



State Water Plan Update Ohio Water Resources Regional Committee Meeting

January 25, 2022
1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams
In-Person Rachael Carson Building

Committee Members in Attendance:

Chuck Durista	Deb Simko
Matthew A. Genchur	Robert Softcheck
Kevin Halloran	Jasun Stanton
Annie Quinn	Donna Lynn Zofcin
Ron Rohall	
John St. Clair	

Committee Members Not in Attendance:

Erin Kepple Adams	Sheryl Kelly
Daniel Dahlkemper	Deb Lange
Lori Dayton	Jason McCabe
Sam Dinkins	Ronald Musser
Duane Goodsell	Mary Ellen Ramage
John Walliser	

Others in Attendance:

Kristina Peacock-Jones – DEP	Monica Gould – Strategic Consulting Partners
Mark Matlock – DEP	Bob Whitmore – Strategic Consulting Partners
Mike Hill – DEP	
James Horton – DEP	

Visitors:

Curtis Schreffler

Welcome

Mark Matlock, DEP, welcomed everyone to the meeting, explained the meeting was being recorded, and provided helpful hints on the use of the technology. Ron Rohall, Committee Chair, welcomed committee members to the meeting. Attendance was completed through the online participant list.

Minutes

The meeting summary of the October 26, 2021, meeting was approved on a Chuck Duritsa / Annie Quinn motion.

Public Comment

Chair Rohall opened the meeting for public comment. An opportunity to express comments verbally or in the chat box was offered. There was no public comment.

DEP State Water Plan Update

Kristina Peacock-Jones provided an update of what DEP is working on regarding the State Water Plan Update. The USGS Water Use Data and Research (WUDR) grant data sharing project involving data sharing between agencies is now operational for SRBC and USGS. Data sharing is still pending with DRBC.

The three draft Critical Area Resource Plans (CARPs) continue to be under development and the drafts are progressing. Two of those CARPs are for the Ohio Regional Committee and one is for the Potomac Regional Committee.

The State Water Plan Atlas from 2009 is being developed into a Story Map as a Digital Atlas. The Digital Atlas should be ready in the first half of 2022.

The ninth Statewide Committee meeting was held on January 19, 2022.

CARP Update

Mark Matlock stated the CARPs are still undergoing internal DEP review and no update was provided.

Regional Materials

Mark Matlock shared a cumulative summary of the Ohio Regional Committee's work for the past two years. The committee reviewed the document and made slight revisions to the materials. The revised regional committee materials follow.

Specific Regional Priorities

The Ohio region is geologically distinct from the other water planning regions. It is marked by varied elevations, cliffs, landslides, and high relief areas. This watershed contributes to the larger Mississippi basin and, as such, requires the involvement of several stakeholders to maintain water quantity and quality.

Inter-Agency Water Resource Planning

The committee supports a holistic approach to water quality, quantity, and availability. They believe inter-agency water resources planning can address many water priorities. Organizations that should be involved in inter-agency water planning include federal, interstate, and state agencies, local municipalities, conservation districts, watershed districts, watershed authorities, nonprofit environmental organizations, and the Army Corp of Engineers. Plans should identify water resources needed to promote and facilitate economic development while maintaining watershed integrity and recreation benefits. They should also evaluate impacts of resource extraction from the Marcellus Shale on

water quality, emerging contaminants in water systems, reclaiming of water resources impaired by abandoned mines, and inter-basin transfers of water. Act 167 stormwater planning at the county level is an initial step toward inter-agency water resource planning.

Water Quality and Quantity

Regional solutions depend upon an integrated approach to water quality and quantity challenges. Water quantity can be defined as a spectrum from too much to too little. Quantity can also vary over time and location. Quality, which is defined by water usage, can be impacted by quantity - either too high or too low. Increased data collection can inform community input and watershed planning. Planning will help to prioritize natural systems, man-made infrastructure, and water treatment to include creative, diverse, and strategic solutions that can maximize water supply and the quality of our drinking water.

The largest hazard to our communities is flood water. Excessive amounts of stormwater runoff can cause flooding and damage the quality of the waterways through agricultural runoff, combined sewer overflows (CSOs), and Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) overflows. Stormwater is significantly impacted by climate change and aging infrastructure. Priority should be given to multi-municipal planning and funding projects that include best management practices referenced in the Pennsylvania Stormwater Best Management Practices Manual that use integrated approaches to maximize pollution reduction and mitigate flooding.

In addition to stormwater management, planning efforts need to address acid mine drainage and orphaned wells, inter-basin transfers, agricultural activities, sanitary sewer overflows, CSOs, MS4s, unsustainable forest management, and the introduction of larger-scale industrial water users, all of which have implications on both quality and quantity.

Region's Uniqueness

What are the Ohio region's unique characteristics that are important considerations in the state's water planning?

- The basin contains the headwaters of the Ohio River, having an impact on 1,000 miles of river downstream through multiple states. Water drains north from West Virginia and south through Ohio and New York before contributing to the larger Ohio River basin.
- The Ohio River basin contains organizations that are unique to the region with a focus on water quality: [The Ohio River Basin Alliance \(ORBA\)](#) and [The Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission \(ORSANCO\)](#).
- Universities, colleges, municipalities, and local foundations within the basin often work together towards solutions to water resource related issues.
- The Ohio River basin is a municipally dense region which can lead to difficulties in coordinating zoning and planning activities.
- The region contains the tribal lands of the Seneca Nation of Indians.
- [The Allegheny National Forest](#) is in the basin; these protected lands provide conservation and recreation.

- There are many locks and dams within the region including 16 multipurpose flood control dams and 23 navigable locks and dams.
- Rivers are used for recreation and transportation with inland ports for sand, gravel, coal, and other commodities. The Port of Pittsburgh is the fourth largest inland port in the United States.
- The region is geographically distinct from the rest of the state due to the Appalachian Mountains. Geologically the Appalachian Mountains are an incised plateau which leads to the appearance of synclines and anticlines from glacial activities. Varying elevations, such as cliffs and high relief areas can be prone to landslides. This necessitates different planning and treatment requirements based on location.
- Hydraulic fracking and coal fired power plants in the region create additional water demands.

Stormwater and Flood Management

What are the region's concerns and recommendations for stormwater and flood management to preserve water quality?

- Stormwater management infrastructure often lacks proper maintenance, partly due to confusion about ownership and the associated responsible parties. Some agreements have been in place since the 1960s, but these can be difficult to enforce, especially as facilities change ownership, leaving some older facilities without maintenance for decades.
- Education and outreach are needed to tie the concept of stormwater management more closely to flooding, as poor stormwater management can lead to downstream flooding.
- Aging stormwater infrastructure should be assessed by regional authorities for high frequency, as opposed to high intensity storm events. Retrofitting aging best management practices and providing groundwater recharge areas for large impervious areas such as parking lots from vacant shopping malls would be beneficial.
- Contaminants from large impervious areas can be transported by stormwater, which can contribute to water quality issues.
- Planning should be completed on a watershed basis and priority should be given to planning upstream and/or at the headwaters.
- [CSOs are common in the Ohio basin](#) and their removals are ongoing. Impacts occur only during rain events, which makes CSOs both a stormwater concern and a water quality problem.
- Rivers, with their proximity to raw materials (lumber, coal etc.) and easy transportation served as an ideal location for development. This not only obstructed the flood plain but constrained the gradual geomorphic development of the waterway. Therefore, the redevelopment of older structures on floodplains, which were built prior to local ordinances that would have prevented their original construction, are a concern for the region.

- State guidance on flood plain development is released whenever a new Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) is provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). FIRMs are then enacted via municipalities (through floodplain ordinances and collaboration with neighboring communities) and could benefit from regional planning.

Climate Change Adaptation for Water Resources

How are water resources within the region being impacted by climate change and what could we do to adapt?

- Flooding due to large amounts of impervious surfaces will continue to cause problems as precipitation intensity increases.
- Stakeholders should investigate climate change implications on water supply vulnerability, availability, and reliability.
- Climate change will likely increase the intensity of storms in Pennsylvania but could also extend dry periods. Stakeholders should investigate the implications of flash flooding and potential decreased groundwater recharge.
- Capturing water during high-intensity storm events and continuing to promote ground water recharge will help reduce drought events. Regional authorities should provide incentives for homeowners to utilize rain barrels or route downspouts to swales.
- The Army Corps of Engineers owns and operates locks and dams within the region which may help with resiliency, provided they are properly maintained. This will require additional infrastructure planning to enhance resiliency.
- There is a need to maintain riparian buffers, particularly in communities at the headwaters of the basin.

Logic Model

James Horton, DEP, shared a template of the previous logic model work completed by the committee. The logic model can be used to make the region's priorities actionable and measurable. A logic model is a picture that links the long term and short-term outcomes, or changes and results you hope to achieve, with the program activities and resources available to move the priorities forward.

The logic model template has the following components:

- Resources
- Activities
- Outputs
- Intermediate outcomes
- Long term outcomes

Committee members developed comments and ideas to be included in a logic model for each of their two priorities.

Comments in the Chat

- <https://www.westmorelandstormwater.org/> - IWRP Home - Westmoreland County Integrated Water Resources Plan
- <https://conservationtools.org/guides/1-environmental-advisory-council> - Environmental Advisory Council: Conservation Tools. Any municipality in Pennsylvania may establish an environmental advisory council to tap the skills and volunteer energy of its citizens.
- <https://weconservepa.org/eac/>
- EAC - Encourage Pre-Design, Pre-permit, Pre-construction
- Lori Boughton is the Regional Manager, Waterways and Wetlands Program
- <https://www.dep.pa.gov/Business/Water/PlanningConservation/CountyConservation/Districts/WatershedSpecialists/Pages/default.aspx>
- Westmoreland IWRP <https://www.westmorelandstormwater.org/stormwater-resources/iwrp/>
- [Integrated Water Quality Report-2022 \(pa.gov\)](#)

Next Steps

Chair Rohall thanked all committee members for their attendance, participation, and ideas.

Mark Matlock, DEP, provided an overview of the committee's future work.

- Edits to the committee's developed materials will be updated.
- A public hearing is being scheduled, tentatively for March 11. The public hearing will be a full day hearing with each regional committee having one hour to receive public comment. Comments from the public hearing will be available for the Delaware Regional Committee to review at the April meeting.
- A committee vote on approval of the committee's priorities and Story Map materials will be held at the April meeting.
- The approved regional committee documents will be provided to the Statewide Committee.
- Ohio Regional Committee meetings are scheduled for the following dates in 2022.
 - April 26
 - A July meeting is not scheduled at this time.
 - October 25

The meeting was adjourned at 3:55 pm on a Chuck Durista / Ron Rohall motion.