



MID-OHIO REGIONAL
MORPC
PLANNING COMMISSION

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AGRICULTURAL & RURAL COMMUNITIES OUTREACH TEAM MEETING MINUTES
MID-OHIO REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
THIS MEETING WAS CONDUCTED REMOTELY

March 18, 2021, 10:00 am – 11:30 am

AGENDA

Members Present

Jessica D'Ambrosio, *Chair, The Nature Conservancy*

Laura Fay, *FLOW*
Scott Stephens, *Delaware SWCD*

MORPC STAFF

Brooke White

Lynn Kaufman

Edwina Teye

- 1. Welcome and Introductions – Chair Jessica D'Ambrosio**
The Chair welcomed the Working Team and opened the meeting at 10:03am.
- 2. Approval of January 21, 2021 Meeting**
The team present was not enough to form a quorum to approve the previous meeting minutes. The Chair tabled the Agenda item for our next meeting.
- 3. Recap of Social Science Survey – Chair**
The Chair reiterated the scope of the key informant interview which involves identifying key individuals that are influencers in the watershed or are actively involved in activities within the watershed. The goal of this initial outreach is to collect data on how to draft and develop potential outreach activities for the watershed geared towards partnerships and activities that improve water quality in the watershed. As mentioned before, elected officials and county soil and water district board supervisors in the HUC 8 watersheds in the Scioto have been identified as the key informants.
Staff from Delaware Soil & Water Conservation District have supported the Team in providing feedback on the drafted survey for the District Supervisors. MORPC staff will update the Working Team with a list of elected officials and potential interview questions.

Additionally, the Chair informed the Team about finalizing plans with City of Columbus regarding interest areas to be included in the survey. The City of Columbus has generously provided \$10,000 to support partnership building within the agricultural and rural communities in the Scioto watershed.

4. Team Input on Survey Development

The Chair opened the meeting for Team input in the key informant interview and tasked members to provide feedback on which counties to be included in the interview process. Chair Jessica D'Ambrosio suggested to consider including all counties that have a major portion of the watershed in the Upper Scioto HUC 8 due to the long-term benefits associated with such engagement. This will not include Knox, Logan and Licking Counties but will include Auglaize, Hardin, and Crawford primarily because of their significant contributions into the watershed.

Scott Stephens from Delaware Soil and Water was in favor of including the counties mentioned above but also brought to the team's attention about the counties in the Western Lake Erie Basin that also have significant portions in the Scioto. It was concluded that it will be a great opportunity to compare the responses of counties in the Western Lake Erie Basin to that of the Scioto counties.

Laura Fay and Brooke White also supported the idea of including all counties with major portions in the watershed. One concern raised was the logistics involved should we resume in-person activities if the extent of inclusion is further north. Chair, D'Ambrosio mentioned one way to resolve that is to schedule events in the center of the region.

MORPC staff was tasked to identify wastewater treatment plants and drinking water providers in the counties potentially to be included in the survey for informational purposes.

Members present also looked at the draft survey and it was agreed that the draft needed a few words editing. Feedback provided also included providing a short paper survey to District Supervisor staff beforehand after which the multiple-choice questions will be sent in. From the responses, the follow up questions will be developed to be more time efficient.

Chair, D'Ambrosio walked the Team through the various questions and explained the context of the survey questions. There was also a question about absentee landowners and how that can be included in the survey process.

It was also agreed to roll out the survey in May into June or in the Fall. Members were also encouraged to provide some potential questions and / or social science survey for the elected officials

5. Other Business

a. Member or Partner Updates

Laura Fay gave an update on FLOW's work with Olentangy Greenspace Collaborative. In this work, Delco provided about 20 acres of their floodplain to be reforested and remove invasive species.

Laura Fay and Chair D'Ambrosio brought to the Team 's attention the opportunity to apply for the Wildlife Conservation Society Grant of about \$300,000 that supports wildlife conservation and watershed resilience.

Laura Fay also mentioned the opportunity to engage AmeriCorps staff to support the water quality monitoring work in Central Ohio as is done in Northeast and Southeast Ohio. She also encouraged the Team to identify potential partners to help make this option a reality.

Chair D'Ambrosio updated the Team about American Farmland Trust's carbon credit pilot project introduced to the Scioto Watershed. Partners include Nutrient Ag Solutions; an agriculture retailer and Soil and Water Outcomes Fund a carbon credit broker engaging municipalities in the watershed targeting 10,000 acres of farmland to implement health practices that could estimate and value water quality outcomes and carbon sequestration and greenhouse gas reduction outcomes. This will translate into saleable and marketable credit.

TNC has also been having virtual lunch and learns about the Agriculture Conservation Planning Framework Toolbox which is a planning GIS tool to help conservation professionals site and understand edge of field agricultural practices and water quality practices.

6. Adjourn

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 11:27a.m.

