Natural Resources Assistance Council

District 3 – Franklin County – 614-228-2663

Kyle Wilson,
Chair

Laura Ball,
Vice-Chair

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

Staff:
Edwina Teye
614-233-4233

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

FY 27 – Scoring Session

Tuesday, October 6, 2026
11:00 a.m.

MORPC
111 Liberty Street, Suite 100
Columbus, OH. 43215

AGENDA

1. Meeting Called to Order
2. Introductions
3. Approval of June 16, 2026 Minutes
4. Current Balance Available: $ 10,200,641.74
5. Review and Scoring of Applications
6. Other Business
7. Adjournment

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

The next NRAC meeting is:
Monday, November 10, 2026, at 10:00 a.m., MORPC

We have an established agenda for this meeting and do not accept comments from visitors. Guests with questions are encouraged to contact staff during normal business hours."

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

Natural Resources Assistance Council District 3
Meeting Notes – Fiscal Year 2027 – Applicant Presentations & Project Updates

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June 16, 2026, 1:00 pm

Members Present
- Ryan Andrews, EMH&T Inc.
- Vice-Chair Laura Ball, City of Westerville
- Shannon Brady, City of Whitehall
- Matthew Brown, Franklin County Economic Development & Planning Department
- Toni Chinchar, ISG, Inc.
- Stephen Farst, City of Groveport
- Terry Seidel, The Nature Conservancy
- Chair Kyle Wilson, Franklin Soil & Water Conservation District
- Catherine Eichel, City of Gahanna
- Jess Griffith, City of Obetz
- Jennifer Hufford, Ohio Public Works Commission
- Chloee Howard, ISG, Inc.
- James Jewell – Prairie Township
- Jacob Pries, Western Reserve Land Conservancy
- Trustee Cathy Schmelzer, Prairie Township
- Cassie Stiles, Metro Parks
- Brad Westall, City of Columbus

Public Present
- Sean Bock, City of Gahanna
- Stacey Boumis, City of Obetz
- Mike Corbitt, City of Obetz

MORPC Staff Present
- Lynn Kaufman
- Edwina Teye

Meeting Called to Order at 1:04 pm
Chair Wilson called the meeting to order and initiated introductions among Members and attendees. Participants identified their organizations and roles, including representation from municipalities, conservation organizations, and planning agencies. The introductions ensured all attendees understood the composition of the group and established context for the meeting discussions.

Approval of March 19, 2026, Meeting Minutes
Chair Wilson led the review and approval process for the March 19, 2026, meeting minutes.

Member Brady moved to approve the March 9, 2026, meeting minutes. Member Farst seconded the motion; motion carried.

Available Funds & OPWC Updates
Jennifer Hufford, Ohio Public Works Commission, provided a financial update, explaining that approximately $6.4 million in carryover funds combined with roughly $3.5 million in new funding resulted in just over $10 million available for the current funding round. She also announced leadership changes, noting that Abbey Dehart assumed the role of Director of the Ohio Public Works Commission after previously serving as Chief Financial Officer, and that Dan DeNiro joined as the new Chief Financial Officer.

Project Updates

City of Columbus

Brad Westall, City of Columbus, updated the Council on the following projects:

- CCKAF/11-03B: Eastmoor Green Line
  The project is complete and pending final administrative steps.

- CCPAD/ 16-03: West Franklinton Green Space
  The project is complete and pending final administrative steps.

- CCRAA/18 (24-01): Alum Creek Preservation (Agler and Sunbury Roads)
  The project is complete and pending final administrative steps.

- CCRAC/24-02 Alum Creek Preservation / Baha'i Assembly
  Brad reported active negotiations with the property owner and requested an extension to January 1, 2027, due to a pricing gap.

  Member Brown moved to extend Alum Creek Preservation / Baha'i Assembly to January 1, 2027. Member Farst seconded the motion; motion carried.

- CCSSA/19-01 Cooke Woods Preservation
  Brad reported that the Cooke Woods Preservation project faces property encroachment issues and requested an extension to January 1, 2027

  Member Brady moved to extend Cooke Woods Preservation to January 1, 2027. Member Ball seconded the motion; motion carried.

- CCRAC /18 (24-02): McNaughten Road Greenspace Preservation
  Brad reported that the McNaughten Road Greenspace project also faces property encroachment issues, including structures and fencing by adjacent landowners. The City of Columbus is pursuing resolution through enforcement actions while maintaining a preference for full property protection. He requested an extension to January 1, 2027

  Member Ball moved to extend McNaughten Road Greenspace to January 1, 2027. Member Chinchar seconded the motion; motion carried.

- CCRAA/24-01 Alum Creek Preservation (Sunbury /Mock Roads)
  Brad reported that the Alum Creek Preservation project that there is a significant gap between the appraised value and the seller's expectations. He stated the City of Columbus is willing to increase its financial offer and requested an extension to January 1, 2027.

  Member Farst moved to extend McNaughten Road Greenspace to January 1, 2027. Member Seidel seconded the motion; motion carried.

City of Obetz

Edwina Teye reported that the Jermoore Road Stream Restoration project is progressing on schedule with completed foundational work including field investigations, stream assessments, and floodplain evaluations. No extension is required.

Metro Parks
Edwina reported that the Walnut Creek Acquisition Phase 2 project closed in May and is awaiting reinbursement, also requiring no extension.

Prairie Township
Jacob Pries, Western Reserve Land Conservancy, delivered an update on the Hellbranch Run Preserve project in Prairie Township, describing successful land acquisition and restoration activities. He highlighted integration with adjacent park amenities, plans for ADA-accessible trails, and environmental restoration work supported by multiple funding sources. He emphasized strong community engagement, including participation by approximately 60 volunteers who planted about 1,300 saplings, reinforcing the project's ecological and public benefit.

Preliminary Screener Presentations
City of Columbus Recreation & Parks

- Southern Meadows Protection Project
  Brad presented a proposed acquisition of approximately 51 acres of farmland in southwest Columbus. He described the site as an important opportunity to expand green space in an underserved area with limited natural land. He noted plans to exclude existing industrial portions and prioritize conservation of wooded and natural areas. Members indicated the project aligns well with program eligibility.

- Hague Ravines Protection Project
  Brad described two parcels threatened by rapid development along Hague Avenue. He explained the project's importance in preserving remaining natural corridors and connecting to existing protected lands. The proposal includes potential acquisition or conservation easements. Members confirmed the project appears eligible.

- McNaughten Woods Project
  Brad reported that this project has been withdrawn, and that no screener will be presented to the Council.

City of Gahanna

- Academy Park Improvements Project
  Catherine Eichel, City of Gahanna, presented a redevelopment project focused on stormwater management improvements, including a detention basin to address runoff issues in a heavily utilized park. She explained existing drainage deficiencies and the need for infrastructure upgrades tied to broader park improvements. Jennifer Huffard clarified that projects primarily focused on stormwater management are not eligible under Clean Ohio unless paired with ecological restoration. Members suggested incorporating a wetland or restoration component to improve eligibility.

City of Obetz

- Big Walnut Wetland Restoration Project
  Mike Corbitt, City of Obetz, presented a conceptual wetland restoration project within a floodplain area tied to a broader development context. He described goals related to flood mitigation, water quality, and community access. Jennifer Huffard noted that projects tied to required stormwater management or benefiting private development would not be eligible. Members suggested separating eligible ecological restoration components or considering an alternate site not impacted by development requirements.

Metro Parks

- Metro Parks Acquisition Projects (Jackson Pike Acquisition & Big Run Acquisition
  Cassie Stiles, Metro Parks, presented acquisition opportunities including the Jackson Pike property near Great Southern Metro Park and an additional parcel adjacent to Walnut Woods. She emphasized restoration potential, floodplain habitat, and community access benefits. Members expressed support and indicated the projects are eligible for application.

Prairie Township

- Prairie Gateway Preserve
  Jacob presented a 13-acre acquisition adjacent to Battelle Darby Creek Metro Park. He described restoration plans including invasive species removal, prairie habitat creation, and potential collaboration with federal partners. He noted increasing development pressure in the area and emphasized the project's role in expanding an existing conservation corridor. Members confirmed eligibility.

Other Business

Virtual Meeting Policy

Chair Wilson led discussion on clarification of the virtual meeting policy. Edwina and Members discussed the fact that the Chair and liaison (Edwina Teye) determine whether meetings are in-person, hybrid, or virtual. Members must notify the Chair at least 48 hours in advance if attending virtually, and public access links must be posted. The policy prioritizes in-person meetings but allows flexibility to maintain quorum and accommodate extenuating circumstances.

Adjourned at 2:26 pm.

MID-OHIO REGIONAL
MORPC
PLANNING COMMISSION



Natural Resource Assistance Council

FY 27 Scoring Session – Oct. 6, 2026

AGENDA

- Meeting Call to Order
- Introductions
- Approval of June 16 Meeting Notes
- Current Balance Available: **$ 10,200,641.74**
- Review and Scoring of Applications
- Other Business
- Adjournment

SECTION 1: PROJECT EMPHASIS

- Questions 1-13
  - Scored between 0 and 5 per each committee member's judgement
  - Each question is weighted
    - Low (2)
    - Medium (6)
    - High (10)

SECTION 2: LOCAL COORDINATION & SUPPORT

- Question 14-20
  - Each question has a different number of potential points
  - Question 14 (matching funds is calculated by staff)
  - Question 20 (cost effectiveness) determined by NRAC Consensus

14. MATCHING FUNDS

App ID	Applicant	Project Name	Total Project Cost	Local Match Dollars	Match %	Clean Ohio Amount Requested	#14 Match
27-01	Columbus	Vandervort Woods Protection Project	$592,150	$ 159,880.00	27%	$432,270	2
27-02	Columbus	Southern Meadows Preservation Project	$6,110,700	1,710,996	28%	$4,399,704	3
27-03	City of Obetz	Big Walnut Floodplain Wetland Restoration Plan	$1,969,559	$492,390	25%	1,477,169	0
27-04	Metro Parks	Big Run Acquisition	$914,000	$228,500	25%	$685,500	0
27-05	Metro Parks	Jackson Pike Acquisition	$649,000	$162,250	25%	$486,750	0
27-06	Prairie Twp	Prairie Gateway Preserve	$1,047,400	$ 261,850.00	25%	$785,550	0
			$11,282,809	2,754,016		$7,481,393	

20. COST EFFECTIVNESS FY 27

0 = High Cost
3 = Medium Cost
6 = Low Cost

App ID	Applicant	Project Name	Project Type	Total Project Cost	Local Match Dollars	Match %	Clean Ohio Amount Requested	Total Acres	Clean Ohio Cost Per Acre	Total Linear Feet	Clean Ohio Cost Per LF	#20
27-01	Columbus	Vandervort Woods Protection Project	Land Acquisition	$592,150	$ 159,880.00	27%	$432,270	5	$86,454.00			
27-02	Columbus	Southern Meadows Preservation Project	Land Acquisition	$6,110,700	1,710,996	28%	$4,399,704	35	$125,705.83			
27-03	City of Obetz	Big Walnut Floodplain Wetland Restoration Plan	Restoration	$1,969,559	$492,390	25%	1,477,169	33	$44,762.70			
27-04	Metro Parks	Big Run Acquisition	Land Acquisition	$914,000	$228,500	25%	$685,500	45	$15,233.33			
27-05	Metro Parks	Jackson Pike Acquisition	Land Acquisition	$649,000	$162,250	25%	$486,750	60	$8,112.50			
27-06	Prairie Twp	Prairie Gateway Preserve	Land Acquisition	$1,047,400	$ 261,850.00	25%	$785,550	13	$60,426.92			
			Totals:	$11,282,809	2,754,016		$7,481,393	191				

SECTION 3: ADDITIONAL CRITERIA

- Questions 21-26
  - Each question has a different number of potential points
  - Question 26 (economic condition) of community is entered by staff

ECONOMIC CONDITION

App ID	Applicant	Project Name	Community	Per Capita	Score
27-01	Columbus	Vandervort Woods Protection Project	Franklin Township	23,619	10
27-02	Columbus	Southern Meadows Preservation Project	Columbus	37,760	8
27-03	City of Obetz	Big Walnut Floodplain Wetland Restoration Plan	Hamilton Twp.	31,852	8
27-04	Metro Parks	Big Run Acquisition	Groveport	39,255	8
27-05	Metro Parks	Jackson Pike Acquisition	Jackson Twp.	45,358	6
27-06	Prairie Twp	Prairie Gateway Preserve	Prairie Township	37,147	8

SECTION 4: COMMUNICATIONS WITH LANDOWNER

- Question 27 is determined by staff
  - Applicant has ….
    - Communicated with the landowner in person or by phone or by email (5 points)
      - Columbus - Southern Meadows Preservation Project
    - A letter of intent to purchase from the landowner (10points)
      - *Columbus - Vandervort Woods Protection Project
      - Metro Parks - Big Run Acquisition
      - Metro Parks - Jackson Pike Acquisition
    - A signed contract (20 points)
      - City of Obetz - Big Walnut Floodplain Wetland Restoration Plan
      - Prairie Twp. - Prairie Gateway Preserve

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- Other Business
- Adjournment

Kyle Wilson

NRAC District 3 Chair

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