



Natural Resources Assistance Council

District 3 – Franklin County – 614-228-2663

Kyle Wilson
Chair

Laura Ball
Vice-Chair

Matthew Brown
Ryan Andrews
Stephen Farst
Nathan Johnson
Toni Chinchar
Brian Heath
Shannon Brady
Steve Studenmund
Terry Seidel

Staff:
Edwina Teye
614-233-4123

c/o MORPC
111 Liberty Street
Suite 100
Columbus, OH 43215

Fiscal Year 2026 – Applicant Presentations & Project Updates Meeting

Monday, June 23, 2025
1:00 p.m.

AGENDA

1. Meeting Called to Order
2. Introductions
3. Approval of March 20, 2025 Meeting Minutes
4. Available Funds - 5,024,301 & OPWC Updates
5. Project Updates
 - a. City of Columbus
 - CCPAD/ 16-03 West Franklinton Green Space
 - CCOAA/15-02 Cherrybottom Park Expansion – Venice Club
 - CCKAF/11-03B Eastmoor Green Line
 - CCOAF/15-03 Refugee Road – Mason Run Protection
 - CCRAA/24-01 Alum Creek Preservation (Agler and Sunbury Roads)
 - CCRAC/24-02 McNaughten Road Greenspace Preservation
 - CCSSA/19-01 Cooke Woods Preservation
 - b. Praire Township
 - CCSAB/25-06 Hellbranch Run Preserve Restoration
6. Preliminary Screener Presentations –

| Start Time | Applicant | Project Name |
|------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1:40 | Metro Parks | Walnut Creek Acquisition Phase 2 |
| 1:55 | Columbus Recreation & Parks | The North Star Project |
| | | McNaughten Woods |

7. Other Business
8. Adjournment

If you require special assistance, please notify
Lynn Kaufman at 614-233-4189 or lkaufman@morpc.org

The next NRAC meeting is:
Thursday, September 12, 2025, at 9:00 a.m., MORPC (site visits)

Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission
111 Liberty Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215

Natural Resources Assistance Council District 3
Meeting Notes – FY 2026 – Applicant Presentations & Project Updates Meeting

June 23, 2025, 1:00 pm

Members Present

- Ryan Andrews, PWIC
- Vice-Chair Laura Ball, City of Westerville
- Shannon Brady, City of Whitehall
- Matt Brown, Franklin County Engineer's Office
- Toni Chinchar, GEI Consultants
- Stephen Farst, City of Groveport
- Brian Heath, Davey Tree
- Nathan Johnson, OEC
- Steve Studenmund, Metro Parks
- Chair Kyle Wilson, Franklin Soil & Water Conservation District

Public Present

- Jennifer Hufford, OPWC
- Brad Westall, City of Columbus

MORPC Staff Present

- Lynn Kaufman
- Edwina Teye

Meeting Called to Order at 1:00 pm.

Introductions

Attendees introduced themselves. Chair Wilson welcomed new Members Brian Heath, Davey Tree, Toni Chinchar, GEI Consultants, and Shannon Brady, City of Whitehall.

Chair Wilson provided a detailed overview of the NRAC project evaluation process to help orient new Members. This began with an explanation of the pre-screener meeting, which serves as an optional but valuable opportunity for applicants to present early-stage project concepts. The purpose is to ensure alignment with Clean Ohio Fund eligibility requirements before full applications are submitted. Chair Wilson emphasized that while many applicants, such as the City of Columbus, are familiar with the process and typically submit eligible proposals, the pre-screener allows the Council to flag ineligible components—such as recreational features like baseball fields—and advise applicants on how to revise their proposals accordingly.

Chair Wilson then outlined the full application and scoring process. Once applications are submitted (typically by late August), each NRAC Member independently scores them based on a standardized rubric that includes both objective and subjective criteria—such as location, economic need, and environmental impact. Some elements, like geographic location or cost efficiency, are scored uniformly, while others depend on individual judgment. The highest and lowest scores are discarded, and the remaining scores are averaged to determine a final score. Projects that meet the minimum threshold and fall within the available funding are awarded grants. If funding is limited, awards are made in descending order of score, with partial funding considered when appropriate. Chair Wilson also noted that site visits and a final awards meeting complete the process.

Approval of March 20, 2025, Meeting Minutes

Vice-Chair Ball moved to approve the March 20, 2025, meeting minutes; Member Johnson seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Available Funds - 5,024,301 & OPWC Updates

Jennifer Hufford reported that the available funding for Round 20 is approximately \$6.5 million, increased from the originally listed \$5,024,301 due to Metro Parks returning \$1.5 million from the Clover Groff Headwaters Project. An additional \$700,000 from the Whitethorn Woods Protection Project remains earmarked but not yet committed, pending resolution of deed restriction issues.

Members and staff discussed virtual meeting policies. Jennifer explained that NRAC is now permitted to hold virtual meetings under Ohio law, pending the adoption of a formal policy. A sample policy will be circulated for review and potential approval at the September site visit meeting.

Project Updates

City of Columbus

CCPAD/ 16-03 West Franklinton Green Space

Brad Westall reported that Site A is complete, while Site B is undergoing environmental remediation.

Member Farst moved to extend the project through July 1, 2026; Vice-Chair Ball seconded the motion. Motion carried.

CCOAA/15-02 Cherrybottom Park Expansion – Venice Club

Brad reported that the project is being canceled due to complications with the landowner and federal trail funding. The City of Columbus intends to reapply in the future.

CCKAF/11-03B Eastmoor Green Line

Brad reported that the property has closed. The City of Columbus is finalizing deed restrictions and will seek reimbursement.

Member Johnson moved to extend the project through December 31, 2025; Member Brown seconded the motion. Motion carried.

CCOAF/15-03 Refugee Road – Mason Run Protection

Brad reported that the project is complete and funds have been disbursed. It is officially closed out and \$207,000 has been returned to the fund.

CCRAA/24-01 Alum Creek Preservation (Agler and Sunbury Roads)

Brad reported that site improvements were recently completed.

Member Brown moved to extend the project through December 31, 2025; Member Studenmund seconded the motion. Motion carried.

CCRAC/24-02 McNaughten Road Greenspace Preservation

Brad reported that the property has closed. The City of Columbus is resolving an encroachment issue before recording deed restrictions.

Chair Ball moved to extend the project through December 31, 2025; Member Farst seconded the motion. Motion carried.

CCSSA/19-01 Cooke Woods Preservation

Brad reported that the property closed in May. Deed restrictions are being filed.

Member Brady moved to extend the project through December 31, 2025; Member Heath seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Praire Township

CCSAB/25-06 Hellbranch Run Preserve Restoration

Edwina Teye announced that the property was officially transferred to Prairie Township on April 1, 2025. Prairie Township secured matching funds from the Land and Water Conservation Fund and is finalizing appraisals.

FYI Metro Parks

CCQAA/17-02 Clover Groff Headwaters Acquisition

Member Studenmund reported that the project was canceled due to a competing offer from a developer. Funds were returned.

Little Darby Watershed and Georges Creek Projects

Both projects were successfully completed and closed out in May 2025.

Columbus's Whitethorne Woods Protection

The project is on hold due to private deed restrictions on the property. The City of Columbus is working to resolve these before proceeding with acquisition.

Preliminary Screener Presentations –

Metro Parks, Walnut Creek Acquisition Phase 2

This project proposes acquiring land adjacent to previous Clean Ohio-funded properties near Walnut Woods Metro Park. The site is agricultural and would be restored to natural conditions. The request is for approximately \$550,000 in Clean Ohio funds. The Council found the project eligible to proceed to full application.

Columbus Recreation & Parks The North Star Project

This project includes two separate sites along Alum Creek:

- Site 1 – a one-acre former apartment complex at Sunbury and Mock Roads, requiring demolition and restoration.
- Site 2 – five-acre former Bahá'í Assembly site with riparian frontage and minimal improvements.

The total project cost is estimated at \$1.29 million, with a Clean Ohio request of approximately \$900,000. The Council recommended submitting these as two separate applications due to differing timelines and complexity.

Columbus Recreation & Parks McNaughten Woods

This is a 25-acre site in the Far East area of Columbus, currently zoned for development. The City of Columbus proposes acquiring and preserving the site as green space. The Council found the project eligible to proceed to full application with a Clean Ohio request of approximately \$2,600,000

Other Business

No additional business was raised.

Adjournment

Member Studenmund moved to adjourn; Member Brady seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Adjourned at 2:07 pm.



MID-OHIO REGIONAL
MORPC
PLANNING COMMISSION

Natural Resource Assistance Council

APPLICANT PRESENTATIONS &
PROJECT UPDATES – June 23, 2025



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PROJECT UPDATES

City of Columbus

- ▲ CCPAD/ 16-03 West Franklinton Green Space – Requesting extension to July 1, 2025
- ▲ CCOAA/15-02 Cherrybottom Park Expansion
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- ▲ CCOAF/15-03 Refugee Road – Mason Run Protection – Requesting extension to Dec. 31, 2025
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PRELIMINARY SCREENERS APPLICATIONS

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