



State Water Plan Update Statewide Committee Meeting

December 14, 2022
9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

Committee Members in Attendance:

Kelly Anderson	Heidi Moltz
Len Bradley	Kevin Moore
Carol Collier	Trish Salvia
Andrew Dehoff	Deb Simko
Patty Elkis	Heather Smiles
Jennifer Fetter	Simeon Suter
Andrew Gutshall	Steve Tambini
Catherine Harper	Susan Weaver
Richard Harrison	Tim Weston
Jeff Jumper	Matthew Wolford
Gary Merritt	

Committee Members Not in Attendance:

Sean Donnelly	Daniel Gold
Theresa Eberly	Shannon Rossman
Brian Eckert	Michael Roth
Matthew Genchur	Jessica Trimble

Others in Attendance:

James Horton – DEP	Monica Gould – Strategic Consulting Partners
Brian Chalfant – DEP	Bob Whitmore – Strategic Consulting Partners

Visitors:

Ben Lorson

Welcome:

James Horton, DEP, welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained the meeting was being recorded and provided helpful hints on the use of the technology. Chair Tim Weston welcomed everyone attending the meeting. Attendance was recorded in the Microsoft Teams participant's log.

Meeting Summary

The meeting summaries of October 19, 2022, and November 16, 2022, were reviewed. It was noted by James Horton that Sim Suter's name was misspelled at one place and has been corrected. The meeting summaries were approved on a Len Bradley / Sim Suter motion.

Public Comment

Chair Weston opened the meeting for public comment. No public comment was offered.

DEP Summary of Activities:

James Horton provided a summary of DEP activities regarding the State Water Plan Update.

The three Critical Area Resource Plans have made progress over this last iteration of the State Water Plan and are all drawing closer to completion. The draft Back Creek CARP is complete and was previously shared with the Ohio regional committee; it was approved by the committee to enter public comment and the 45-day agency review phase followed by a hearing to receive testimony from the public. This review time has ended. DEP staff and the Critical Area Advisory Committee have addressed the comments and suggested edit. This CARP along with a comment/response document was still being internally reviewed at the time of the last Ohio regional meeting. As a result, this CARP will be considered by the Ohio committee as early as possible in the new year.

The draft Laurel Hill CARP is receiving edits and will be shared once it has exited internal review.

The Marsh and Rock Creek CARP is still under review. Once the draft CARPs have been reviewed by their respective committee and approved by DEP with any additional edits, they will be sent to a list of stakeholders and planning officials within their watershed for review and comment. Additionally, DEP will host public hearings specifically to consider each CARP and solicit comments from the public prior to the vote for recommendation.

Once the CARPs have been edited in accordance with public and planning agency feedback, the CARPs will return to their regional committees to vote their approval and recommendation to the statewide committee.

The committee schedule has been prepared for the upcoming year utilizing a hybrid meeting format making use of RCSOB facilities and Microsoft Teams.

The final State Water Plan Update Report has completed its final internal review, received final edits from both you and the Department and is now ready to share with you.

The Committee requested copies of the CARPs be also sent to Statewide Committee members when DEP review is completed.

Final Report Discussion

Chair Weston noted the final report purpose in the introduction of the report has been enhanced by himself and Kate Harper. A comment was provided by Kate Harper that the Digital Water Atlas StoryMap is a valuable resource to support the State Water Plan and should be referenced in the plan document. James commented the Digital Water Atlas will be promoted in all education and outreach activities.

Chair Weston noted one minor change in wording to the draft plan document and reviewed the change with the committee.

Final Report Vote

A motion was made by Kate Harper and seconded by Simeon Suter to approve and recommend the State Water Plan document to the Secretary of DEP for signature. The motion accepted the word changing made today and provides the Chair of the statewide committee and DEP staff can correct any typos and formatting changes that need to be made in the final document.

The motion to approve the plan was unanimously approved.

Committee members names will be included at the end of the State Water Plan document. It was requested, if possible, to add the professional affiliations or agencies committee members represent to the document to show the breadth of expertise and representation on the committee.

Final Report Process Debrief

Committee members were asked to provide feedback and insights on the committee's work process and final report development. The following comments were provided:

Positive Feedback

- The statewide committee is a great committee with a wealth of experience and education and representation from all professions and geographic regions of the state
- The committee worked very hard to prepare the report.
- The plan was a nice collaborative effort.
- The work groups were a very beneficial part of the process and added insights and research on issues. Work groups were able to dig deep into issues
- The committee's relationship with DEP staff supporting the plan was very good and the committee appreciated the historical knowledge they provided.
- Statewide committee members value DEP staff commitment to the State Water Plan and will make it an active document and not placed on a shelf to be reviewed in five years.
- The committee successfully adapted to the change in meeting virtually because of the COVID pandemic.

- Chair Weston and Vice-Chair Harper were recognized for their leadership to the process and effortless work in moving the plan through the development process.
- James Horton and DEP staff working on the plan were recognized and appreciated for their collaborative approach.

Suggestion for Improving the Process

- Communicating the purpose of the state water planning process and expectation of committee members would be helpful. Expectations for the work to be completed and metrics for measuring progress were not clear in the beginning. More structure for both regional committees and the statewide committee would be helpful.
- Committee members were very frustrated with the DEP internal review process of documents.
- Committee members feel DEP staff would steer regional committee recommendations in a different direction at times and not support regional committee suggestions and recommendations
- Challenging that some of the regional committees had difficulty achieving quorum at many meetings. It was noted that it is difficult to find members who have the expertise, qualifications, and the time to participate.
- DEP staff, statewide, and regional committees need to have a better integration of work. Committee did not feel they had DEP program support and resources to help develop the plan. At times it was not a productive process.
- It has been 12 years since the last plan was developed. No analysis of data collected or what has occurred during this 12-year period was provided as background scientific data for the Committees to use.
- Committee members are hopeful they will continue to meet to make sure goals are being achieved.
- Members acknowledged the administrative process to identify and appoint members to committees is difficult. It is suggested DEP talk to the Legislature to see if the appointment process can be modified to make it easier to appoint members.

Next Steps

- Statewide committee and regional committees will be meeting twice a year beginning in 2023. These meetings will be held in April and October.
- James Horton (DEP) will develop a brief survey for committee members to offer additional feedback and suggestions for improving the planning process.
- All committees will be re-electing Chairs at the April 2023 meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:14 on a Matt Wolford / Len Bradley motion.