



Black River Advisory Committee

LoCo 'Yaks | Facilitating Organization

138 Alabama Avenue

Lorain, OH 44052

(440) 249-0590

BI-MONTHLY (COVID) MEETING | Wed., October 14, 2020 | 2:00 PM

Zoom link to join:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86142242272?pwd=N2JsU3JEUm82ZDJzMTN1M3duekVvZz09>

Meeting ID: 861 4224 2272

Passcode: 196831

Agenda

- ❖ Welcome / Call to Order
- ❖ Fiscal Report
- ❖ Old Business
 - FY2018 support grant – Approved & finalized.
 - We've spent \$38,869.38 since April of 2019, and we have \$75,340.63 to go over the next 17+ months.
 - Videos
 - Intern
 - Approval of Meeting Minutes 5/19/2020; 8/17/2020
 - Jane's letter
- ❖ Black River Restoration Project Updates
 - County
 - City
- ❖ Ohio AOC Program Updates
 - BUI #11 Removal Recommendation Report
 - BUI Review – overview/ status/ next steps
 - 3 – Degradation of Fish Populations – Management Actions Complete (MAC)
 - 4 – Fish Tumors or Other Deformities
 - 6 – Degradation of Benthos – MAC
 - 7 – Restrictions to Dredging Activities
 - 10 – Beach Closings (Recreational)
 - 14 – Loss of Fish Habitat – MAC
- ❖ New Business
 - Substantially Complete!!
- ❖ Announcements/ Other Business
 - BRAC has submitted an application for the Vibrant NEO Champion Awards. Judging will take place mid-October. A virtual recognition ceremony will be held November 19th.
 - Others?
- ❖ Adjourn

Lorain: Officials laud Black River conservation efforts

- By Kevin Martin kmartin@morningjournal.com



Kristen Isom of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency leads a tour Oct. 6 of the Black River Reclamation Site in Lorain. The Black River Area of Concern, designated in 1987, is near completion with final management actions completed in September, 2020.



U.S. Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur tours Oct. 6 the Black River Reclamation Site in Lorain. The Black River Area of Concern, designated in 1987, is near completion with final management actions completed in September 2020.

Local, state and federal officials toured the Black River Reclamation Site Restoration in Lorain as the final steps are completed as part of the Black River Area of Concern.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Andrew Wheeler and Regional Administrator Kurt Thiede toured the site at 2601 E. 28th St. along with Lorain Mayor Jack Bradley, U.S. representatives Marcy Kaptur, a Toledo Democrat, and Republican Bob Gibbs in addition to state representative Gayle Manning and state Sen. Nathan Manning, both North Ridgeville Republicans.

Wheeler said the EPA has been prioritizing cleaning up the Great Lakes and the Areas of Concern are a big part of that.

“This is a big milestone,” he said.

With all of the work completed, Wheeler said the EPA will continue to monitor the area and perform testing.

If all goes well, the Black River will be de-listed as an Area of Concern after receiving approval from the Ohio EPA and Canada, as all Area of Concerns are international.

Wheeler said the agency is trying to streamline this process and give the affected communities the recognition they deserve.

“This community deserves a lot of recognition in getting to where we are today,” he said.

As an Ohioan, Wheeler stressed the importance of cleaning up the Great Lakes and getting them back to the levels of conservation prior to industrialization.

The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative has invested more than \$24 million in 15 projects that assess, design and implement restoration projects.

Kate Golden, who heads the project for the city of Lorain, said the total environmental investments tops \$32 million.

Golden said apart from supporting environmental restoration, the funding helps local businesses.

It also has enabled city leaders to realize the value of the riverfront and economic development potential with local investment making a difference, she said.

The restoration of the Black River has harnessed the revitalization of downtown Lorain with the Broadway streetscape project and Black River Landing hosting local events.

Kaptur, who represents the city of Lorain in in Congress, said every community she represents is tied directly to the health of Lake Erie.

“All those rivers dump into Lake Erie,” she said. “And so Lorain, and the Black River has so much to do with (Lake) Erie health and animal health.”

Ohio has had to fight harder in order to protect the Great Lakes and lauded the bi-partisan cooperation of Gibbs in working together, Kaptur said.

Kristen Isom, of EPA Region Five, is the task force lead for the Black River Area of Concern.

“We are here today to celebrate all management actions complete here at the Black River,” Isom said. “So, this is really a major milestone.”

The Black River was designated as an Area of Concern in 1987 and local, state and federal partners have worked together in completing all management actions, with the final step finished in September.

The Black River once was nicknamed the “river of fish tumors” due to its long history of industrial, agricultural and urban uses, which led to poor water quality, loss of biodiversity, habitat degradation and sedimentation.

Lorain relied on the Black River in transporting materials to support local industry and was degraded through discharges from industrial operations and wastewater.

According to EPA documents, the Black River Reclamation Site was the final project under the Lower Black River Area of Concern Remediation and Restoration Program Grant, and included grading and covering of over 35 acres of slag piles along property owned by the city of Lorain.

The conclusion of the project will improve water quality and native species planted as the area is further restored for birds and other wildlife, documents show.