



QUARTERLY MEETING
June 12, 2024, 10:00 am
Magee Marsh Wildlife Area
13229 W. State Route 2, Oak Harbor, OH 43449

Meeting Minutes

Call to Order and Roll Call: Director Anne Vogel, Ohio EPA, Commission Chair
The Ohio Lake Erie Commission (OLEC) Meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m.

Commission Members Present:

Anne Vogel, Director, Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, OLEC Chair
Scott Gray, Designee for Director Mary Mertz, Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Tim Hill, Designee for Director Marchbanks, Ohio Department of Transportation
Brian Baldrige, Director, Ohio Department of Agriculture
Bill Wolf, Commissioner
Jim Stourffer, Commissioner
Dianne Miller, Commissioner
Crystal Davis, Commissioner
Kate Bartter, Commissioner
Richard Hylant, Commissioner

Commission Members Absent:

Lydia Mihalik, Director, of Ohio Development Services and Agency
Bruce Vanderhoff, Director, Ohio Department of Health
Danielle Giannantonio, Commissioner

Staff Present:

Joy Mulinex, OLEC
Sandra Kosek-Sills, OELC
Kris Patterson, OLEC
Hannah Boesinger, OLEC
Nicole Knab, OLEC

Public: 10 people **Welcome and Agenda Overview:** Director Anne Vogel, Ohio EPA, Commission Chair
Director Anne Vogel, Ohio EPA, Commission Chair welcomed everyone.

Director Vogel asked for roll call.
(roll call)

A quorum was declared, and the meeting came to order at 10:05 a.m.

Welcome from Meeting Host

Meredith Gilbert, ODNR Magee Marsh Staff

- Director Vogel expressed gratitude to our hosts, the Magee Marsh Wildlife Area.
- Ms. Gilbert welcomed everyone and provided some history about the site and information about birding.

ACTION: Approval of March 13, 2024 Meeting Minutes

- Motion to approve by Bill Wolf, seconded by Diane Miller. Motion carried with no dissent.

ACTION: Approval of Resolution to Increase the LEPF Spending Limit for FY-24

- Joy Mulinex provided background on the funding availability for LEPF and the decision to recommend the consideration of the motion which would increase the grant funding from \$100,000 to its previously issued FY-23 amount of \$150,000.
- Jim Stouffer made a motion to approve, seconded by Tim Hill. Motion carried with no dissent.

ACTION: Approval of Lake Erie Protection Fund Grants

- Kris Patterson provided background information on the LEPF grants. Three applications were presented for approval from West Creek Conservatory, City of Bay Village, and Ohio Sea Grant.
- Bill Wolf made a motion to approve, seconded by Crystal Davis. Motion carried with no dissent.

ACTION: GLRI Resolution of Support

- Kris Patterson explained that the pending congressional bills would reauthorize the GLRI for FFY2027-2031. GLRI has provided \$3.7 billion which has been invested in over 7,500 projects with over \$280 million in Ohio through FFY22. This includes Great Lakes Leaky Act contaminated sediment removals in AOC, habitat restoration projects in and near streams, and wetlands.
- The Motion to approve was made by Diane Miller, seconded by Jim Stouffer. Motion carried with no dissent.

ACTION: Resolution Commemorating the Term for Jim Stouffer

- Term-limited and rolling off the Commission, shared recognition of his leadership and a great voice for Lake Erie.
- Motion to approve was made by Steve Gray, and seconded by Tim Hill. Motion carried with no dissent.

ACTION: Resolution Commemorating the Term for Bill Wolf

- Term-limited and rolling off the Commission, shared recognition of his leadership and knowledge surrounding the ongoing discussion to address Lake Erie HABs.
- Motion to approve was made by Brian Baldridge, seconded by Crystal Davis. Motion carried with no dissent.

Special Reports:

Nicole Zacharda, Program Manager Great Lakes Commission

- Shared updates about HABs Collaborative meeting that was held at Maumee Bay State Park in April and also the Great Lakes Sediment and Nutrient Reduction Program which compliments other efforts to reduce phosphorus loads to Lake Erie. More can be learned through [nutrientreduction.org](https://www.nutrientreduction.org).

Laura Johnson, Director, National Center for Water Quality Research Heidelberg University

- Dr. Johnson shared updates on the status of loading season, nutrients measured, and the latest projection on the coming summer HABs season.

- Key Updates:
 - o The return of HABs to Lake Erie were closely linked to increases in phosphorus loads.
 - o The bloom severity is related to the March - July phosphorus loading. 2024 loads are at expected levels given the amount of streamflow.
 - o Precipitation in April was high, but rain in June and July are forecast to be average.
 - o Current bloom severity is estimated to be moderate (4.7-7).

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

Ohio Lake Erie Commission Office Report

Joy Mulinex

- Various Updates: Great Lakes Authority, Federal Coordination project work and Great Lakes Executive Committee on June 25 and 26, GLRI State Forum June 6, GLWQA Annex 2 Lake Erie Lakeside Action & Management Plan (LAMP) 2024 -2028 being drafted, GLWQA Annex 4 (Nutrients) meeting to review 2023 loading and trends, internal reorganization, and DAP updates.
- Ethics requirement annual training <https://ethics.ohio.gov/education/elearning/ecourses.html>
- H2Ohio collaboration continues; updates on Commission's budget and increasing funds for the Lake Erie Protection Funds.

Sandra Kosek-Sills: Great Lakes Environmental Justice Grant Program (GLEJFP)

- Domestic Action Plan: Technical meeting in the spring - lakeerie.ohio.gov for Ohio DAP 2023, Actions Proposed.
- Lake Erie Environmental Justice Grant Program Cooperative Agreement with USEPA will run for a five-year period from 2024 - 2029 for \$5,804,996. Implementation projects will achieve GLRI outcomes for habitat restoration, increase aquatic connectivity, and Great Lakes education. The program will deliver GLRI benefits for disadvantaged communities in Ohio Lake Erie Watershed. OLEC with work with coalition partners, outreach committee, and subawardees.
- Partners: Equity Partners Black Environmental Leaders and Rural Action, U.S. EPA and outreach Committee.

Kris Patterson: GLRI, AOC, LEPP, LoLE

- GLRI Action Plan IV - U.S. EPA concluded the public comment period on the proposed Action Plan IV and held GLRI State Forum. U.S. EPA will open another opportunity for state comments soon. The plan is to have the final Action Plan in place by the start of FFY24 (October 2024)
- Maumee AOC
 - o Sediment Remediation including review of bids for lower Maumee River Remedial Design is in progress by TLCPA. Ohio EPA & U.S. EPA recently helped plan a meeting on Great Lakes Legacy Act projects in which OLEC staff attended.
- Cuyahoga River AOC
 - o Gorge Dam Sediment Remediation including solicitation for bids and shoreline stabilization and sediment disposal site construction.
 - o Little Cuyahoga projects including 3 lowhead dam removals, 1 mile of habitat restoration and bank stabilization, approved for funding.
- Cuyahoga River AOC
 - o Beach Closings BUI removal recommendation submitted to GLNPO.

- Sunset Pier is Lorain's vision to revitalize waterfront. Approved for EJ/DEI funding from GLNPO – need include repair boat launch and engagement with community.

Commissioner Reports:

Commissioner Richard Hylant

- Shared updates on conversations had at GLPF Spring Board Meeting

Commissioner Kate Bartter

- The GLPF allocated each state's share for the year, and Ohio received about \$233,000. She shared the list of Nutrient Management programs that were funded by the GLPF. Shared concern of the public having an understanding of the level of investment.

Commissioner Diane Miller

- NIH and National Science Foundation put together a grant to fund the Great Lakes Center for Fresh Waters of Human Health. It is a re-up of funding with 14 institutions involved, including the University of Toledo and University of Michigan which is leading the grant. Previously, Bowling Green State University had been the lead.

Commissioner Crystal Davis

- GLRI Action Plan Draft: Happy to see equity, climate change and traditional ecological knowledge incorporated into the draft, and would like to see those issues continue to be prioritized.
- Shared congratulations on the GLEJGP. Noted that the Great Lakes EJ GP awarded to Restoring America's Estuaries includes Junction Coalition (Toledo) as an equity consultant. Thus there is broad representation from Ohio in these grants.

Commissioner Bill Wolf

- Water Monitoring at the Metroparks, noted water quality was level 1.
- In talking trends with colleagues in the field he noted smart sensors AI, weather analysis, climate analysis will be key to fertilizer usage, VRT/drones/satellite imagery important in monitoring, and regenerative agriculture.

Commissioner Jim Stouffer

- Tourism is looking good, boating usage is strong, and sales are going back to a normal rate. This year started strong in tourism with the eclipse, and not moving towards the holidays. Thanks the Commission's work and the impact that it has on the tourism industry.

Tim Hill, Designee for Director Jack Marchbanks

- Currently working on a project west of Columbus explore nature-based solutions for storm litigation for Mad River - 200-250 feet away from I70. The location experience erosion on a sharp 90 degree curve experiencing erosion heading towards highway at about 10 ft a year. Shared a two-year practice of using cutdown treetops and put them on the outside bend of the stream, tied them down.

Each time there's a flood even, the flood deposits sediment into the treetops and reestablishes the entire bank and forced the river to move to the other side. In time they will replant trees and reestablish the bank.

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Steve Gray, Designee for Director Mertz, Ohio Department of Natural Resources

- Work continued on H2Ohio Lake Erie, Maumee Basin and downstate including H2Ohio Rivers.
- Shared handout on Great Lakes Ohio Fishing.
- Noted it's the 75th Anniversary of Department of Natural Resources

Director Brian Baldridge, Ohio Department of Agriculture

- H2Ohio priority is the Basin, multiple programs fall within that area.
- Collaborate with Ohio EPA on programs they deal with and work to fix, current and punish with situations that negatively impact the basin.
- Looking at options for capturing water to explore regenerative agriculture.

Director Anne Vogel, Ohio Environmental Protection Agency

- Exploring water reuse and water studies in Ohio that will expand to other parts of the state to ensure good stewardship of the water usage available.
- Going after federal money available

Public Comment

- Nancy Larson: Representing Water Keepers shared concern on algae and need for commercial phosphorus source reductions.
- Quinton Babcock: Received \$45,000 through Lake Erie Communities and Coastal Resiliency Program, to develop Community Action and Coastal Resiliency Plan and provided update on work.

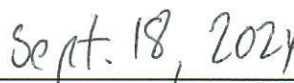
Adjourn Business Meeting

A motion to adjourn was made by Tim Wolf, and seconded by Bill Stouffer. The motion carried on a voice vote.

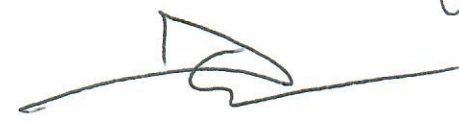
Meeting was adjourned at 12:15 pm



Signature of Secretary



Date



Signature of Chair



Date