



Maumee AOC Advisory Committee  
*August 14, 2025, 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm*  
**Virtual Meeting**  
**Minutes**

Attendance: Mary Winkle, Jesse Stock, Mike Pniewski, Cherie Blair, Bill Burkett, Kris Patterson, Archie Lunsey, Michael Towne, Zuri Carter, Corey VanStratt, Scott Butterworth, Shawn Duke, Beth Sparks-Jackson, Ross St. Clair, Jason Collins, Matthew Kovach, Melissa Hopfer, Jenny Carter-Cornell, LaRae Sprow

**1. Call to Order**

**Mike Pniewski, Chair**, called the meeting to order at 1:04pm

**2. Approval of Previous Minutes**

Mike called for a vote on the February minutes. He requested a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Bill Burkett made the motion, Shawn Duke seconded, and the motion passed.

**3. US AOC Conference – Sept. 16-18, 2025**

**Jesse Stock – PCS**, provided an update on the status of the summit. No longer a conference, it has a new name but same dates. Registration and website are now live, and there are three options: Paid, Deferred Payment, or Scholarship. Currently 100+ attendees are registered. Please make sure to RSVP for your field trip in the Whova App. One field trip is included in your registration. Still firming up the volunteer responsibilities throughout the summit, but if you're interested and still have not offered, please contact [gl2025@partnersforcleanstreams.org](mailto:gl2025@partnersforcleanstreams.org). Approximately \$44,000+ in sponsorships for the summit have been collected to create an enriching 3 days. Tuesday's evening reception is at the National Museum of the Great Lakes, Wednesday at Mudhens Armory. Scholarships are still available for travel support, and the deadline is August 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**Kris Patterson - OLEC**, said a more detailed agenda from GLNPO is in progress and expected by end of next week. The summit will differ from past AOC conferences as this will focus on more working meeting discussions and overarching information across all AOCs. There are more than 20 poster submittals so far. The deadline for submitting abstracts has passed but is still open for any last-minute submissions. The form to submit is on the Area of Concern Cross-Agency Partnership Summit (ACAPS) website on the Registration page. Please no product advertisements. Some VIPs have confirmed attendance such as Regional Administrator Anne Vogel, two U.S. EPA staff, Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur, and a few others.

**Cherie Blair - OEPA**, gave an update. There are three fields trips offered during the Tuesday afternoon of the summit. One field trip is included in registration. Cherie, Beth Sparks-Jackson, and Jenny Carter-Cornell will be facilitators for each of the tours. Presenters for projects are still being finalized. If your project is included in a tour, but you are not available to speak, please reach out to Cherie.

#### 4. U.S. EPA Task Force Leader Report

**Leah Medley – U.S. EPA GLNPO**, was not in attendance. Cherie Blair provided an update on new staffing changes at GLNPO.

#### 5. Project Spotlight

**LaRae Sprow – Metroparks Toledo**, updated on Metroparks project at Oak Openings and Blue Creek Metropark. U.S. EPA funded \$950,000 in the western portion of the AOC for these projects. The Blue Creek and Neis Ditch Restorations address BUI 3: Degradation of Fish and Wildlife Populations by planting native shrubs & trees and stabilizing 1450 ft of streambank. Small deflector logs were placed in the stream to add some structure and stabilization in addition to some root wads and woody debris. The floodplain was widened to increase capacity along 1000 linear feet. Live stakes and live stake matting were also incorporated into this project to stabilize the bank and increase density of native shrubs. Some of the challenges that occurred included permitting coming in slowly, but there were little to no impacts on the project timeline. The Village of Swanton cooperated well and were on board for the project. Private landowners impacted by the project did not have any pushback and helped to move the project along. Weather challenges, heavier rain events, and some colder temperatures resulted in a few slowdowns and more water needing to be pumped, but no major issues. All plantings in Neis Ditch are completed, and Blue Creek plantings have been pushed to the fall.

Kris Patterson asked about how Metroparks protected fish and aquatic wildlife during the pumping. LaRae shared that there is a screen in place.

Zuri Carter asked how the deflector logs are installed in the stream. LaRae explained that these logs are partially buried in the ground to stabilize them.

#### 6. Ohio EPA AOC Coordinator Report

**Cherie Blair – Ohio EPA**, presented a short update. All WildMAPs have been completed! More details and statistics on this milestone will be shared during the summit in September. More AquaMAPs in progress and planning to start this year. Some projects have gotten a later start than planned for, but all are funded except for one. A bigger focus on SedMAPs will be coming soon as WildMAPs are now complete and AquaMAPs are following. The infrastructure of Swan Creek makes it a little more difficult to work in, so Ottawa and Maumee will be first for sediment work. Forty-four sites are being monitored in Ohio to determine the best way to target BUI 6.

#### 7. Facilitating Organization's Report

**Jesse Stock – PCS**, presented the facilitating organization report. Through June 2025, 12.3% of the total budget has been absorbed by PCS. Regular AOE meetings have been taking place to guide and serve as a resource for partner outreach and communication best practices. PCS was awarded a NWF grant for tours in the AOC for GLRI projects that were to take place in August. These tours have been postponed until October to allow for more media and government representation to attend. Dates have not been finalized but will be made available as soon as they are figured out. These tours will mirror those that are available during the summit in September. These tours are private and by invite only.

Committee member applications will be coming in October for next year's MAAC. The annual meeting will be held December 11<sup>th</sup> and will be in person, with a networking lunch before the meeting. More details to come.

#### 8. Partner Updates

**Zuri Carter – Metroparks Toledo,** Audubon State Nature preserve project has begun construction and progress is coming along well.

**Corey VanStratt – Ducks Unlimited,** Camp Sabroske Phase 1 was completed in June. Phase 2 and permitting are expected this winter and construction to begin in spring/summer of next year. A wetland delineation project is happening this month, and a report will follow in September.

**Edith Kippenhan – City of Toledo,** GLRI Hill Ditch stream realignment has been completed with live stakes for stabilization. A draft plan for planting trees and shrubs is expected in late fall or early spring. Jermain Park is substantially complete. Delaware Creek Phase 2 is out to bid, with bids closing on Tuesday, August 19th. Collins Park implementation phase funding needs approval and contractor has been selected.

**Jenny Carter-Cornell – Verdantas,** Islands complex restoration is 95% complete. Some dredging in boat launch area and in between islands is in progress to accommodate future maintenance and recreational boating. Some plantings are still being done through the fall. A ribbon cutting celebration on Monday, September 15<sup>th</sup> at 12:30 p.m. at Walbridge Park shelter house with several speakers. There may also be a raptor release from Nature's Nursery during the celebration. Official invites by email expected Monday, August 18. The City of Toledo is working with Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge to kayak around the islands the following week.

**Kris Patterson – OLEC,** Keep an eye on lakeerie.ohio.gov offering more opportunities through the Lake Erie Protection Fund for GLRI like needs in the community. Applications from most recent round are still being finalized.

## **9. Public Comments**

None

## **10. Meeting Adjourned at 2:24 p.m.**

**Next meeting: December 11th – in person. More details to come.**