



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

MINUTES

- ❖ Welcome / Call to Order – Don called to order at 2:04pm.
 - In attendance: Chip, Coldwater; Don, Lorain County; Julie, OSU Extension; Kristen Isom, US EPA; Kristen Risch, Coldwater; Kate, City of Lorain; Jennifer, City of Amherst / Sandstone EHS Services; Max, OEC; Steve, ODNR; John Sabo, retired; John Schwartz, LCSWD; Matt, Beaver Creek Watershed; Jack, Coldwater; Jill, LCPH; Melanie, Ohio EPA; 440-984-4429.
- ❖ Fiscal Report
 - 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.
 - Painted storms drain at new City Services Complex.
 - Videos – Robb is working on them. Sub-committee meeting yesterday (10/13). Will have trailer ready soon. Still need someone to start AOC basics video.
 - Intern – Steph emailed LCCC but no response. So then we posted job on Facebook and had 3 qualified applicants. Steph emailed summaries to BRAC members in attendance now for review and to submit recommendations by Friday 10/16.
- ❖ Old Business
 - Approval of Meeting Minutes 5/19/2020; 8/17/2020; motion to accept both as is by Julie; second by Max; no discussion; all in favor; none opposed; motion carries unanimously.
 - Jane's letter – showed letter to committee and emailed draft. They will submit edits that I can then incorporate.
- ❖ Black River Restoration Project Updates
 - County – Lyn is in the field. [Don] Official extension to Feb. 2, 2022 was approved by EPA. Chip & Lyn said they've completed 25.5 acres since getting in the field on Aug 10th. New spraying is doing wonders for coverage – a lot of coverage a lot quicker. Isom toured Margaret Peak - Fortune Ditch and Oak Savannah. [Isom] Was totally blown away. Saw Rec site, Fortune, Willow, and it was all amazing – mind blowing -- the transformation, excited to hear species that have returned. Very appreciative of everyone's time. Thank you. [Don] Coldwater provided drone footage of Fortune Ditch before & after – it is available on BR Watershed FB page. Board of Commissioners loves Chip and now Don has to do more presentations. [Chip] footage really shows the efficiency of the new equipment. [Don] This year we can go a little later than normal due to warmer temperatures.
 - City – [Kate] End of Sept., Rec Site and all MAP are completed. Only a little re-seeding is needed. Really really huge accomplishment – 5 years in the making. We have 2 active projects on the property – Seep Modification and aquatic habitat restoration (additional bank & stream work adjacent to Seep site) using money that was not expended under MAPs.

- [Kate] Last Tuesday (10/6) City of Lorain had a visit from Federal Administrator of EPA to look at the project site and congratulate us on completion of MAPs. Isom, others from Chicago, Director Wheeler, Congresswoman Kaptur, AJ, Kate, several from US EPA, and several local elected officials. [Isom] Just wanted to thank Coldwater, City, everyone who accommodated the tour and made this all happen.
- [Chip] Project got a nice compliment – kayakers nearby asked how to “access that trail up there?” in regards to the Rec Site. No one ever wants to go there, so this was great to hear.
- [Max] A heads-up about the Director of the US EPA being in town and viewing our work because we looked stupid when someone asks us about it knowing our positions on the committee. [Kate] Agrees, but we weren’t allowed to talk about it. [Isom] I just found out a couple days prior.

❖ Ohio AOC Program Updates – [Melanie]

- BUI #11 Removal Recommendation Report – After comments, I have not reviewed them thoroughly yet. Will have to find info on spills. Appreciate the quick turnaround. GLNPO is also reviewing right now. Next step will be official Public Comment period through OH EPA & OH LEC websites. Then it goes back to GLNPO, and once they approve, the BUI will be removed.
- BUI Review – overview/ status/ next steps (PowerPoint slideshow attached to Minutes)
 - 3 – Degradation of Fish Populations – Management Actions Complete (MAC) – sampling/evaluation to take place in 2022-23 with primary evaluation in 2021 to determine sampling needs.
 - 4 – Fish Tumors or Other Deformities – 2020 sample collection canceled due to COVID; funding still in place to reschedule Spring 2021 (hopefully).
 - 6 – Degradation of Benthos – MAC – sampling/evaluation to take place in 2022-23 with primary evaluation in 2021 to determine sampling needs.
 - 7 – Restrictions to Dredging Activities – USACE will sample Oct-Nov. for removal status data; OH EPA has requested additional locations upriver & near turning basin to fill in some data gaps – those areas have been added; evaluation of collected data will take place in 2021.
 - 10 – Beach Closings (Recreational) – TetraTech will write summary report to be completed by 12/31/2020.
 - 14 – Loss of Fish Habitat – MAC – sampling/evaluation to take place in 2022-23 with primary evaluation in 2021 to determine sampling needs.
 - QUESTIONS? – [Don] Kate, Coldwater, with concern to dredging – do we know if there is still a potential hot spot upstream of Henderson bridge? [Kate] It is beyond the navigable part of the river and covered in 7-8’ of sediment so USACE has no intentions of dredging or digging it up. [Don] City has had interest in Riverbend Industrial Park (aka Cromwell)... Will not-dredging the turning basin effect any interest in a potential land purchase? [Kate] Great question and I do not know, but there is currently no infrastructure to support a development with river access.

❖ New Business

- Substantially Complete!! – [Kate] Great News! City is very excited. 10 years ago, not sure anyone at City believed it would really happen. Coldwater has been a phenomenal partner, who actually cares about the projects and end results. [Chip] Science factoid – all capped & covered acreage has been seeded with native plants and the mourning doves have been feeding there. Subsequently, now the raptors are feeding on the doves. Specifically, the

northern harrier is a medium-sized raptor on the state-endangered list. Had the work not been done, we wouldn't have a resurgence of these birds using the area = super impressive.

- Current chat transcript:
 - From Steve Holland, ODNR : Poor doves :(
 - From Max Schaefer : sad for the doves, but the harrier is sweet!
 - From cwendt : hahaha

- Continuing on... [Isom] Reflecting on the last 5 years, realizing it's been so much longer...the things this committee has accomplished has been outstanding. Congratulations on amazing work and an amazing milestone.
- [Don] I will be giving a presentation to the Commissioners about the MAPs Complete and will work to get invitations (via Zoom) to the BRAC. [Risch] Are we still planning an in-person celebration next summer? [Don] Absolutely, if it's possible of course.

❖ 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. [Steph] Submitted app for BRAC as a Program. Will know results early November.
- Others?
 - [Steph] Ashtabula has officially removed all BUIs and will now be delisting. [Melanie] She spoke with Ted Conlin recently and seeing the Ashtabula finish "has been the best part of [his] retirement".
 - [Don] Commissioners have \$5000 financial assistance grants available for small businesses. Guidelines includes small businesses with less than 15 full-time employees and less than \$1mil in revenue. App deadline extended until we spend \$500,000. App is one page available on the county website.

- ❖ Adjourn Max makes a motion to adjourn; second by Kate; no discussion; all in favor; none opposed; meeting adjourned at 3:02pm.