



## **Black River Remedial Action Plan Coordinating Committee**

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# **BLACK RIVER REMEDIAL ACTION PLAN**

## **Coordinating Committee Meeting Minutes**

**Monday, April 29, 2013**

**1:30 PM**

Carlisle Reservation

12882 Diagonal Road

LaGrange, OH 44050

**In Attendance:** Karen Bezoski (US Steel Lorain Tubular), Stephanie Charles (LCGHD), Ted Conlin (Ohio EPA), Dave Covell (LCGHD), Heather Dardinger (Coldwater Consulting), Jill Lis (LCGHD), Elva Martes (City of Lorain Utilities), Ellen Mavrich (Citizen), Matt Nahorn (Beaver Creek Watershed Group), Tony Nigro (City of Elyria Wastewater), Don Romancak (Lorain Co. Community Development), Raymond Romero (LCGHD), Mark Smith (LCGHD)

### **Agenda Items**

#### **New Black River Video**

- 8-10 days of filming starting in June
- Created using EPA funding
  - Timeline with an end of year completion date
- Gay Eyerman – producer/screenwriter
  - Worked on past video
- LCCC – video production
- Shoots
  - LoCo Yak Clean-Up
  - Fishing tournament
  - International festival
  - Kayak symposium
  - Boat tour
- Video will be put on local cable stations and website, with a limited number of DVDs being created for distribution
- Could potentially have invasive species work done at the steel mill site
  - Coldwater could coordinate to have people there on June 18
- Purpose: success of what has been done, how people feel about the changes to the river, helping with economy, betterment of people in and around the river

#### **May Fish Sampling**

- Tumor study
  - Ohio EPA received money from US EPA to do project
    - Sampling river on May 20-21 in lower Black River
  - Some trouble sampling last year due to low water flows from lack of rainfall

- May do some fish shocking and but mostly use fyke nets for sampling
- Bullheads will be euthanized for sampling
  - Fish 3 years and older will be used for study
  - Use otoliths for aging
  - Livers collected and frozen, sent to lab to be analyzed for tumors
- In 1980's, 1 out of 10 Black River fish had an external anomaly; Now in 2012, 1 out of 200 has an anomaly
- 2004 – Fish tumors BUI went from 'Impaired' to 'In Recovery' in lower main stem

### **Black River Watershed Interns at LCGHD**

- Inventory of HSTS in Lorain County but incomplete; need a better inventory
  - Attempt to catalog homes that have septic systems but are not inventoried
- Hire interns to:
  - Take existing database of HSTS and compare to all residents in the area to where sanitary sewers are
  - Go in pairs to inventory the types of systems to determine non-point source load
  - Environmental Health major and Environmental Science major will be hired to do work
- Will start in next few weeks and will continue to give updates
- EPA said to come back to GLRI after inventory is complete to see if there is money available for assistance
  - Section 301 will not fund HSTS
- Share data with Lorain County Stormwater District when complete
  - They are in process of screening outfalls, MS4
  - Can use data to create a better plan to react to what is out there

### **2012 Black River RAP Annual Report**

- There is no draft yet
- Possibly using grant money to have it created for us by an outside contractor rather than doing it all in-house
- Will include:
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Black River Kayakathon
  - Lower river restoration
  - Farewell to Ken Pearce
  - Info regarding 2012 sampling
  - Wellington gas leak
  - Weather extremes and their impact on the river

### **LCGHD Environmental Health Director**

- Jill Lis is the new Director of Environmental Health at Lorain County General Health District
  - Worked for Cuyahoga County Board of Health prior
  - Focus on water quality issues
  - Was involved in watersheds in Cuyahoga County
  - Would like to create a connection between Black River and Cuyahoga River RAPs
  - Share a report of the "muck study" at next meeting
- Ted proposed Jill as new RAP Chairperson
  - Would be fine with becoming chairperson of the RAP in about a month
  - Not opposed to it

### **Old Business**

- None

## New Business

### GLRI Challenge Grant

- Interviewing for new position for Watershed Specialist
  - Everyday person for GLRI grant
  - Interface between in the field and in county building
  - 50% out in field
- In process of hiring 3 supervisory positions in field
- Starting interviews for field workers
  - Start in early June to harvest old biomass

### Coldwater

- 2 year grant to remove phragmites
  - Unsure of funding
  - Will begin this summer

### Ohio EPA

- Letter of support to Salt Creek/Black River Protection Project
  - Did not put up for RAP vote due to time restrictions
  - Aligns with riparian corridor resolution
  - Contiguous to heron rookery
- Under pressure to show progress in AOC
  - Caution BRR about haste in delisting due to pressures
  - Priority delisting – such as Ashtabula
    - “New delisting” - If all guidance and management actions met but haven’t proven restoration, can delist
    - Such AOCs could be removed from AOC-only funding sources
  - Black River may be looked at as an AOC to delist in near future by US EPA
    - Looking to delist single or multiple BUIs or a complete delisting of all AOC
      - We may be able to delist some BUIs in a short time
        - Dredging BUI
          - 80% channels were clean enough for lake disposal
          - Army Corp assess ship channel for the last 20% of sediments
            - If these come back fine, we could possibly remove BUI
        - Fish tumors
          - Internal bullhead liver tumor study now underway
          - External tumors & other anomalies are much improved and close to delisting target
        - Sub-watershed delisting possibilities
          - Fish populations
            - Fish populations in main stem and East Branch meet the criteria but West Branch was 60-80% of what is needed to delist; may re-assess West Branch again because it may have been due to low flow
          - Fish habitat
            - Meets delisting criteria in all areas except lower main stem
              - Entire lower main stem is 80% needed to delist
              - Lacustrary is at 69%

- Upstream of lacustrary, main stem is at 144% needed to delist
- If we get vegetation in there, we could move forward with fish habitat
- Wildlife habitat
  - Delisting target came from Canada AOC standard for this in early 2000s, currently unattainable in US and Ohio
  - Current state delisting guideline being re-written, may allow for delisting in all of part of AOC
- More work needed and help has been requested
  - Fish consumption
    - asked US EPA for help on where fish are getting mercury
      - unsure how these are getting in, especially in Findley Lake that is surrounded by state park
    - PCB most likely coming from Ford Road landfill (superfund site)
  - Recreational use
    - New LCGHD intern program will help with this
  - Aesthetics
    - To delist, need to be "free from" many things like sheen, floating debris, etc.
      - Need original RAP members to explain why originally listed as impaired so we can determine how conditions are now and what needs to be done to delist
      - State needs to provide better guidance on delisting and state is looking for input from RAP members

### **Delisting guidance document**

- Look for this around mid-summer
- Canada and US looking at new criteria for IJC for water quality agreement

### **City of Lorain**

- MBI has written first draft of report
- QHEI data is close
- IBI data is great
- Macroinvertebrate data is low and below levels
  - Do have an out because it has to be dredged
- NOAA phase 2 sampling going on
  - Can share results at next meeting

## **Announcements**

### **Planning Session Workshop (4/30/2013)**

- Oberlin Inn 6:30-8:30
- Letters to elected officials and people who attended past workshops
- Targeted to Lorain, Medina, and Western Cuyahoga County residents
- Begin to establish different scenarios
  - What will we look like in 2040 if we do nothing
  - Identify areas of growth and decline

- 3 additional workshops throughout the year after getting input from what they would like to see in their communities
- Quality connected place; what should rural, urban, and suburban areas look like
  - How do communities fit within the region
- [www.vibrantneo.org](http://www.vibrantneo.org)
- Approximately 100 people registered; goal of 125 for next workshop
- Funded by HUD, EPA, DOT
- Fiscal impacts so we know what government spending will look like depending on trajectories taken
- Conditions and trends page
  - Environmental impacts
  - 10-12 findings
- Populations down by 7%, increased footprint by 20%

#### **EPA/GLNPO**

- If you have any program that could restore a BUI, they are willing to talk
- If it leads toward detsiting they will be interested

#### **Coldwater**

- City of Lorain – 2 GLRI grants in progress
  - US Forest Service
    - Heron rookery in lower BR; removing material and planting trees
  - Assessment grant from Ohio EPA
    - Area where city has an oil seep issue
- Kayak-a-thon
  - Not with international festival; looking in August and early September
  - Will share with RAP group as it gets closer
- Lo Co Yaks River Clean-Up
  - Sunday, May 5