



## Maumee AOC Advisory Committee

February 10, 2022 9:30am – 11:00am

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### MINUTES

**Attendance:** Cherie Blair, Kris Patterson, Jason Lewis, Deanna Bobak, Mike Pniewski, Vanessa Dick Steigerwald, Jenny Carter-Cornell, Jim Carter, Amanda Kovach, Andrew Timmis, Ryan Alison, Paul Hotz, Ashlee Decker, Beth Sparks-Jackson, Alexis Sakas, Kris Barnswell, Kari Gerwin, Sally Gladwell, Scott Butterworth, Josh Miller, Deborah Miller, Tim Schetter, Laura Sullivan, Archie Lunsey, Leah Medley, Amber Bellamy, Bryan Hinterberger, Paul Rasmussen, Lynn Ackerson, Mike Libben, DJ Mears, Shawna Towns, Liv Simkins Bullock

- **Welcome & Meeting/Call Logistics:** Cherie Blair, Ohio EPA welcomed everyone to the Teams meeting.
- **MAP Spotlight** (*agenda item was moved up to accommodate the speaker's time constraints*)  
Jason Lewis, US FWS, gave a virtual presentation on the projects at & near the Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge. Several AOC MAP projects have occurred or are underway near there. Jason went through updates on progress for fish passage and Pool 2; Navarre Marsh (Ducks Unlimited led) and connecting it to Toussaint; Toussaint East & West projects completion and exceeding goals; and Schiller and Fox units. Significant work over the last few years has added to the ONWR and made habitat and management improvements. Planning is also underway for future work on Crane Creek and reconnecting it. FWS is very thankful for the funding and AOC prioritization.
- **Vote: Chair & Vice-Chair:** Kris Patterson, PCS, helped initiate 2022 nominations and vote for Chair & Vice Chair roles. Ryan Allison nominated Mike Pniewski and Jenny Carter-Cornell. Jenny welcomed and encouraged any other nominations. Jenny seconded Mike's nomination and he seconded hers. Hearing none, Mike & Jenny accepted and a vote was held. Motions passed with 6 yes's. Mike & Jenny abstained from the final vote.
- **Vote: Minutes:** Mike asked for a motion & vote on the December 2021 minutes that were distributed. Jenny asked for some minor corrections and with those changes, made a second motion to approve the minutes. The motion passed with 6 yes's. Jim Carter abstained since he missed that meeting.
- **Update from BUI 3a, 6, 14a Biological subcommittee:** Josh Miller, USGS, gave a presentation outlining the results of the Maumee River habitat feasibility study and the discussions of the working group. Josh outlined the multi-agency feasibility steps that helped gather extensive information on the conditions around the islands in the focus area, including Delaware & Clark islands, the Audubon island complex, and some smaller remnant islands such as Marengo. The feasibility team used all of the multi-agency reports and analysis, alongside community input and rough preliminary cost estimates, to recommend narrowing the focus areas to Delaware Island and Audubon complex. After discussing various ways to prioritize the funding and maximize the AOC benefit moving forward, the MAAC decided to recommend focusing funding on fully funding Delaware Island and using remaining funding for modified restoration work at the Audubon island complex. However, the next step, Engineering and Design, will also inform what and how much is feasible at each project location. Leah Medley congratulated the feasibility team and the MAAC on working through these decisions well and scaling down the work to be more attainable. She also cautioned that US EPA is seeing costs rise significantly on projects so future planning and costing should be very mindful of that caution.



- **Vote: Recommendations on Maumee River Aquatic MAP projects:** After discussion and agreement, Sally Gladwell motioned to approve the Delaware Island and Audubon Island complex focus for these MAP projects. Ryan Allison seconded and motion passed with 6 yes's. Tim Schetter and DJ Mears abstained.
- **US EPA Task Force Leader Report:** Leah Medley, GLNPO, gave a brief update on Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act. US EPA is still working on a Focus Area distribution plan but it's likely that a significant amount of it will support AOC work. It likely won't support new AOC projects but hopefully will mean less phases for projects or supporting really big dollar amount projects, especially for GLLA work. The January allocations for MAPs aren't finalized yet but the discussion for the Maumee went really well.
- **Ohio EPA AOC Coordinator Report:** Cherie went over the status of many of the current MAP projects. She will update & distribute updated MAP tables soon, as the new allocations are released. Ohio EPA expects to prepare BUI Removal documents for BUI 1 & 11 this year & will ask for the MAAC concurrence. Cherie highlighted the upcoming Ohio AOC Summit (for only Ohio AOC leaders), SOLE Conference with AOC sessions, and US EPA AOC Conference. Watch for more information soon on the US EPA AOC Conference to be distributed. Ohio EPA is negotiating the next capacity grant with US EPA, for 5 years this time. Local facilitating organization grants will be negotiated soon as well.

Cherie also provided an update on the Ottawa River NRDA settlement funds, after an inquiry at the previous meeting. Ducks Unlimited received \$850,000 in settlement funds and is purchasing 2 properties (a third fell through) in Sandusky and Erie counties (outside of the AOC). Properties will be turned over to ODNR.

- **Facilitating Organization's Report:** Kris gave a brief report and asked for suggestions on future MAAC activities. She will be putting together the next proposal for AOC support grant. The current grant is underspent still, although work is picking up for the contractors to support NPS-IS updates and outreach materials. Additional Rack Cards to highlight projects are in development along with future DMDS & website updates.
- **Partner Updates:** Many partners gave brief updates or informational announcements. FWS mentioned the Bullhead study report should be available soon. ODNR asked for additional leads on properties in the Swan Creek, Blue Creek area. They found 1 property, based on prior leads, and need a few more. Blue Week for the Oak Openings will be celebrated in May and the Kitty Todd expansion, Sandhill Crane restoration, will be featured by TNC with a ribbon cutting & public tour. Lucas County Engineers 2-stage Ditch project on Van Fleet is starting. The Clark Island project, through H2Ohio, will be collaborating with the developing Maumee Island (Delaware island complex) habitat project.
- **Public Comments & Adjourn:** No public comment so the meeting was adjourned by the Chair.
- **Next meetings for 2022**  
*August 11, December 8 at 930am*