



Black River Advisory Committee

LoCo 'Yaks | Facilitating Organization

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QUARTERLY-ish (COVID) MEETING | Monday, August 17, 2020 | 2:30 PM

Minutes

- ❖ Welcome / Call to Order – Don is running late. Stephanie called the meeting to order at 2:43PM.
 - In attendance: Kristen Isom, US EPA; Melanie Barbis, OhEPA; John Schwartz, LCSWD; Pam Davis, NOACA; Jennifer Wasilk, Sandstone EHS Services | City of Amherst; Matt Nahorn, Beaver Creek Watershed; Max Schaefer, The Ohio Environmental Council; Julie Mackey, Lorain County OSU Extension; Lyn Ickes, Lorain County; Kate Golden, City of Lorain; Rick Payerchin, The Morning Journal; Cherie Blair, OhEPA; Don Romancak, Lorain County Community Development.
- ❖ Fiscal Report
 - FY2018 support grant – Extension has been submitted after a few minor edits. Haven't really spent any money since last meeting. Extension will be another 18 months and up to \$60,000 geared toward moving into a digital/virtual world with YouTube and increased social media presence. We have included money for 2 employees/paid interns, a waterproof adventure camera, and \$15,000 toward app to incorporate AOC projects, landmarks, etc.
- ❖ Approval of Meeting Minutes 5/19/2020 – skipping until Don logs on.
- ❖ Black River Restoration Project Updates
 - City
 - Kate – Rec Site is nearing completion. Had a few minor delays due to weather, waiting for final stabilization. Also there was some additional work that is taking a little more time, but very close to “substantially complete”. (And that’s when Rita, the cat she saved from the Rec Site, jumped up & bit her for no apparent reason.) Extension requested for time to catchup from COVID delays.
 - Kate – Seep modification project – in development
 - Kate – Aquatic Habitat project – in development
 - Kate – Dredge Project through Healthy Lake Erie Initiative funding – a de-watering site for dredge material because open dumping on Lake Erie is no longer allowed. Land is adjacent to restoration areas. Working on some final design parameters, and everything is going well.
 - Stephanie – LoCo 'Yaks is dropping of water samples to the airport every night, so it all seems to be moving along smoothly.
 - County
 - Don – Lyn is back, field work has started, brought back a couple crew members, and got new equipment including an amazing new sprayer that is a “godsend”. Submitted

request for extension for Phase III – Invasives Treatment. Anticipate extending through Feb 2022.

- Don – Margaret Peak still has some signage that needs to be installed according to grant guidelines. Also looking at an app that can provide information for self-guided tours of projects and AOC areas.
 - [While waiting for meeting to start, Lyn/County (\$10,000) and Kate/City offered to financially support the app that will cover all of the AOC, eventually incorporating Lake Erie and potentially all of the Great Lakes.]

❖ Ohio AOC Program Updates

- BUI #11 removal process
 - Melanie – State review took a little longer than expected. Just received their remarks today. Once State comments have been addressed, will unofficially submit to GLNPO for review, and then to BRAC for comments. After addressing all comments, official Removal Recommendation will be submitted to GLNPO. Once approved by GLNPO, there will be a press release and a 14-day public comment period.
 - Don – we’ll have the committee send comments to Stephanie. Stephanie will send to Don, Max, & Kate before it goes back to Melanie. Then, when the time comes, we should use all the digital avenues we have to get the word out for public comment – social media, websites, etc.

❖ Old Business

- BUI Review – overview/ status/ next steps – skipping until next meeting because “state is still discussing a new approach to the BUI removal process” and then Melanie can give us a clearer picture of where we stand.
- Support Grant Extension updates – discussed during Fiscal Report. Will reach out to LCCC for paid intern.
- NOACA Maps
 - Pam – Don sent over priority list. Finalizing contract with OhEPA over next couple of weeks and will get started then.

❖ New Business

- MAC Celebration – (Note: In last meeting, Don stressed importance of having a small celebration this year *maybe*; although USEPA suggests waiting until work is actually complete-complete rather than “substantially complete”. Don agreed with this statement.)
 - Kate – will be spring at the earliest before we can do in-person.
 - Don – think it’s wise that we put off any celebration until we are actually complete and hopefully then we can have a real in-person celebration with stakeholders and public. “But I want to hear from the committee...”
 - Kristen Isom – wants to clarify the statement about “totally complete” – it’s not US EPA’s decision and they want the BRAC to make the decision of when to celebrate. “Substantial completion” is a big deal and deserves to be recognized.
 - Don – a lot of things (pandemic/weather) have caused some delays and we are not quite where we thought we’d be at this time. We should do an event that we can do “well” and that will give the completion the recognition it deserves.

We should do an announcement or press release about “substantial completion” when the time is right.

- Cuyahoga River AOC facilitating organization – Jane is retiring. RFP has been issued and the opportunity is open.
 - Don – Let’s send a nice letter of recognition to Jane.
 - Pam – expects substantial competition for Fac. Org. Knows at least 4 nonprofits interested.
- YouTube – subcommittee – Jack, John S&W, John Sabo, me & Robb. CW has been taking drone footage that we will use. We are also going back to the geopool site to interview and take pictures. While LY is still busy with summer, we will promote the old videos. Also found Doodly.com today. We will work on something similar to the WI AOC video.
 - Kate – There has been Duckweed growth at the mouth of Beaver Creek for last 2 years, but never before. It’s not enough to require a regional response, and it’s a large, natural runoff draining into the Lake. Maybe we can do an episode on best fertilizer practices for lawns, explaining the significant impact to Lake Erie and our clean water.
 - Don – open for discussion, but it’s a good idea to reach further out in our watershed.
- LOS for Tinker for Western Reserve Land Conservancy Mini Grant application – applying to install cigarette butt disposal containers, and would like BRAC support.
 - Don – as long as we’re not competing with ourselves...
 - Steph – BRAC nor LY are applying, although there is usually enough money to go around.
 - John Schwartz – S&W is also applying for the grant for water quality monitoring equipment for volunteers in smaller watersheds.
 - Don – We’d be happy to offer LOS from BRAC.
 - Plenty of funding, and these 2 groups are applying under different categories, so it isn’t real competition.
 - Jennifer motions to provide letters for both groups; Kate “informally” seconds it. No discussion. All in favor. None opposed. Motion carries.
 - Stephanie will send summary email to full committee for those who could not be on today.
- ❖ Announcements/ Other Business
 - Don – should we do Minutes Approval? [Steph - If we haven’t lost any participants at this point, we do not have a quorum.] Then let’s hold off until the next meeting.
 - Any other announcements? – No one said anything until Jennifer motioned to adjourn.
- ❖ Adjourn
 - Motion to adjourn by Jennifer, second by Julie. All approve. Adjourned at 3:35PM.