a focus on restoring environmental health of the watershed within the Area of Concern.

Local AOC Advisory Committee Minimum Performance Expectations

Local involvement and engagement is a crucial piece of Ohio's AOC and Lake Erie Programs. We certainly anticipate that a local AOC Advisory Committee will establish locally driven procedures, policies and programs. However, the following are minimum performance expectations for Local AOC Advisory Committees:

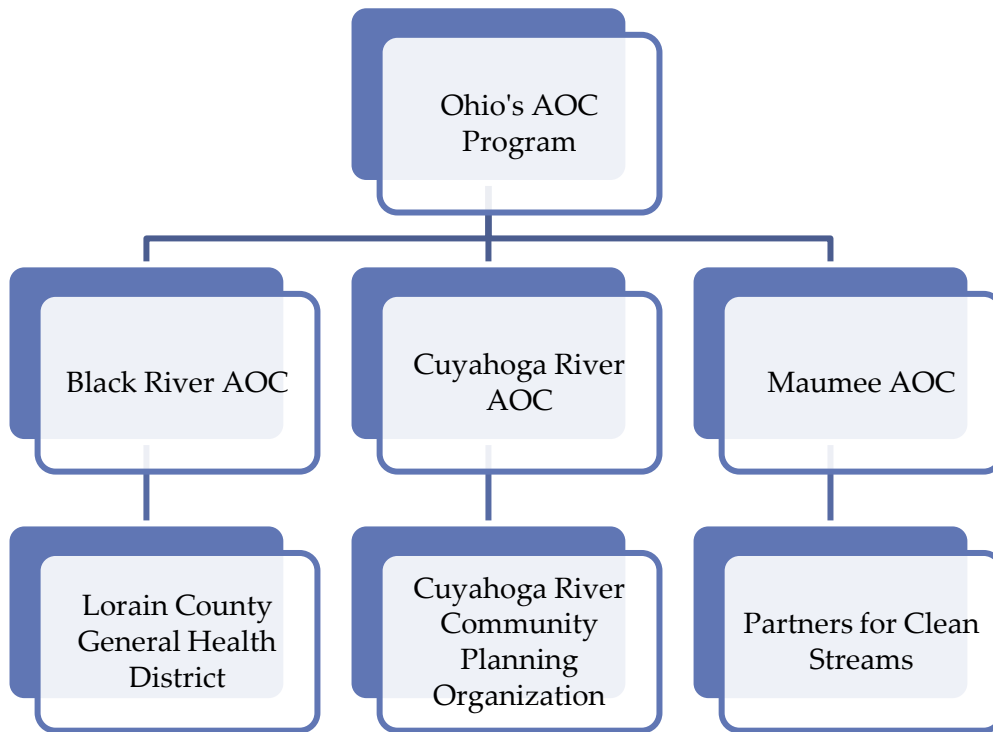
1. Local AOC Advisory Committees shall maintain a minimum of eight active members, with at least 2 members representing each of the following categories: (1) local government (i.e., counties, cities, special district and authorities); (2) business/industry (i.e., industry, commerce and other for-profit organizations), (3) academic institutions/non-profit organizations; and (4) general public (i.e., residents, land owners and concerns citizens). For groups larger than eight members, there should be approximately proportional representation for each category.
2. The local AOC Advisory Committee shall operate with a functioning chairperson who may not be a board member or staff with the local Facilitating Organization.
3. There should be a minimum of four meetings of the AOC Advisory Committee—at least once quarterly. A quorum must be present at each of the quarterly meetings. In the absence of a quorum the quarterly meeting must be rescheduled.
4. All quarterly meetings of the AOC Advisory Committee must include time where public input is solicited.
5. Minutes will be taken at each quarterly AOC Advisory Committee meeting and posted to the local AOC website within ten business days of the meeting.
6. The Facilitating Organization will provide a quarterly fiscal report for any AOC-Support Grants awarded by Ohio EPA for review by the AOC Advisory Committee.
7. AOC Advisory Committee will be asked to review and comment on any BUI removal and/or AOC delisting recommendations drafted by Ohio EPA. Committee may concur with recommendations and/or choose to disagree with the recommendations but a formal action of the Advisory Committee will be anticipated.



Local AOC Facilitating Organizations

A local AOC Facilitating Organization is responsible for three very important components of the Remedial Action Plan Process. They are tasked with providing the staff and administrative support to the local AOC Advisory Committee and to provide meaningful AOC specific public education and outreach activities. However, a mission critical role of AOC Facilitating Organizations is to engage and inform the AOC watershed community about the activities and specific management actions being completed within their AOC. Although some groups may choose to also be project implementers, an AOC Facilitating Organization is not typically expected to be implementers of significant management actions or large restoration projects. Most management actions in an AOC will usually be implemented by local governments, park districts, and other land holding entities within the AOC with the support and assistance of the AOC Advisory Committee¹. The Ashtabula River AOC does not have a designated Facilitating organization.

Figure 2 - Ohio's AOC Local Facilitating Organizations



¹ Local AOC Facilitating Organizations do have an important role (and opportunities) to implement projects that are designed to engage AOC homeowners, landowners, communities and others. For example, a homeowner rain barrel or rain garden initiative, small stream restoration demonstrations and similar projects that are limited in size and scope can be important educational tools within an AOC.



Roles and Responsibilities of a Local AOC Facilitating Organization

In fulfilling their core mission of providing direct support to a local AOC Advisory Committee a local AOC Facilitating Organization typically fulfills the following support roles and responsibilities:

- Serves as secretariat and facilitator to the local AOC Advisory Committee and its subcommittees within the AOC.
- Works in partnership with Ohio EPA and the local watershed community to facilitate the development and implementation of AOC habitat restoration plans and other actions or plans that will contribute to BUI removal.
- Assists local implementers by providing information and access to appropriate technical and financial assistance from local, state and federal program partners. Assists local implementers with grant writing and/or seeking other AOC specific project funding.
- Engages the AOC community by providing regular opportunities to solicit public input and to increase public involvement in the activities of the AOC Advisory Committee.
- Provides public information about the AOC and conducts meaningful public outreach activities to improve community awareness of habitat restoration projects and other management actions within the AOC.
- Administers all grant funds in accordance with local, state and federal grant rules and guidelines. Insures that all required reports are submitted to Ohio EPA in a timely manner and that implementation of management actions is adequately tracked and reported to Ohio EPA and the AOC community.

Any Ohio EPA AOC grant funds that are provided directly to a local AOC Facilitating Organization may only be used for activities directly related to serving as the secretariat to the local AOC Advisory Committee, providing assistance to local entities implementing management actions identified in the Stage 2 Remedial Action Plan, and conducting AOC specific educational and outreach activities. Grant funds are not being provided to help the local organization build their own capacity. Activities such as fund raising, grant writing, conducting public membership drives and other activities related to fund raising for a nonprofit organizations general operations are unallowable under AOC support grant funding.



Local AOC Facilitating Organization Minimum Performance Expectations

The local AOC Facilitating Organization is responsible for providing administrative and secretariat support to the local AOC Advisory Committee. In recent years, the Facilitating Organizations have received grant subsidies from Ohio EPA to insure that assistance to the AOC community and support to the Advisory Committee occur effectively and efficiently. Any subgrant agreements with Ohio EPA will include very specific “deliverables” – items and/or activities that the Facilitating Organization is contractually bound to complete.

The following represent minimum performance standards that are expected of any organization serving as AOC's Facilitating Organization:

1. Administer any and all grant funds provided by Ohio EPA in a manner that is compliant with state and federal grant and accounting requirements.
2. Submit quarterly fiscal reports to the AOC Advisory Committee for any AOC-Support grant awarded by Ohio EPA.
3. Submit all grant required reports by their identified deadline(s). Failure to do so will result in suspension of grant payments.
4. Update the AOC specific website at least once monthly by adding new materials and removing all outdated materials.
5. Assist at least two (2) AOC project implementers per year with a grant application to implement a recommended management action.
6. Post minutes from each conducted Local AOC Advisory Committee meeting no later than 10 business days following all meetings.
7. Conduct at least one annual public program that is specifically designed to highlight activities within the AOC and to help inform and engage the general public, local governments and others within the AOC area.
8. Conduct at least one annual AOC stream clean-up or similar outreach activity designed to provide opportunities for the general public to directly engage with AOC activities.



Proposed Revisions to Ohio EPA Guidelines for AOC Support Grants

Starting July 1, 2014 any new AOC Support Grants provided to local AOC Facilitating Organizations will be awarded and administered within the minimum framework of the following general grant policies and procedures, as well as consistent with state and federal grant guidelines, cost principles and any appropriate rules:

1. Ohio EPA will be moving all future AOC Support Grants to a performance-based grant system. AOC Support Grants will be awarded based upon the deliverables that the AOC Facilitating Organizations will complete. Grant amounts must be proportionate to the proposed levels of performance.
2. All grant applications and contracts will be prepared using a Master List of Deliverables and in a format that will be provided by Ohio EPA. Activities selected from the Master List of Deliverables *may* be funded using AOC Support Grant funding. Activities (deliverables) not included in the deliverable list are not grant eligible.
3. No more than 15% of an AOC Support Grant may be used for overhead items and/or general supply, equipment, printing, administrative costs, etc. (Any general operating costs other than salary and fringe benefits). AOC Support Grants are designed to directly support the work of local AOC Advisory Committees and/or local implementers. They are not designed to provide a significant percentage of an organization's general operating budget. All costs charged to an AOC Support Grant must be reasonable, allowable and allocable and comply with all federal costs principles and administrative requirements.
4. No more than 50% of AOC Support Grant funding may be used for AOC support personnel salary and fringe benefits. Only those staff providing direct support to AOC activities may be paid with grant funds.
5. Membership drives and general organizational fund raising activities may NOT be conducted using AOC Support Grant Funding. This is a federal prohibition and is unallowable.
6. Grant-writing, funding solicitations and/or activities soliciting donations for general organization support may not be conducted AOC Support Grant funding. However, personnel paid with AOC Support Grant funds **are expected** to assist local implementers with grant-writing for project implementation when such projects are specifically recommended in the Stage 2 Remedial Action Plan or other specific AOC restoration strategies.
7. AOC Support Grant funds may not be used for the purchase of food or for the purchase of promotional items of any kind. This does not include brochures, newsletter or other published items that are designed to inform the public about the activities of the local AOC Advisory Committee.



**Table 1 - Ohio EPA AOC Support Grants
Master List of Grant Deliverables – July 2014**

Objectives	Deliverables
AOC Coordination, Support and Communication Activities	AOC Advisory Committee Meetings
	Secretariat Services to AOC Advisory Committee
	Updates to AOC Advisory Committee
	Advisory Committee Membership
	AOC- Specific Project Teams
	AOC-Specific Project Task Forces
	AOC-Based Workgroups
	Attend Workshops and Conferences
	Post AOC Minutes on Website
	Assist with BUI Removal Documents
	Update Management Actions
	Update Stage 2 RAP Report
	Develop Local BUI Restoration Targets
	Prepare Grant Applications
	Provide Grant Writing Assistance to Implementers
	Prepare Project Specification and Bid Documents
	Prepare AOC Habitat Restoration Plans
	Prepare GIS Maps
Other (Specify):	
Other (Specify):	
AOC Specific Education, Outreach and Information Management Activities	Create and Maintain Updated AOC Website
	Prepare Quarterly Newsletters
	Create and Post a Quarterly AOC E-newsletter
	Establish and Maintain a AOC-Specific Facebook Page
	Establish other Social Media account
	Develop Brochures/Fact Sheets
	Conduct AOC Festivals and Events
	Develop AOC-Specific Workshops
	Develop AOC-Specific Press Releases
	Install AOC Awareness Signs
	Develop AOC Displays
	Conduct Project Tours
	Conduct Public Canoe Floats/Tours
	Develop and Distribute AOC-Specific DVD
	Post AOC-Specific Videos on Social Media
	Conduct Stream side Clean ups
	Stencil Storm Drains within AOC
	Provide Technical Assistance
	Provide GIS Assistance
	Informs AOC communities about Grant Opportunities
	Conduct Technical Training
	Deliver AOC-Specific Presentations
	Conduct and/or Present AOC-Specific Webinars

In Support of Ohio's Areas of Concern



Grants Administration and Management	Establish Separate Account and Grant Financial Accounting System
	Develop a AOC-Specific Timecard Coding and Tracking System
	Prepare and Submit a AOC Specific Annual Report
	Submit Semi-Annual Progress Reports
	Submit Quarterly Fiscal Reports
	Submit Closing Fiscal Report
	Submit Final Progress Report at Grant Closing
	Complete and Submit for EPA approval a Quality Assurance Project Plan
	Other:
Public Involvement and Engagement	Maintain 2 General Public Members on AOC Advisory Committee
	Maintain 2 Local Government Members on AOC Advisory Committee
	Maintain 2 Business/Industry Members on AOC Advisory Committee
	Maintain 2 Academic/Non-Profit Members on AOC Advisory Committee
	Conduct Annual State of the AOC Public Information Summit
	Conduct Public Meetings
	Conduct Annual AOC Listening Session or Town Hall Meeting
	Assist Ohio EPA with BUI Removal Public Meeting
	Assist Ohio EPA with AOC Delisting Meeting
	Other (Specify):
	Other (Specify):
Implement Demonstration Projects	Publish RFPs
	Develop Project Plans or Designs
	Execute Construction Contracts
	Restore Stream Channel
	Stabilize Eroding Streambank
	Restore Wetlands
	Remove Lowhead Dams
	Modify or Remove Levee/Dikes
	Install Permeable Pavement
	Construct Demonstration Biofiltration Units
	Construct Stormwater Treatment Wetlands
	Install Community Scale Rain Gardens
	Install Homeowner Scale Rain Gardens
	Install Rainwater Harvesting System
	Install Green Roof
Other: (Specify)	

Having a master deliverable list provides for substantial efficiencies during the grant application, review and contracting processes. Such a list of deliverables is also extremely helpful in improving accountability, streamlining progress reporting and improving participants understanding of performance expectations. A master list of deliverables also provides a general framework that is flexible and deliverables may be added at any time (when appropriate) should priorities or program directions shift.



**Table 2 - Ohio EPA AOC Support Grants
Sample Contract Deliverable Sheet – June 2014**

AOC Coordination, Support and Communication Activities	AOC Advisory Committee Meetings	4 Meetings	CRCPO shall coordinate and facilitate meetings of the Cuyahoga AOC Advisory Committee at least once quarterly throughout the grant period. A minimum of 4 quarterly meetings will be convened and facilitated.
	Secretariat Services to AOC	4 Meetings	CRCPO shall provide direct secretariat services the Cuyahoga AOC Advisory Committee at each of the 4 quarterly meetings.
	Updates to AOC Advisory Committee	4 Updates	CRCPO shall provide formal updates on AOC activities at each of the four quarterly meetings.
	Post AOC Advisory Committee Minutes	4 Meeting Minutes	Minutes created during the meetings of the AOC Advisory Committee shall be posted to the Cuyahoga AOC specific website within 10 days of the respective meeting. All past meeting minutes must be maintained on the AOC website.
	Advisory Council Membership	8 Members	CRCPO shall recruit and retain at least 8 members to the Cuyahoga AOC Advisory Committee. Membership should be equal across the member categories.
	AOC Specific Project Teams	2 Project Teams	Establish at least 2 project specific AOC teams during the grant term. CRCPO shall establish and facilitate at least one project team shall be formed with representatives from AOC based local watershed groups to conduct the Cuyahoga AOC Strategic Implementation Initiative. A second workgroup will be convened to develop a local restoration target for Public Access and Recreation with recommendations complete and provided to Ohio EPA prior to June 30, 2015.
	AOC Based Workgroups	6 Workgroups	CRCPO shall participate on at least 6 workgroups convened by local governments and other AOC based organizations. These workgroups shall include Cleveland Harbor Dredge Team, Habitat for Hard Places, Metroparks Greenway Initiative, the Public Recreational Access Workgroup, Green Bulkheads Initiative and other AOC-related local workgroups.

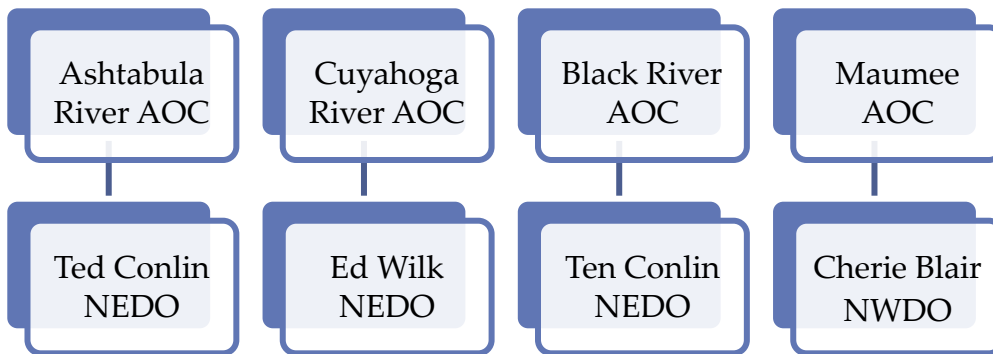


Ohio EPA District AOC Coordinator

We are fortunate to have very capable staff working in Ohio EPA's Lake Erie Program, both in the Central Office in Columbus and in Ohio EPA's Northeast and Northwest District Offices. Knowing that the program has such talent encourages confidence that Ohio EPA's Lake Erie Program will be able to excel once we provide clear direction, sound organizational design and AOC program policies and procedures.

Delisting an AOC is a very difficult process at best. Dealing with pollutants such as contaminated sediments, metals and others found in an Area of Concern requires high levels of technical knowledge and skills. Ohio EPA's District AOC Coordinators provide access for local AOC groups to valuable technical assistance and potential sources of financial assistance needed to facilitate implementation of management actions. AOC program staff is housed in the District office in order to enable fast responses to public inquiries or requests for assistance and to provide an important local perspective to program managers in Ohio EPA's Central Office. The following table identifies Ohio EPA District AOC Coordinators with their respective Area of Concern.

Figure 3 – Ohio EPA AOC Coordinators



Role and Duties of the Ohio EPA District AOC Coordinator

The Ohio EPA (AOC) Coordinator provides important support to the local AOC Facilitating Organization and local AOC Advisory Committee. They also are valuable sources of information and assistance to local communities, park districts, and other potential project implementers within the Areas of Concern. Recognizing this, the roles and duties of the Ohio EPA District AOC Coordinator are expected to be consistent with the following:

In Support of Ohio's Areas of Concern



- Serves as the Ohio EPA representative as an ex-officio member to the local AOC Advisory Committee and any other AOC local subcommittees as appropriate. Ohio EPA District AOC Coordinator may not participate as a voting member on any local AOC Advisory Committee or as a Board Member to any 501(C)(3) group serving as a local AOC Facilitating Organization.
- Assists the local AOC Facilitating Organization with preparation and submittal of required information or data (as appropriate) to Ohio EPA by required due dates.
- Coordinates with the local AOC Facilitating Organization to track and report implemented management actions and helps to inform the AOC community and general public about environmental and water quality improvements and BUI removals that are occurring within the AOC.
- Provides general oversight of the local AOC Facilitating Organization and helps to monitor subgrant performance to keep progress moving forward for project deliverables and subgrant schedules. Provides general assistance to local AOC Facilitating Organization to maintain timely report preparation and submission, including an annual AOC report due by August 15th.
- In partnership with the local AOC Advisory Committee and others, works directly with the local AOC community to encourage and facilitate the completion of AOC habitat restoration plans. Once completed, the Ohio EPA District AOC Coordinator works in partnership with the local AOC Advisory Committee to encourage and facilitate implementation of the restoration plans.
- Provides access to technical assistance and highlights funding opportunities (when available) to local implementers such as municipalities, park districts, land managing non-governmental organizations and others within the AOC areas.
- In partnership with the local AOC Advisory Committee, Ohio EPA District AOC Coordinator helps to develop draft Beneficial Use Impairment (BUI) removal documents, when appropriate. Provides BUI status updates and coordination with Ohio EPA Lake Erie Program, technical and management staff.
- Implements policies, procedures and programs as directed by Ohio EPA leadership. As a general rule of thumb, Ohio's AOC program is developed by Ohio EPA Central Office with input from the district offices.
- Assists with public outreach and educational activities related to the AOC. Coordinates with Ohio EPA Lake Erie Program staff, including Public Involvement Center staff to conduct public meetings, issue press releases and other tasks such as conducting public meetings.
- Provides quarterly AOC progress reports to Lake Erie Program Coordinator and district management personnel.
- Attends national and regional program meetings and conferences and represents Ohio EPA on workgroups and inter-agency initiatives.



Ohio EPA District AOC Coordinators are Ohio EPA employees, and as such may not serve as a formal voting member of an AOC Advisory Committee or any formal body of the local AOC Facilitating Organization. They may serve in ex-officio capacities only. Ohio EPA staff must perform all of their duties in the best interest and within the strategic context of Ohio EPA agency programs, policies and procedures. Serving as a voting member on a group that potentially receives and/or applies for grant funding (or directly benefits) from Ohio EPA is not appropriate.

Minimum Performance Expectations for the Ohio EPA District AOC Coordinator

Ohio EPA's District AOC Coordinators are important links between the local AOC Advisory Committee, Facilitating Organization and state and federal agencies. The ongoing support, guidance, assistance and communication that is provided to local AOC Facilitating Organizations from the District AOC Coordinator is important for ensuring continued progress toward removing BUIs and restoring the water quality within the AOC. The minimum performance expectations are:

1. Coordinates with Central Office Lake Erie Program Coordinator when direct communication with US EPA GLNPO personnel occurs. Copies Lake Erie Program Coordinator (in Central Office) on all AOC-related correspondence to and from GLNPO personnel regardless of content and/or context.
2. Promptly returns phone calls and emails from local AOC participants.
3. Promptly provides AOC related information when requested by local AOC participants and others.
4. Attends quarterly meetings of the local AOC Advisory Committee (or equivalent).
5. Provides Ohio EPA AOC Program update at each quarterly AOC Advisory Committee meeting.
6. Provides AOC progress and activity reports to Lake Erie Program Manager and Ohio EPA District Managers on October 15th, January 15th, April 15th and July 15th each year.
7. Conducts at least four quarterly meetings each year with Ohio EPA grant funded local Facilitating Organizations.
8. Attends the annual National AOC Conference and other appropriate workshops and conferences.
9. Leads the development of any draft BUI removal documents.
10. Attends and participates in any scheduled Lake Erie AOC program meetings.
11. Reviews and updates BUI status when new monitoring data becomes available.
12. Prepares an AOC annual report of events and progress for Ohio EPA's NPS and Lake Erie Program Annual Report.
13. Represents Ohio EPA, DSW and the Lake Erie Program in a professional and positive manner.



Central Office Ohio EPA Lake Erie Program Staff

Ohio EPA's Lake Erie Program is much more than simply the Areas of Concern. We also are responsible for implementing other provisions of the Great Lakes Legacy Act, Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, Lake Erie Lakewide Action and Management Plan and monitoring efforts, and working with the myriad of other agencies, communities, nonprofit organizations and other stakeholders within the Lake Erie basin. A key to an effective program is ensuring that communication among all staff working on the program is occurring frequently and on a regular basis. This is perhaps the most crucial role of the Lake Erie Program Coordinator located in the Division of Surface Water.

For the purposes of this framework, we are focusing activities and responsibilities to those centered upon Ohio's four Areas of Concern. Following are summaries of the duties and responsibilities of those Lake Erie Program staff that are centered in the Central Office of the Division of Surface Water. (Please refer to pages 15 through 17 for the duties of the AOC District Coordinators).

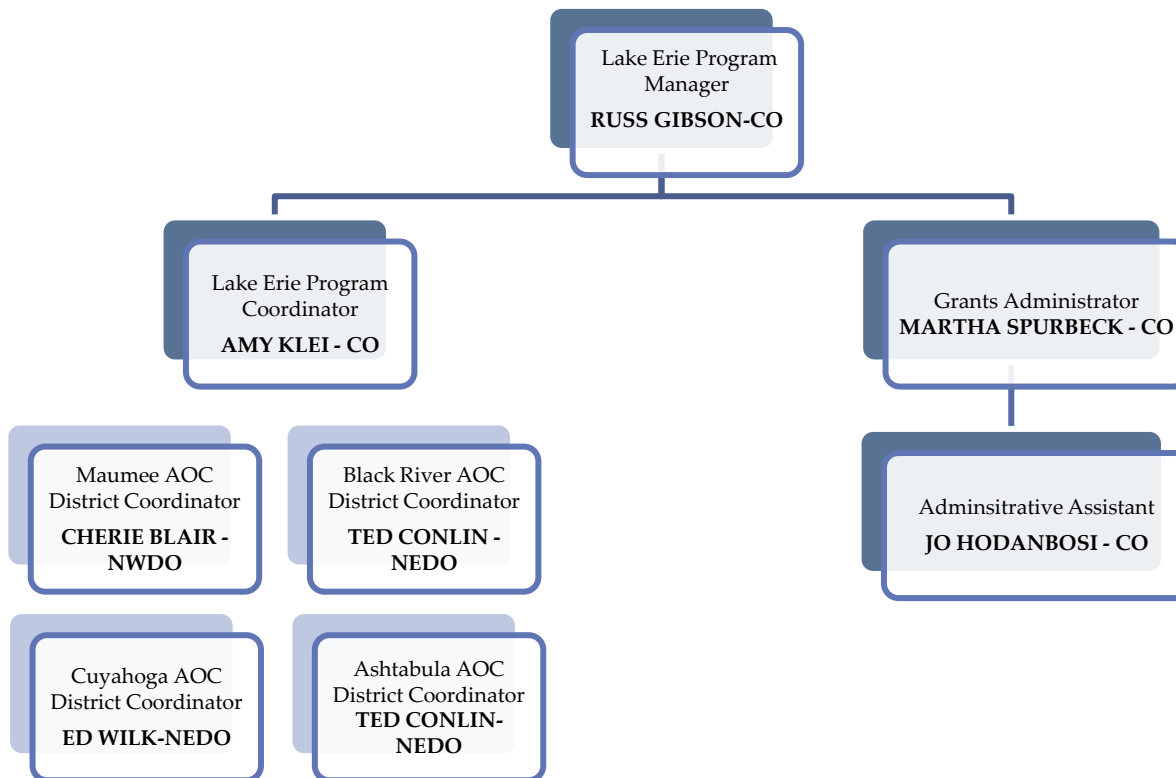
Lake Erie Program Manager: The Lake Erie Program Manager provides program oversight, AOC Program strategic planning and direction, performance evaluation of the program, and communicates procedures, policies and program priorities. Housed in the Central Office of the Division of Surface Water the Lake Erie Program Manager is the primary program liaison with division and agency leadership, public information, legal and legislative program staff on matters pertaining to Ohio EPA's Lake Erie Program.

Grants Administrator: The Nonpoint Source Program Grants Administrator provides grants, financial and administrative assistance with respect to any subgrants issued to local AOC Facilitating Organizations, other state agencies and/or universities. Reviews requests for payments from AOC Facilitating Organizations following preliminary review and approval by Lake Erie Program Coordinator and forwards approved materials to DSW Fiscal staff. Reviews all program and grant reports from subgrantees.

Administrative Assistant: Provides direct administrative assistance to all members of the Lake Erie and NPS Program staff. Prepares grant agreements and tracks all grant and subgrant related materials in the fiscal/payoff/signoff chain. Manages and maintains all section grant contacts, assists with the development of all grant and personnel related documents produced by the program staff.



Figure 4 - Ohio EPA Lake Erie Program Staff



Role of Central Office Ohio EPA Lake Erie Program Coordinator

- Assists with the development of program policies, procedures and annual strategic program priorities. Primary Central Office liaison with Ohio EPA District AOC program staff and provides clear direction on program matters and priorities. Works with District management and AOC staff to insure consistent implementation of AOC program activities.
- Serves as Ohio EPA's technical program coordinator to US EPA on AOC and other Lake Erie related program issues. Represents Ohio EPA's AOC program on federal AOC workgroups and committees.
- Coordinates Ohio EPA's Lake Erie Program activities with other state and federal agencies including ODNR, US ACE, US FWS, NOAA, USGS and others. Serves as Ohio EPA information clearinghouse for state and federal agencies on Lake Erie Program activities and priorities.
- Facilitates communication between Ohio EPA District Coordinators by leading regularly scheduled quarterly (or as needed) Ohio EPA AOC Coordinator calls.



- Provides program updates to Division of Surface Water management. Completes required grant reports to US EPA – Great Lakes National Program Office. Responsible for reporting AOC restoration progress to US EPA. Coordinates the development, submittal and printing of an Ohio AOC Program Annual Report.
- Oversees all AOC subgrants, verifies compliance with work plans, grant agreements and reviews payment requests to insure that subgrant expenditures comply with federal grant guidelines, OMB circulars and state laws. Conducts subgrant project audits and implements plans for resolving issues discovered during these audits.
- Coordinates with Central Office fiscal staff; reviews and processes payment requests; insures adequate progress is being made by local subgrantees and/or AOC Facilitating Organizations and Ohio EPA District AOC staff.
- In partnership with other state and federal programs may write applications and apply for GLRI and other types of grants.

The Central Office Lake Erie Program has a core mission to remediate and protect the Lake Erie ecosystem. Through ongoing communication, education, and management, the program emphasizes stakeholder involvement to restore the beneficial uses of Lake Erie and its tributaries. A significant management challenge (and opportunity at the same time) is the need to clearly understand the various programs within the Lake Erie watershed and strategically coordinate efforts to avoid duplication.

Delisting Ohio's AOCs is central to the Lake Erie Program's mission to make meaningful and lasting improvements in Lake Erie and continues to be an important priority that will be achieved through effective local, state and federal partnerships. These partnerships and systematic implementation of projects will lead to remediation of contaminated sediments, restoration of habitat and removal the remaining beneficial use impairments.

Minimum Performance Expectations for Ohio EPA Lake Erie Program

Coordinator

1. Prepares Lake Erie Program annual report and submits to Lake Erie and Nonpoint Source Program Manager by September 15th each year. Material will be added into Ohio EPA's Nonpoint Source Program Annual Report that is submitted to US EPA-Region 5 each fall.
2. Prepares Lake Erie Program annual work plan for US EPA Great Lakes National Program Office and coordinates with DSW Fiscal Staff and Lake Erie and NPS Program Manager.
3. Provides project briefings and program updates to DSW Management staff.
4. Serves as the primary Ohio EPA contact with GLNPO program staff on all matters of financial and implementation concern. Coordinates closely with AOC District Coordinators on interactions with GLNPO staff.

In Support of Ohio's Areas of Concern



5. Provides timely responses to all GLNPO program related information requests.
6. Updates Lake Erie Program policies and procedures (with concurrence of DSW Management) and prepares white papers and other reports detailing any change in Lake Erie Program policies and/or procedures.
7. Develops implementation project ideas and works in multi-agency and other partnerships to prepare Lake Erie/GLRI grant applications.
8. Serves as grant manager for the Lake Erie Program Capacity grant and any and all associated subgrants.
9. Organizes and leads quarterly AOC program staff meetings.
10. Responds timely to requests from Ohio EPA District Office staff and management.
11. Attends and participates in any scheduled Lake Erie AOC program meetings.
12. Attends the annual National AOC Conference and other appropriate workshops and conferences.
13. Represents Ohio EPA, DSW and the Lake Erie Program in a professional and positive manner.
14. Coordinates (as in copies, summarizes or shares) information from all AOC specific calls with Ohio EPA's District AOC Coordinators and management.
15. Works with Lake Erie Program Manager to integrate Ohio's AOC and Lake Erie Programs with other DSW programs such as Ecological Assessment, Nonpoint Source Program and NPDES Permitting, and other Ohio EPA divisions.