



State Water Plan Update Great Lakes Water Resources Regional Committee Meeting

January 26, 2022
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

Committee Members in Attendance:

Tim Bruno	Craig Palmer
Tony Foyle	Deborah Phillips
Joy Fronzoli	Brenda Sandberg
Tom McClure	Timothy Wachter
Zachary Norwood	Matthew Wolford

Committee Members Not in Attendance:

Robert Buhl	Rebecca Hosack
James Cardman	Melissa Lyon
Jason Childs	Susan Moyer
Daniel Gold	Amy Murdock
Joe Greco	Kathy Wyrosdick
Patrick Gehrlein	Dennis Whitney
	David Wright

Others in Attendance:

Kristina Peacock-Jones – DEP	Monica Gould – Strategic Consulting Partners
Mark Matlock – DEP	Bob Whitmore – Strategic Consulting Partners
Mike Hill – DEP	
James Horton – DEP	
Brian Chalfont – DEP	

Visitors

Kayla Shellenhamer
Jenny Tompkins

Welcome

Mark Matlock, DEP, welcomed everyone to the meeting, explained the meeting was being recorded, and provided helpful hints on the use of the technology. Craig Palmer, Committee Chair, welcomed committee members to the meeting and completed a roll call for attendance.

Public Comment

Chair Palmer opened the meeting for public comment. An opportunity to express comments verbally or in the chat box was offered. No public comment was offered.

Minutes

The meeting summary of the October 27, 2021, meeting, was approved on a Brenda Sandberg / Joy Franzoli motion.

DEP State Water Plan Update

Kristina Peacock-Jones provided an update of what DEP is working on regarding the State Water Plan Update. The USGS Water Use Data and Research (WUDR) grant data sharing project involving data sharing between agencies is now operational for SRBC and USGS. Data sharing is still pending with DRBC.

The three draft Critical Area Resource Plans (CARPs) continue to be under development and the drafts are progressing. Two of those CARPs are for the Ohio Regional Committee and one is for the Potomac Regional Committee.

The State Water Plan Atlas from 2009 is being developed into a Story Map as a Digital Atlas. The Digital Atlas should be ready in the first half of 2022.

The ninth Statewide Committee meeting was held on January 19, 2022.

Regional Materials

Mark Matlock shared a cumulative summary of the Great Lakes Regional Committee's work for the past two years. The committee reviewed the document and made slight revisions to the materials. The revised regional committee materials follow.

Specific Regional Priorities

Pennsylvania is fortunate to be a part of the Great Lakes region. The Great Lakes form the largest surface freshwater system in the world, containing 90% of North America's supply of freshwater that provides vital habitats to native species and supports diverse ecosystems and robust biodiversity. It provides drinking water to 40 million people in the U.S. and Canada and sustains a thriving \$6 trillion regional economy. Lake Erie directly connects northwestern Pennsylvania to this resource, underpinning the social identity of the region and fueling the tourism, recreation, port, and maritime sectors of its economy. Also, the headwaters of the Genesee River flow through the forests and agricultural lands of northern Potter County into New York on their way to Lake Ontario. Many demands are placed upon the waters of the Great Lakes which require thoughtful protections to assure sustainability for future generations. Pennsylvania works intently with the other U.S. states, Canadian provinces, and the two federal governments to eliminate the possibilities of major diversions of water outside of the Great Lakes Basin, improve water quality, enhance biodiversity and ecosystems, and provide cooperative, sturdy governance systems for the resource.

Protect Water Quality and Quantity in the Basin

Lake Erie is vitally important to the prosperity of northwestern Pennsylvania, serving regional domestic, commercial, agricultural, and industrial needs. The Great Lakes supply power generation, offer world-class recreational opportunities, and provide transportation and trade access to the entire Great Lakes – St. Lawrence Seaway. As a result, the committee believes that Pennsylvania should not only maintain current participation in interstate and international governance venues but have a larger role in federal legislation and other policy measures that may impact Lake Erie and Lake Ontario such as invasive species, pollution management, agricultural management, and stormwater management. Northwestern Pennsylvania should have a larger role in state legislation that impacts Lake Erie and Lake Ontario.

Only approximately 1% of Lake Erie water is renewed by precipitation in any given year. Water quantity in the Great Lakes basin can best be protected by prohibiting diversions from outside of the basin.

Additionally, the committee recognizes that the region is not composed solely of Lake Erie and Lake Ontario, so efforts must be made to protect water quality throughout the larger region's watersheds. This can be accomplished by assessing biology, identifying contaminants, and evaluating the impacts of stormwater management and agricultural best management practices throughout the region. This will also help inform how Pennsylvania and Great Lakes communities can build resiliency to the impacts of a changing climate in this unique watershed.

Coordinate with Partners

The best way to achieve the larger goals of the committee is for the Commonwealth to actively engage with partners along multiple political strata. This includes other states, provinces, federal government agencies, and other stakeholders including governmental and non-governmental. On a local level, counties and municipalities should collaborate toward regional approaches to water challenges with support from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), whose role would be to encourage open and continual communication and incentivize cooperation through grant funding. Coordination should begin with education and outreach to communicate the impacts of land use to property owners and implement best management practices to better maintain the hydrologic integrity of the region.

Region's Uniqueness

What are the Great Lakes region's unique characteristics that are important considerations in the state's water planning?

- Lake Erie has a vast, but not unlimited supply of water. Only approximately 1% of Lake Erie water is renewed by precipitation in any given year.
- Despite its relatively small land area, the Lake Erie region is a vital economic asset to the Commonwealth.

- Lake Erie's quality and quantity is impacted by Canada and other U.S. states which border the Great Lakes.
- The region's economy is reliant on tourism and recreation. To help safeguard and continue those activities, the county government is working toward Lake Erie waters receiving a national marine sanctuary designation.
- The Great Lakes are utilized as navigational waters associated with business and industry. Ship traffic can potentially lead to the transportation and introduction of invasive species which can impact the distribution of other species and nutrient cycle processes.
- Agriculture, especially vineyards, play an important role in the local economy.
- Localized sources of nutrients and non-point source pollutants can negatively impact the Great Lakes tributaries and open waters and contribute to harmful algal blooms.

Stormwater and Flood Management

What are the region's concerns and recommendations for stormwater and flood management to preserve water quality?

- Municipal stormwater management is critical in the region due to associated impacts on water quality and potential effects on ravine and bluff erosion and recession. Best management practices will help control the volume, flow, and quality of stormwater coming from developed areas.
- Evaluate [Act 167](#) plans to determine their long-term feasibility and consider potential funding sources for counties to update Act 167 stormwater management plans and for both large and small municipalities to update stormwater management ordinances. This activity should include an evaluation of municipal subdivision and land development ordinances, hazard mitigation plans, and integrated water resources management.
- Encourage regional solutions such as municipal authorities to assess and, where possible, repair/retrofit aging infrastructure for high-frequency or acute severe storm events, water quality and erosion control, and infiltration.
- Digitalizing municipal and private stormwater infrastructure and utilizing geographic information systems (GIS) would be helpful in the development of asset management and capital improvement plans. DEP has provided grant funding to Erie County to conduct a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) assistance program which could be leveraged to help digitize this data in both urbanized and rural communities.
- Highlight the role of public education and outreach to achieve community stormwater knowledge.
- Continue work toward the elimination of remaining municipal combined sewer overflows as part of an overarching stormwater plan.

Climate Change Adaptation for Water Resources

How are water resources within the region being impacted by climate change and what could we do to adapt?

- Consider the implications of flash flooding and potential decreased groundwater recharge on waterway flow. With the risk of more severe droughts brought on by climate change, continuing to promote groundwater infiltration and recharge to maintain aquifers should be a high priority.
- Participate in interstate efforts to identify regional climate stressors and plan for economic and environmental resiliency actions.
- Stakeholders should assess the implications of climate change on water supply vulnerability, availability, and reliability to build resiliency.
- Stakeholders should investigate impacts of extreme lake levels (either higher or lower than normal) of Lake Erie and the associated impact on tourism, commercial and industrial activities, bluff and beach erosion, and residential communities. Recent data indicates the lake level cycles are shorter in length.
- Municipalities should take a regional approach to evaluate aging stormwater infrastructure and its current capacity and develop mitigation strategies for increased storm intensity and frequency due to climate change.
- Maintain focus on science and explicit data to follow demonstrable trends on climate change.

Logic Model

James Horton, DEP, shared a template of the previous logic model work completed by the committee. The logic model can be used to make the region's priorities actionable and measurable. A logic model is a picture that links the long term and short-term outcomes, or changes and results you hope to achieve, with the program activities and resources available to move the priorities forward.

The logic model template has the following components:

- Resources
- Activities
- Outputs
- Intermediate outcomes
- Long term outcomes

Committee members developed comments and ideas to be included in a logic model for each of their two priorities.

Resources and ideas provided in the chat

- [Qualified Opportunity Zones - PA Department of Community & Economic Development](#) - Qualified Opportunity Zones - PA Department of Community & Economic Development. Through this program, investors are provided tax benefits

for investing capital gains in Low-Income Community census tracts – and certain tracts adjacent to low-income tracts.

- ALLARM is the Alliance for Aquatic Resource Monitoring out of Dickinson College. Current parameters include temperature, clarity, conductivity, nitrate-nitrogen to create a baseline of water quality at 5 sites in the watershed. ALLARM is providing oversight and structured guidance to PLEWA for our stream study. Starting small with 5 parameters at 5 sites, with plans to expand.
- Penn State Extension is facilitating the Master Watershed Steward Program to train local volunteers for monitoring. These local groups can serve to provide education and assistance to municipalities for project priority setting.

Next Steps

Chair Palmer thanked all committee members for their attendance, participation, and ideas.

Mark Matlock, DEP, provided an overview of the committee's future work.

- Edits to the committee's developed materials will be updated.
- A public hearing is being scheduled, tentatively for March 11. The public hearing will be a full day hearing with each regional committee having one hour to receive public comment. Comments from the public hearing will be available for the Delaware Regional Committee to review at the April meeting.
- A committee vote on approval of the committee's priorities and Story Map materials will be held at the April meeting.
- The approved regional committee documents will be provided to the Statewide Committee.
- Great Lakes Regional Committee meetings are scheduled for the following dates in 2022.
 - April 27
 - A July meeting is not scheduled at this time.
 - October 26

The meeting was adjourned at 11:49 by Chair Palmer.