



MID-OHIO REGIONAL **MORPC** PLANNING COMMISSION

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CENTRAL OHIO BLUEWAYS ADVISORY PANEL MID-OHIO REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

HYBRID MEETING
July 11, 2023, 10:30 AM to 12:00 PM

AGENDA

Welcome & Purpose

Jonathan Miller opened the meeting by welcoming attendees and outlining the agenda. The meeting aimed to continue discussions on woody debris management, explore emergency medical services (EMS) considerations for waterway users, review updated partnership agreement drafts, and discuss next steps for Big Walnut Creek Water Trail designation.

DISCUSSION: Woody Debris Management (Continued)

Ryan Ainge, Cuyahoga Valley National Park, provided an in-depth overview of woody debris management practices used in Cuyahoga Valley National Park. The discussion focused on two primary methods: the "Clean and Open" method, which involves removing only debris that obstructs navigable channels (no permit required), and the "Habitat Structure" method, which involves pinning debris to banks to prevent erosion (typically requires permits). Ryan emphasized the importance of balancing ecological protection with visitor experience and manageable workloads. The park targets a 10–15% navigable channel width, roughly 10 feet, to accommodate intermediate paddlers and rescue rafts. Ryan also described the permitting process, volunteer involvement, and the use of tools like chainsaws, hand saws, and high lines for debris removal.

DISCUSSION: EMS

Captain Josh Bishop, Special Operations Rescue, Columbus Fire Department discussed EMS operations related to waterway incidents. He emphasized that increased paddler activity does not necessarily burden EMS and that water rescues are considered high-priority and engaging calls. Key challenges include locating paddlers, especially in wooded or inaccessible areas. Josh proposed implementing a mile marker system along rivers and trails to improve response accuracy. He also highlighted the development of a drone program and the use of mapping apps to identify access points and hazards. A committee member inquired about bridge labeling and cell phone tracking, both of which were confirmed as helpful tools.

Ryan Ainge added that the app "What3Words" has been effective for precise location sharing during emergencies. He emphasized that official water trail designation has significantly improved inter-agency coordination and emergency response. Volunteers also play a role in preventative messaging at access points, especially during high-risk conditions. Attendees discussed dam release notifications and the potential use of Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) to inform paddlers of sudden flow changes.

William Murdock, AICP
Executive Director

Erik J. Janas
Chair

Chris Amorose Groomes
Vice Chair

Michelle Crandall
Secretary

Partnership Agreements: Updated Draft

Jonathan presented the updated draft of the partnership agreements, noting that the new version is significantly streamlined. The agreements defer responsibilities to individual communities and emphasize guidance over enforcement. The goal is to encourage best practices without mandating actions that some jurisdictions may not be equipped to handle. The draft focuses on Big Walnut Creek and includes a mapping appendix. Jonathan encouraged members to review and submit feedback by August 4.

Wrap-Up & Next Steps

Jonathan outlined the following next steps:

- Review and provide feedback on the draft partnership agreements by August 4.
- Attend the next meeting on August 9, which will focus on access point design and include a presentation by Member Sasson on woody debris management from an environmental perspective.
- Continue outreach to jurisdictions along Big Walnut Creek to support Water Trail designation.
- Update mapping data for Big Walnut Creek, including paddling and trail access points.
- Plan a session for the October 26 Summit on Sustainability titled “Navigating Recreation and Ecology,” and identify potential speakers and sponsors.

Adjourn

Please Notify Lynn Kaufman at lkaufman@morpc.org if you will not be able to attend this meeting, or if you require special assistance.

The next Central Ohio Blueways Advisory Panel Meeting will be Tuesday July 11, 2023 at 10:30 AM, and will be held as Hybrid.



CENTRAL OHIO BLUEWAYS

ADVISORY PANEL

JULY 11, 2023



MID-OHIO REGIONAL
MORPC
PLANNING COMMISSION

JULY 11, 2023 AGENDA

- I. Welcome & Purpose
- II. DISCUSSION: Woody Debris Management
 - I. Ryan Ainge (Cuyahoga Valley National Park)
- III. DISCUSSION: EMS
 - I. Josh Bishop (Special Ops Rescue Captain)
- IV. Partnership Agreements: Updated Draft
- V. Wrap-Up & Next Steps
- VI. Adjourn

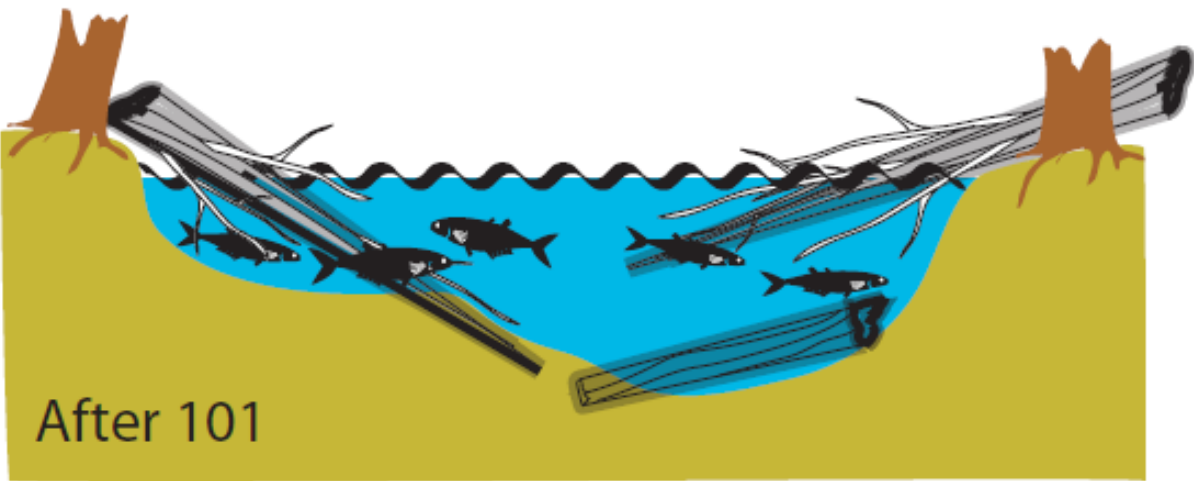


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DISCUSSION: WOODY DEBRIS MANAGEMENT (CONTINUED)

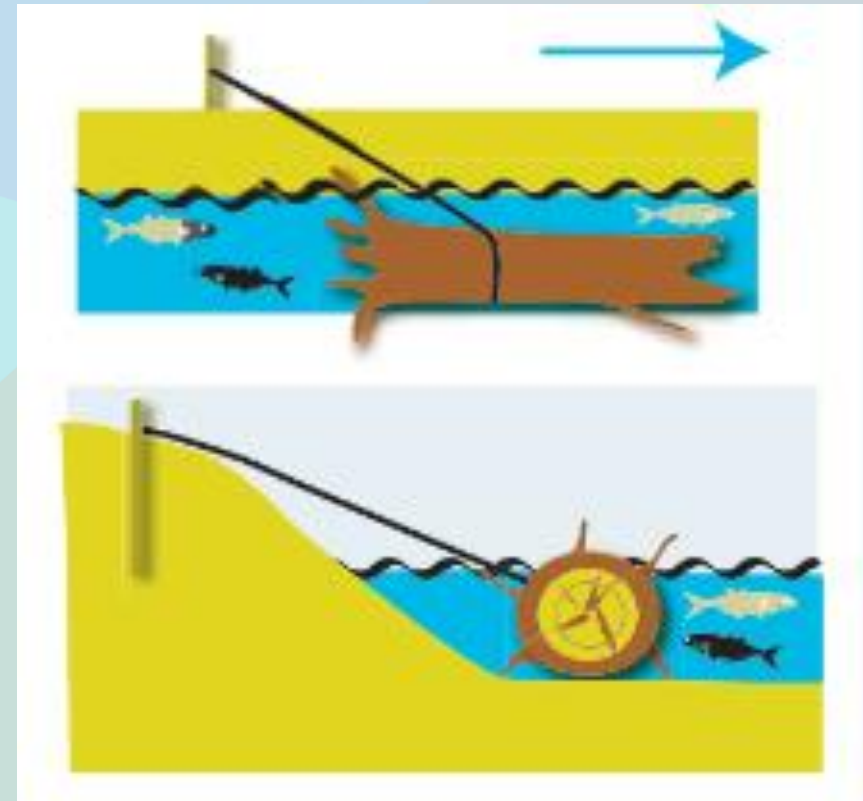
WHEN TO KEEP AND WHEN TO REMOVE

- Michigan Department of Environmental Quality “Woody Debris Management 101: Clean and Open Method”
 - No Permit Required



- Leave rooted or embedded stumps & logs.
- Remove floating or resting logs.

- Michigan Department of Environmental Quality “Woody Debris Management 102: Habitat Structure Method”
 - Permit Required (Under Part 301 of Michigan’s Natural Resources and Environmental Act [1994])



DISCUSSION: WOODY DEBRIS MANAGEMENT (CONTINUED)

CUYAHOGA VALLEY NATIONAL PARK

- **Highlights 3 Areas of Focus**
 - Creation of the Ideal NPS Experience
 - Protection of River Ecology
 - Facilitation of Manageable Workloads
- *“Visitors enjoy a quality experience highlighting scenic, natural and cultural resources”*
- *“The water trail will have a navigable channel roughly 10-15% wide during average water flow”*



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Woody Debris Evaluation Form

Date _____ Time _____ Weather _____

Crew _____

Stream Name _____ Map Coordinates _____

Latitude _____ Longitude _____

Land Ownership: ☐ Public ☐ Private ☐ Unknown ☐ Other _____

Riparian Corridor Available: ☐ none ☐ ≤25 ft ☐ 26-50 ft ☐ 51-100 ft ☐ >100 ft

Photo	Photo Number	Photo	Photo Number
Main Structure		Left Bank (facing upstream)	
Anchor Point		Right Bank (facing upstream)	
Area of Concern		(describe)	

SITE ASSESSMENT

Site Sketch (include major components, north arrow, bank-full width, nearby landmarks, road crossing, infrastructure, and access points)

↔ ☐ flow ☐ ↔

Water Depth

(at deepest point)

- ☐ knee (0-1 ½ ft)
☐ waist (1 ½-3 ft)
☐ chest (3-4 ft)
☐ deep (>4 ft)

Bottom

- ☐ firm
☐ slight muck
☐ knee deep muck
☐ muck over knees
☐ deep holes or channel

Is site accessible to heavy equipment?

☐ yes ☐ no

Is there area available to leave

woody debris on-site?

☐ yes ☐ no

LWD Stream Coverage

☐ ≤25% ☐ 50% ☐ 75% ☐ 75-100%

SITE MAINTENANCE

Repair Needed: ☐ Clean and Open ☐ Habitat Improvement ☐ None

LWD Characteristics (check all that apply)

- ☐ Fallen tree attached to bank ☐ Floating debris ☐ Beaver dam
☐ Jam at culvert or outfall ☐ Jam at bridge face ☐ Stream bank failure
☐ Blocking boat passage ☐ Causing bank erosion ☐ Causing flooding
☐ Log imbedded in the river bottom/bed

Maintenance to be Completed (check all that apply)

- ☐ Clean and remove trash ☐ Trim small branches ☐ Open channel
☐ Remove structure ☐ Reorient key logs ☐ Anchor structure
☐ Armor bank ☐ Dispose of large removed debris

Maintenance Priority

☐ Low ☐ Average ☐ High ☐ Urgent

Safety

- ☐ Yes ☐ No Is site accessible to maintenance or emergency vehicles?
☐ Yes ☐ No Can the site be accessed from the bank?
☐ Yes ☐ No Are there deep water, holes, submerged debris, or strong currents near the structure?
☐ Yes ☐ No Are power tools needed for the job?
☐ Yes ☐ No Could the site be a potential volunteer clean-up location?
☐ Yes ☐ No Is poison ivy present?

Log Tally

(Estimate for Equipment/Time Needs)

	Large Logs >12" Diameter	Medium Logs 6-12" Diameter	Small Logs <6" Diameter
Approximate Number Present and Lengths			

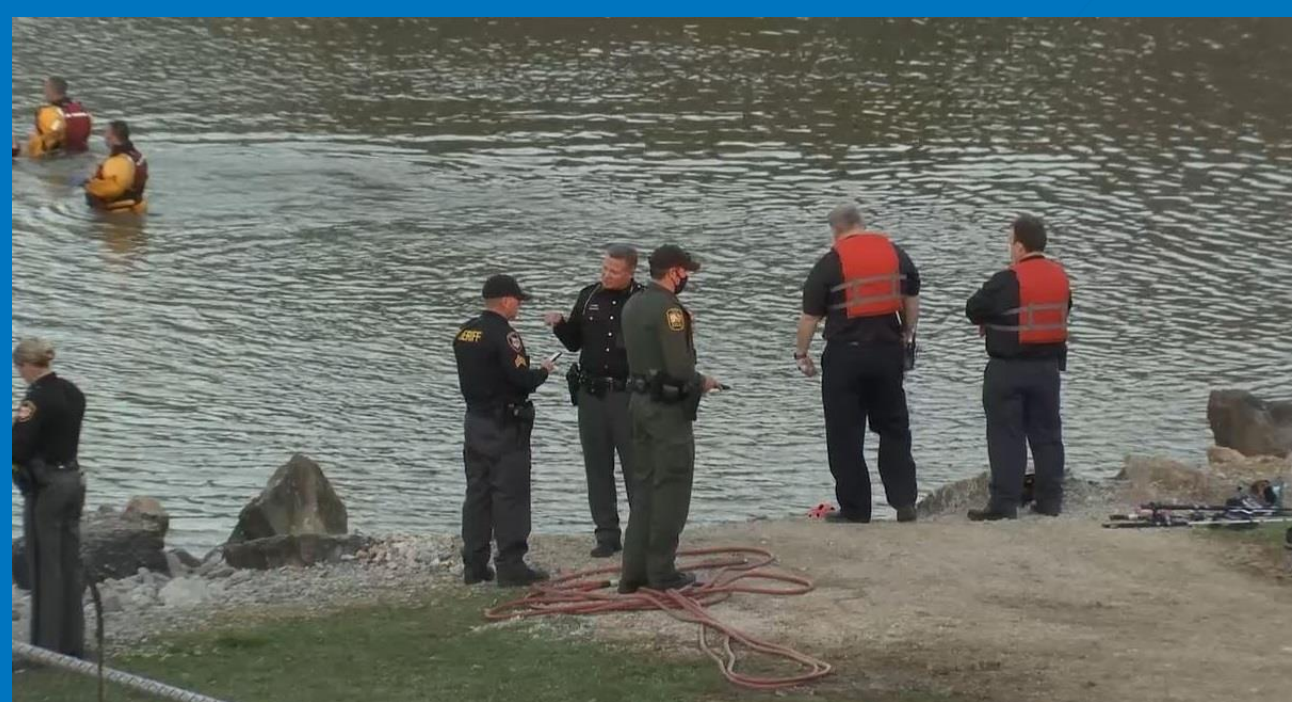
Equipment Needed

- ☐ 30 gallon trash bags _____ (number)
☐ Hand tools (hand saw, pry bar, come-along, branch lopper, rope/chain)
☐ Power tools (chain saw, power winch)
☐ Small motorized equipment (skid steer, small tractor)
☐ Heavy equipment (front end loader, dump truck, trash dumpster)
☐ Personal Safety Equipment (safety glasses, ear plugs, gloves, life vest, first aid kit)
☐ Other (list) _____

DISCUSSION: EMERGENCY RESPONSE

POTENTIAL CONCERNS

- How to Find Paddlers
- Overburdening Response Personnel
- Encouraging Use During Dangerous Periods



PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS: UPDATED DRAFT

SECTIONS

- Participating Entities
- Purpose
- Geographic Scope
- Signage and Branding
- Accessibility
- Responsibilities of MORPC
- Responsibilities of Participating Entities
- Terms of Agreement
- Termination

*All Sections Streamlined



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DRAFT

CENTRAL OHIO BLUEWAYS WATER TRAIL DESIGNATION PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

BIG WALNUT CREEK

This Partnership Agreement (PA) between the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) and the Water Trail Designation's Participating Entities - as listed under "1. PARTICIPATING ENTITIES" - represents a mutual understanding and continuing partnership to establish guidelines for the promotion, operation, maintenance, and environmental stewardship of the Big Walnut Creek Water Trail (BWCWT) per the requirements of Water Trail Designation through the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR). See Appendix B for a list of definitions and acronyms.

1. PARTICIPATING ENTITIES

The following entities have entered into this PA and are bound by the terms of agreement contained within. Further references to "participating parties," "entities," or "stakeholders" shall refer to the collective entities outlined below.

- 1.1 Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC)
- 1.2 Blendon Township
- 1.3 City of Columbus
- 1.4 City of Gahanna
- 1.5 Village of Groveport
- 1.6 Hamilton Township
- 1.7 Harrison Township
- 1.8 Village of Lockbourne
- 1.9 Madison Township
- 1.10 Village of Obetz
- 1.11 City of Westerville
- 1.12 City of Whitehall
- 1.13 Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks

2. PURPOSE

The following section demonstrates the purpose and driving force behind the organization of this PA.

- 2.1 Guide the maintenance, promotion, and environmental stewardship of the Big Walnut Creek
- 2.2 Obtain State Water Trail Designation through ODNR.
- 2.3 Describe the geographic boundaries/limits of the Water Trail. Termini for the Water Trail

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

BIG WALNUT CREEK

- Met With:
 - Madison Township
 - Obetz
 - Westerville
 - Whitehall
 - Franklin County
 - Pickaway County
- Still Need to Meet With:
 - Columbus
 - Metro Parks
 - Gahanna
 - Groveport
 - Hamilton Township
 - Harrison Township (PIC)
 - Lockbourne

****IF YOU KNOW OF A GOOD CONTACT, LET ME KNOW***



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SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABILITY

OCTOBER 26TH, 2023

8:00 AM to 4:30 PM

HILTON COLUMBUS DOWNTOWN

401 N HIGH STREET

SESSION ON BLUEWAYS

- *“NAVIGATING RECREATION AND ECOLOGY”*
- *Other Ideas?*

**Speakers?*

**Sponsors?*

NEXT STEPS

REVIEW DRAFTS

- Make Updates / Recommended Edits
- Send Comments By August 4th

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- AUGUST 9TH: Access Point Design

BIG WALNUT CREEK

- Schedule Meeting in Early August



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THANK YOU

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