

Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission

Remote Meeting

Agricultural & Rural Communities Outreach Team  
Meeting Notes

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January 21, 2021, 10:00 am

Members Present

Larry Antosch, Ohio Farm Bureau Federation  
Brian Brandt, American Farmland Trust  
Chair Jessica D'Ambrosio, The Nature  
Conservancy  
Nina Duerk, Strand Associates

Laura Fay, Friends of the Lower Olentangy  
Watershed  
Scott Stephens, Delaware Soil & Water  
Conservation District

Public Present

Dr. Douglas Jackson-Smith, The Ohio State  
University

MORPC Staff Present

Lynn Kaufman

Edwina Teye, Ph.D.

Brooke White, Ph.D.

**Meeting Called to Order at 10:03 am**

**Guest Presentation – Dr. Jackson-Smith, The Ohio State University**

Dr. Jackson-Smith, a rural sociologist and professor at OSU gave a presentation about social science surveys and how to employ several sources including primary and secondary sources to gather the relevant data about rural residents and agricultural communities.

Dr. Smith provided an overview of the different approaches i.e. focus groups, engagement events and surveys and highlighted the high response rate associated with the drop off/pick up method and survey methods. To provide some context, Dr Smith discussed a recent study he conducted with his team dubbed the Ohio Farm Poll 2020 focused on the impact of 2019 on agriculture among others.

While not specifically geared towards the Scioto Watershed, the study could be queried to answer some questions pertaining to the Scioto including use of conservation practices, concerns and attitudes as well as the profile of the respondents as it pertains to the farm size and farm type with cash grains, hay and other livestock being the dominant types. Other questions that were posed in the study included statements related to agricultural and environmental issues. To conclude, Dr Smith provided some takeaways to guide the working team as we prepare to determine engagement activities in the watershed shaped by data collected. Among them included determining who the data is to be collected from (i.e. farmers, non-farmers, urban residents in the watershed) and how it will be done (i.e. representative cross section through surveys, random focus groups and secondary data). Additionally, data can be collected through key informants by targeting certain categories of people and the motivated public.

**Approval of November 19, 2020 Meeting Notes**

Laura Fay made a motion to approve, Brian Brandt seconded the motion. Motion carried.

### **Funding Updates**

Dr. Brooke White reminded the Team of the funder's charge to support the creation of partnerships in the agriculture and rural communities. With this as a background, Chair D'Ambrosio described a potential opportunity to gather data by employing SWCD County Supervisors and elected officials including township trustees who are a resource to the communities of interest of the Team. The goal of this would be to provide a sense of what is of interest to the communities to help shape the Team's work on creating partnerships and engagement activities. As related to next steps, the Team was tasked with developing potential questions and determining areas in the watershed for inclusion.

### **Repository Update**

Chair D'Ambrosio encouraged Members to visit the repository and provide resources related to the agreed objectives of the Team. Current studies in the repository include the Nutrient Mass Balance Study released last year from the Ohio EPA. The study summarizes nutrient loading data originating from Ohio watersheds draining to Lake Erie and the Ohio River. She also highlighted the various folders in the repository including the events folder where members can post links to upcoming events of interests while also providing an avenue for promoting the Board by co-hosting or sponsoring events in the watershed by other partners.

### **Discussion of Action Items for the Year**

Chair D'Ambrosio reiterated the Team's work related to gathering data through the social science survey with the goal of creating partnerships and engagement activities within the communities of interest.

### **Other Business**

#### Member Updates

Chair D'Ambrosio highlighted events by The National Conservancy which are saved in the repository.

The Chair also encouraged the Team to send out potential questions as staff prepares to embark on the social science survey.

#### Member Input on Future Presentation Topics

Member Scott Stephens recommended a presentation on USDA -ARS CEAP project past and present in the Upper Scioto

**Adjourned at 11:41 am.**