

Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission
Remote Meeting

Sustaining Scioto Board
Meeting Notes

December 9, 2020, 2:00 pm

Members Present

Larry Antosch, Ohio Farm Bureau
Federation
Chair Kristen Atha, AECOM
Brian Brandt, American Farmland Trust
Jessica D'Ambrosio, The Nature
Conservancy
Laura Fay, Friends of the Lower Olentangy
Watershed

Niki Lemin, Franklin County Public Health
Jeff Lewis, Ohio EPA
Glenn Marzluf, Del-Co Water Company
Rob Priestas, City of Columbus
Steve Stolte, Union County Commissioners
Aaron Wilson, OSU, Byrd Polar & Climate
Research Center

Public Present

Anthony Sasson, Midwest Biodiversity
Institute

Kyle Wilson, Franklin County Soil &
Water Conservation District

MORPC Staff Present

Ted Geer
Edwina Teye

Brandi Whetstone
Brooke White

Meeting Called to Order at 2:00 pm.

2020 Year in Review

The Board's stated 2020 Priorities were:

For Informed Decision Making

- Establish leadership structure and sustainable program funding.
Outcome: The Board was created and has met several times; funding has been secured from City of Columbus, Del-Co Water Company, and the City of Marysville. Staff continues to investigate additional sources of funding.
- Create and update climate data tools and projections to support planning and implementation initiatives.
Outcome: This priority is temporarily on hold.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive Water Quality Monitoring Program
Outcome: The Board and Staff have created a scope of work, identified partners, and are investigating funding opportunities to develop and implement a comprehensive water quality monitoring program.

For Prepared and Connected Communities

- Establish Public Outreach Team / Develop Outreach Framework
Outcome: The creation of the Education & Outreach Team was put on hold pending funding. The Agricultural & Rural Communities Outreach Team was created and began meeting on November 19, 2020.

The 2020 Sustaining Scioto Board meetings have featured the following speakers and topics:

<u>Speaker</u>	<u>Topic</u>
Laura Johnson, University of Heidelberg	Water Quality Monitoring & Research
Jeff Lewis, Ohio EPA	Upper Scioto Water Quality Overview
Aaron Wilson, Byrd Polar & Climate Research Center	Climate, Agriculture, and Water Quality
Christopher Nietch, US EPA	East Fork Watershed Monitoring

2021 Look Ahead

Water Quality Monitoring

Staff and Members will investigate funding opportunities other than Ohio Water Development Authority (OWDA). The funding applied for earlier in 2020 was unfortunately not granted. Staff will pursue a National Science Foundation opportunity with assistance from Derek Kauneckis of the Desert Research Institute. He is researching several watersheds as a data system, hopefully the one of the local watersheds will be chosen for the project. His work will dovetail with the work that MORPC proposed in the OWDA application.

Regional Climate Data and Tools

This priority is still in the exploratory phase, with a prospective partner being the Byrd Polar & Climate Research Center. Staff is researching tools to help multiple municipalities across the region not currently being served. This project will focus on regional rather than global climate conditions.

Subcommittees

The Agricultural & Rural Communities Outreach Team is making good progress. The decision was made to put the Education & Outreach Team on hold in 2020; Staff and Members are considering when the best time would be to create the Team.

Tools and Presenters

Brooke White asked Members to contact her with any suggestions of speakers for upcoming Board meetings.

Member D'Ambrosio suggested a speaker to discuss how watershed planning will affect communities within the lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Chair Atha suggested that Anthony Sasson could present the findings of the Large River Nutrient Assessment performed on the Scioto by Midwest Biodiversity Institute in 2020.

Staff suggested speakers with the topics of Climate Data and Tools, and Climate Change Communication.

Agricultural and Rural Communities Outreach Team

The Team has a call to action to find the best, most recent data possible regarding the Scioto Watershed. Member/Team Chair D'Ambrosio asked the Members of the Board to assist in that search.

The Team's short-term planning activities will be:

- Modelling/Monitoring – Developing a baseline of information from the watershed through continuous and discreet sampling activities.

- Outreach – Information gathering focused on outreach activities in the watershed, the partners involved, any gaps identified and the development of new outreach programs.
- Social Science Study – Overview of farmers in the watershed, characteristics including their motivations in the watershed.

The Team has funding from the City of Columbus, and may be able to host a webinar or other virtual event. Members are working to devise activities to maximize the funding available and continue to investigate other funding sources.

The Team will meet again on January 21.

Board Member Updates

Member Stolte reported that he chose not to run for Commissioner in Union County again. He will also step down from the Sustaining Scioto Board in January.

Member Fay reported that the F.L.O.W. partners Olentangy Watershed Alliance Group and the City of Delaware received a grant from the Ohio EPA for a Gulf of Mexico Hypoxia study to reduce nitrogen. F.L.O.W. is working on 2019/2020 Watershed Report Cards for several streams looking for macroinvertebrates.

Anthony Sasson, Midwest Biodiversity Institute reported that the City of Columbus recently funded the Midwest Biodiversity Institute to perform a Large River Nutrient Assessment on the Scioto. Assessments have been completed, and results should be available in mid-2021.

Member Brandt reported that American Farmland Trust recently received funding from the Gulf of Mexico Hypoxia Project to complete three plans: Headwaters of the Scioto River, Cottonwood Ditch, and Silver Creek.

Next Steps

Chair Atha asked that Staff report back on the National Science Foundation opportunity as it progresses.

Adjourned at 2:48 pm.