



State Water Plan Update Ohio Water Resources Regional Committee Meeting

July 27, 2021
1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

Committee Members in Attendance:

Erin Kepple Adams	Annie Quinn
Lori Dayton	Mary Ellen Ramage
Chuck Duritsa	Ron Rohall
Duane A. Goodsell	Robert Softcheck
Kevin Halloran	John St. Clair
Sheryl Kelly	Jasun Stanton
Deb Lange	Donna Lynn Zofcin
Jason T. McCabe	

Committee Members Not in Attendance:

Daniel Dahlkemper	Ronald L. Musser
Sam Dinkins	Deb Simko
Matthew A. Genchur	John Walliser

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	
William Brogan - DEP	

Visitors:

None

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. Ron Rohall, Committee Chair, welcomed committee members to the meeting. Attendance was completed through the online participant list.

Minutes

The minutes of the April 27, 2021, meeting were reviewed and approved on a Chuck Duritsa / Bob Softcheck motion. The vote was completed by a voice vote.

Public Comment

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

DEP State Water Plan Update

Kristina Peacock-Jones gave the committee 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 projects are progressing well. The project for moving Chapter 110 water use registration forms from paper to online is nearly complete and will be deployed soon. The project involving data sharing between agencies (SRBC, DRBC, and USGS) is in the testing phase. The project should be fully operational by the end of this summer. The Power BI report summarizing water use data will be public on our website soon. The sixth meeting of the Statewide Committee was held on July 21, 2021.

Back Creek and Laurel Hill Critical Area Resource Plans (CARPs)

Mark Matlock shared the two CARPs are being reviewed internally at DEP. Committee members should be receiving updated information by the end of the year.

Story Map

DEP staff are preparing a story map of the state water planning process. Plans were to show the story map at this meeting, but internal technical problems are preventing the story map from being uploaded for showing. The story map will hopefully be revealed to the committees in October.

Regional Priorities

Mark Matlock, DEP staff, presented and briefly reviewed draft statements developed by all the regional committees. The draft priorities were shared with the Statewide Committee at their meeting in May. The Statewide Committee asked each regional committee to review their draft priorities and provide more details or specifics if possible. The draft priorities developed by the Ohio Regional Committee are:

Inter-agency Water Resource Planning

The committee supports a holistic approach to water quality, quantity, and availability. They believe inter-agency water resources planning can address many water priorities. Organizations that should be involved in inter-agency water planning include federal and state agencies, local municipalities, conservation districts, watershed districts, watershed authorities, nonprofit environmental organizations, and the Army Corp of Engineers. Plans should identify water resources needed to promote and facilitate economic development while maintaining watershed integrity and recreation benefits. They should also evaluate impacts of resource extraction from the Marcellus Shale on water quality, emerging contaminants in water systems, reclaiming of water resources impaired by abandoned mines, and inter-basin transfers of water. Act 167 stormwater planning at the county level is an initial step toward inter-agency water resource planning.

Water Quality and Quantity

The committee believes it is critical to think of water as a single entity which requires an approach that considers both water quality and quantity simultaneously. Stormwater is significantly impacted by climate change and aging infrastructure. Excessive amounts of storm water runoff can damage the quality of the waterways they're entering. Storage, infrastructure upgrades, and treatment are potential solutions but planting additional trees along the banks of tributaries can help as well. Trees mitigate long-term impacts of stormwater and improve water quality. Stormwater is a potential problem for both water quantity and quality and its potential solutions can have impacts on both as well.

Other concerns in the Ohio basin include legacy issues encompassing acid mine drainage and orphaned wells, inter-basin transfers, agricultural activities, and the introduction of larger-scale industry water users in the region have implications on both quantity and quality.

After a thoughtful review and discussion on the priorities, committee members made slight wording revisions to the priorities and the revised priorities follow:

Water Quality and Quantity

Regional solutions depend upon an integrated approach to water quality and quantity challenges. Water quantity can be defined as a spectrum from too much to too little. Quantity can also vary over time and location. Quality, which is defined by water usage, can be impacted by quantity - either too high or too low. Increased data collection can inform community input and watershed planning. Planning will help to prioritize natural systems, man-made infrastructure, and water treatment to include creative, diverse, and strategic solutions that can maximize water supply and the quality of our drinking water.

The largest hazard to our communities is flood water. Excessive amounts of storm water runoff can cause flooding and damage the quality of the waterways through agricultural runoff, combined sewer overflows, and MS4 overflows. Stormwater is significantly impacted by climate change and aging infrastructure. Priority should be given to multi-municipal planning and funding projects that include best management practices (BMPs) referenced in DEPs Stormwater Control Manual that use integrated approaches to maximize pollution reduction and mitigate flooding.

In addition to storm water management, planning efforts need to address acid mine drainage and orphaned wells, inter-basin transfers, agricultural activities, SSOs, CSOs, MS4s, unsustainable forest management, and the introduction of larger-scale industrial water users, all of which have implications on both quality and quantity.

Inter-agency Water Resource Planning

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The revised priorities changes were unanimously approved on an Anne Quinn / Chuck Durista motion. The motion included a request that all abbreviations be fully defined.

A second motion was unanimously approved on a Deb Lange / Donna Zofcin motion to list the water quality and quantity priority first and the inter-agency water resource planning priority second.

Education and Outreach

Committee members have been given an opportunity to participate in an online survey to answer questions regarding how education and outreach of the state water plan should be achieved. Summary comments provided by survey participants were shared with the committee. A discussion followed on each survey question and committee members added additional comments. The summary survey data and additional comments provided by the committee members follow (committee's additional comments are in red). Additional surveys are coming in and the total responses is now 47.

Survey Responses by Region

- Delaware – 11
- Great Lakes – 8
- Lower Susquehanna – 5
- Ohio – 4
- Potomac – 4
- Upper/Middle Susquehanna – 10

Total responses – 42

Why is it important to conduct education and outreach on the state water plan?

- People buy-in to a plan if they understand why their involvement is important
- To educate on the importance, value, and challenges facing our water resources
- To gain public long-term support and investment for water projects that benefit the region
- Why we need to plan for the allocation, protection, and future of water
- Awareness and knowledge of issues and remediation efforts
- Public is aware of the plan, initiatives, and goals
- Find local solutions
- Transparency and broad-based citizen input
- Education and outreach prevent negative information being provided

- People do not understand the scope of the impairment in our watersheds
- To inform decision makers of water resource issues that need to be addressed
- Identifying local priorities
- Investment in water resources = wise economic strategy
- Connection between water resources protection and climate change
- Public should be informed on the direction and scope of the state water plan
- Communicating the most important components of the plan to community stakeholders should help with goals being met, widespread plan acceptance and a desire to create positive change
- Funded with taxpayer dollars
- Highlight successes, challenges, and data needs
- People do not understand the scope of impairment of our watersheds
- Plan could affect stakeholders not involved in the development of the plan
- To build coordination with planners at the local and county level
- To ensure all citizens are aware of the issues and reinforce the importance of water availability and protection
- Public awareness and buy-in

Who should we educate on the plan?

- Students and teachers
- Elected officials – local, counties, and state
- Public, every Pennsylvania resident
- County Conservation Districts
- County Planning
- Developers
- Environmental groups
- Engineers
- Watershed organizations
- Farmers
- Industrial, agricultural, recreation users
- State associations
- All water users
- Sewer and water authorities
- Water resources professionals
- State legislative offices
- Local community advocates
- State and regional water associations
- Schools, universities, elementary and high school students
- Volunteer groups
- Township supervisors
- Water Authorities
- PA Municipal League
- Trout Unlimited

- Economic Development (reach out to the Department of Community & Economic Development)
- Environmental Justice coordinator, etc.

How should the key messages of the state water plan be communicated to the public and to specific interest groups?

- Written materials for municipalities
- Go to the people, do not make them come to you
- Work through schools, colleges, conservancies, conservation districts and watershed organizations.
- Business groups, chambers, and economic development organizations
- Educational materials for the public
- Targeted messages
- Easily understood, visually appealing elevator speeches
- Website; internet marketing with links to website; story map
- Social media (multimedia approach, FB, IG, YouTube, videos, testimonials, etc.)
- Regional meetings, webinars, workshops
- Direct written correspondence to planning agencies, municipal governments
- One pager visual appealing marketing and information brochure with links that can be sent to everyone involved in water resources
- Series of newspaper articles and fact sheets; one page newspaper spread
- Watershed specialists in each conservation district (Growing Greener model)
- In person events with follow-up links to website and social media
- Through groups that already exist – Water Resources Association of the Delaware River Basin, The Water Circle (Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission), Delaware River Watershed Initiative network
- Web accessible graphics, documents, maps
- Public TV
- Recreational associations
- Summary of the plan that can be handed out
- Interactive
- Make water exciting!
- Ask other agencies/entities to link to the plan/promote the plan
- Ohio River Basin Alliance, Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission, universities - meeting/outreach
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Southwest PA Water Network

What is DEP staff's role in education and outreach?

- Leadership role in all aspects of education and outreach
- Develop and fine tune the message
- Support the development and distribution of materials
- Develop a written strategy and campaign for education and training
- Manage the curriculum, presentation materials and keep it up to date

- Coordination and providing of resources
- Technical advisor
- Education and training to key stakeholders
- Coordinate the website
- Creators of the information to be shared
- Provide direction and support to regional/local facilitators to engage the public
- Organize meetings
- Coordination and funding
- Educate their own staff on the issues
- Developers / coordinators / facilitators of the plan
- Arrange workshop speakers, create informational materials, coordinate educational events
- Provide current and timely data and resources for all regions
- Provide resources to get the information out
- **Capacity for DEP to maintain education and outreach**

What should the regional committee's role be in education and outreach?

- Take the message to the people
- Identify key stakeholders within the region
- Be present at local presentations by DEP and provide input
- Support the development and distribution of messages
- Organize local / regional forums to bring key planners and the public together
- Provide technical expertise and local examples of adverse conditions or solutions to problems
- Write newspaper articles, meet with local and state elected officials
- Organize regional forums
- Emphasize issues pertaining to local areas
- Connectors to different organizations
- Local representative of the plan
- Coordinating at a local level
- Provide local examples of the need for the plan
- Help to develop materials
- Coordination with other local planning organizations
- Take the state concepts and plan and transferring it to local impact
- **Help with buy-in**
- **Define a clear role and follow-up on progress, every year**

What resources are needed to be able to deliver and facilitate an education workshop to the community?

- Local venues, media advertising
- Targeted messaging materials
- Fund a signature capital project in each watershed and promote it
- Funding to organize and deliver education and training programs
- Power point presentation

- Ability to conduct a virtual meeting
- Technical experts
- Local town hall meetings
- One page fact sheet, executive summary
- Comprehensive marketing strategy for each initiative
- Financial resources

As a regional committee member, are you willing to participate in education and outreach within your region? (Scale of 1 (no) to 7 (absolutely))?

- Average score = 5.40

Should DEP prepare a comprehensive workshop presentation that can be used by regional committee members (Scale of 1 (no) to 7 (absolutely))?

- Average score = 5.79

Additional comments

- Publicity is essential
- Having a presentation available would provide an open invitation to view the work of the state water plan resources committees
- The Commonwealth should have legislative and executive support on this plan to be successful
- Keep educational material concise and to the point
- Plan needs to include what involvement we want from different stakeholder groups
- Need to convey the economic value and importance of investments and work to plan and protect our water resources
- Plan must be clear and compelling to the target audience, cannot be seen as regulatory or over burdensome
- Workshops should be tailored to regional priorities
- **Have the Secretary/Governor promote the plan - positive public relations**

Next Steps

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

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

- Summary notes from today's discussion will be provided to committee members.
- Committee members terms expire on a rotating basis with 1/3 of the members' terms ending in September. Mark will begin the reappointment process and committee members who terms are expiring should let him know if they do not want to be reappointed.
- The next Ohio Regional meeting will be held on October 26, 2021. The meeting will be a virtual meeting on Microsoft Teams.
- Committee members should decide in October if they want meetings in 2022 to be in-person or virtual meetings.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:53 pm on a Mary Ellen Ramage / Annie Quinn motion.