



# Lake Erie Commission

QUARTERLY MEETING  
*March 13, 2024, 10:00 a.m.*  
*Glass City Metropark*  
*1001 Front St, Toledo, OH 43605*

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## **Meeting Minutes**

**Call to Order and Roll Call** ..... Director Anne Vogel, Ohio EPA, Commission Chair

***Commission Members Present:***

Anne Vogel, Director, Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, OLEC Chair  
Mindy Bankey, Designee for Director Mary Mertz, Ohio Department of Natural Resources  
Jack Marchbanks, Director, Ohio Department of Transportation  
Tracy Intihar, Designee for Director Brian Baldrige, Ohio Department of Agriculture  
Scott Ryan, Designee for Director Lydia Mihalik, Ohio Department of Development  
Bill Wolf, Commissioner  
Danielle Giannantonio, Commissioner  
Dianne Miller, Commissioner  
Crystal Davis, Commissioner

***Commission Members Absent:***

Bruce Vanderhoff, Director, Ohio Department of Health  
Jim Stouffer, Commissioner  
Richard Hylant, Commissioner  
Kate Bartter, Commissioner

***Staff Present:***

Joy Mulinex, Executive Director, OLEC  
Sandra Kosek-Sills, OELC  
Kris Patterson, OLEC  
Cherie Blair, Ohio EPA

**Welcome and Agenda Overview** ..... Director Anne Vogel, Ohio EPA, Commission Chair

Director Anne Vogel, Ohio EPA, Commission Chair, called the Ohio Lake Erie Commission (OLEC) meeting to order at 10:08 a.m. and welcomed everyone.  
Director Vogel asked for roll call.  
(roll call)  
A quorum was declared.

Director Vogel expressed gratitude to our hosts, the Toledo Metroparks, who were not present at the start of the meeting.

Director Vogel explained that members of the community would have an opportunity for comment at the end of the meeting.

**ACTION: Approval of December 6, 2023, Meeting Minutes**

Motion to approve by Bill Wolf, seconded by Director Marchbanks.  
Motion carried with no dissent.

**ACTION: Lake Erie Commission Chair**

Director Vogel opened the floor for nominations for Commission Chair. It was noted that Director Vogel was willing to accept the position. Director Vogel was nominated. Mindy Bankey made a motion to approve, seconded by Danielle Giannantonio. Motion carried with no dissent.

**ACTION: Lake Erie Commission Secretary**

Mindy Bankey reported that, though unable to present today, Director Mertz is willing to accept the position. Director Vogel opened the floor for nominations. Director Mertz was nominated. Tracy Intihar made a motion to approve, seconded by Director Marchbanks. Motion carried with no dissent.

**ACTION: Lake Erie Protection Fund FY-24 Budget and Grants Allocation**

Director Vogel turned to Joy Mulinex to provide background information on the LEPF budget and grants.

The LEPF is funded by the Lake Erie license plate sales. Funds go toward grants for research & implementation projects that align with the priorities included in the Lake Erie Restoration and Protection Plan. This plan was updated in 2023. OELC partners with the fiscal officer at Ohio EPA to determine funds available for grants. OLEC has been awarding larger grants, compared to years past, to make more a meaningful impact. OLEC would like to maintain those larger grants. OLEC would like to award individual grants up to \$50,000, with 2024 grants totaling up to \$100,000.

There was additional discussion surrounding the funding and history of these grants. Motion to approve was made by Diane Miller, seconded by Mindy Bankey.

Motion carried with no dissent.

**Special Reports:**

- Amanda Smith Rasnick, Destination Development Director, Shores & Islands Ohio
  - Shared updates relating to building community awareness and involvement, tourism, marketing, social media, and online presence, ensuring a great and safe eclipse, and more. Shores & Islands Ohio works to keep Lake Erie's shorelines and beaches clean.
- Earl Mack, President, and Fred LeFebvre, PIO/Secretary, Toledo Buffalo Soldiers
  - Shared information regarding the mission of the Toledo Buffalo Soldiers and the work they do, including getting involved in the community and getting community members engaged in the city and what the city has to offer, including nature.

Director Vogel thanked the presenters for their presentations. Time was given for questions for each presentation.

**Ohio Lake Erie Commission Office Report.....Joy Mulinex**

The Commission staff had their annual retreat in January. Introduced new OLEC Team Member – Kris Patterson, Program Administrator.

Various Updates: Federal Coordination project work on GLRI & meeting with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; H2Ohio Collaboration continues; shared commission's Budget.

Photo Contest coming soon: Life on Lake Erie Photo Contest 2024: entries accepted until July 31, 2024, with winners announced at the September Commission meeting.

Ohio DAP 2023..... Sandra Kosek-Sills  
Domestic Action Plan: Ohio's DAP is complete and is available on the Commission's website. US & Canada are both working on federal DAPs, and Indiana and Michigan DAPs should be coming soon.

Hosting a workshop in April, more info coming soon.

Lake Erie LAMP: Lake Erie Lakewide Action and Management Plan 2024-2029 - similar to our action plan, being updated currently to provide info and data, under review phases, LAMP annual report coming soon.

Provided information on Lake Erie Protection Fund closed grants.

Maumee AOC..... Cherie Blair  
Cherie is the Maumee AOC coordinator; Maumee AOC is 11 separate/individual watersheds (only part of the Maumee watershed).

Work is being done to remove BUIs.

Wildlife Habitat Projects - 19/20 projects complete. The remaining project is funded and scheduled to be completed in 2025.

All other work on the Maumee AOCs is progressing - Aquatic Populations & Habitat Projects progressing; Contaminated Sediment MAPs; & Miscellaneous Projects. Cherie shared more information on a few specific projects and their progressions.

The Annual Report is available now.

GLRI, AOC, LEPF .....Kris Patterson  
GLRI Action Plan IV should be in place at start of FFY24 (October '24).

AOCs – about 21 management action projects will be in active construction in 2024.

### Commissioner Reports:

#### **Mindy Bankey, Designee for Director Mertz, Ohio Department of Natural Resources**

2024 marks the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary for ODNR, lots of festivities & programs going on!

Great Lakes Commission Meeting in D.C. was last week, and Director Mertz attended as the chair.

ODNR participated in the groundbreaking of some projects in Toledo recently, and the Maumee Bay Park groundbreaking is next month.

ODNR is planning & preparing for the Solar Eclipse with special projects and parks preparation to welcome guests.

#### **Director Jack Marchbanks, Ohio Department Of Transportation**

ODOT partnered with organizations near Lake Erie for special project to be completed this July. Phase 2 trail continuation on schedule for 2025

**Commissioner Danielle Giannantonio**

In late January we were awarded a PFOS treatment grant, a study will ensue for utilization of this grant.

**Commissioner Crystal Davis**

Shared a brief update that National Park projects are ongoing.

**Commissioner Bill Wolf**

For the first time ever, the Cuyahoga River is clean enough to support steel head trout (which ODNR will be supplying later this spring)!

**Scott Ryan, Designee for Director Mihalik, Ohio Department of Development**

The 2024 Ohio Travel Guide is available.

**Tracy Intihar, Designee for Director Baldrige, Ohio Department of Agriculture**

Recently had a productive water quality meeting with partners in Indiana and Michigan. Finished reenrollment of original 14 counties in the H2Ohio project, more details coming soon. Statewide enrollment will be rolling out for H2Ohio with a goal for 500,000 acres enrolled to get started. Will be offering a technical assistance program for ag retailers regarding nutrient management plan (relating to H2Ohio). A phosphorous filter program is coming soon.

**Commissioner Diane Miller**

Harmful algal bloom research grants awarded from Ohio Department of Higher Education – about 37 million dollars in that program from state funds and funds from the participating universities – were announced last week. Universities from across the state are involved.

**Director Anne Vogel, Ohio Environmental Protection Agency**

Water use chapter - officially part of the water reuse association, with discussions about how to take stormwater and wastewater and get more clean water from it. Director Vogel was also in DC last week for the Great Lakes Commission Meeting where there was a large focus on Lake Erie.

**Public Comment**

Nancy Larson, Board Member, on behalf of Sandy Bihn, Exec Director, Lake Erie Waterkeeper Provided the Commission with written comments and read from them. Thanked the Commission for allowing time to speak.

**Welcome from Meeting Host.....**Dave Zenk, Metroparks Toledo  
Though Dave Zenk, Metroparks Toledo Executive Director, was unavailable, other Metroparks Toledo staff, including Matt Killam, Chief Outreach Officer, spoke briefly with the Commission regarding the location of today's meeting.

**Adjourn Business Meeting**

Motion was made by Scott Ryan, seconded by Bill Wolf.  
Motion carried on a voice vote.  
Meeting was adjourned at 12:02 p.m.

## Public Comment

- Nancy Larson, Board Member, on behalf of Sandy Bihn, Exec Director, Lake Erie Waterkeeper Provided the Commission with written comments and read from them. Thanked the Commission for allowing time to speak.

**Welcome from Meeting Host:** Dave Zenk, Metroparks Toledo


- Though Dave Zenk, Metroparks Toledo Executive Director, was unavailable, other Metroparks Toledo staff, including Matt Killam, Chief Outreach Officer, spoke briefly with the Commission regarding the location of today's meeting.

## Adjourn Business Meeting

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Signature of Secretary

  
Signature of Chair

Date June 12, 2024

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