

Chapter 9

Management Agency and Community Involvement

This chapter discusses the involvement of local jurisdictions and the general public in development of this plan. It addresses the role of the joint task force established by NOACA and NEFCO to participate in and oversee plan development, and the formation of work groups formed to address various aspects of the plan. It summarizes the two rounds of public meetings held to discuss with the general public the plan's development. Finally it summarizes the public review and comment period held during October/November 2002 to review the draft Clean Water Plan. Involvement of local jurisdictions and the general public have been crucial elements in the plan development process.

Northeast Ohio 208 Plan Update Task Force

NOACA and NEFCO formed the Northeast Ohio 208 Plan Update Task Force in September 1996 to assist in plan development. The Task Force included local management agency representatives from the seven counties involved in the plan update. The Task Force was co-chaired by Erwin Odeal, Executive Director of the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District and a member of the NOACA Board and David Crandell, Manager of the City of Akron's Public Utilities Bureau.

Various kinds of local governments and agencies were represented on the Task Force, including mayors, county commissioners, sewer agencies, county health departments, planning agencies, park districts, and soil and water conservation agencies. The Task Force also included representatives from state and federal environmental agencies and local watershed groups. The charge given to the Task Force was to:

- a) advise NOACA and NEFCO staff on the plan update development;
- b) review and comment on all reports prepared during the planning process;
- c) serve as co-convenor of public meetings held during the planning process; and
- d) recommend actions to be considered by the NOACA and NEFCO Boards on the draft Plan.

The Task Force met every three months beginning in November 1996 and throughout 1997 and 1998, and more frequently in 1999. During this time, members discussed and debated plan development issues, participated on several work groups formed to formulate strategies for incorporation in the plan, reviewed and commented on draft documents and reports, and assisted in public meetings held. In December 1998, the Task Force approved an outline for the plan update document and subsequently began the review of draft chapters. Table 9-1 lists the Task Force members. Documentation of Task Force activities is available from NEFCO.

Work Groups

The Task Force established three work groups to assist in plan development. It formed a home sewage management strategies work group consisting of county health department officials from the seven counties involved in the plan update, Ohio EPA and the Ohio Department of Health. This group met a number of times over an eighteen month period to formulate the recommendations and strategies that form the core of Chapter 4. Documentation of this work group's activities is available from NEFCO.

Also formed was a critical areas identification work group which was charged with identifying water resources in the region warranting enhanced protection under the 208 Plan. This work group also met several times early in the planning process, and produced a series of reports and maps which became the foundation for the resources identified for protection in Chapter 6. Documentation of this work group's activities is available from NEFCO.

Finally, the Task Force formed a protective mechanisms work group to assist in the identification of management tools and strategies to enhance the protection of regionally important water resources in the region. This work group met a number of times over a twelve month period and produced a report which formed the basis for recommendations in Chapters 5 and 6. Documentation of this work group's activities is available from NEFCO.

Public Meetings During Plan Development Phase

NOACA and NEFCO held two rounds of public meetings during the development of this document. In the summer of 1997 seven meetings were held, one in each of the seven counties involved in the plan update to introduce the project to the community, discuss goals of the planning process, present information on existing water quality conditions, and discuss the public's comments and concerns about the planning process.

A second round of public meetings was held in the summer of 1999. Five meetings were held in watersheds throughout the planning area. The purpose of these meetings was to report progress on the plan's development before plan alternatives were completed. Presentations were given in four areas of the plan's development: wastewater planning, home sewage management, nonpoint source control, and the protection of regionally important water resources. The public was given the opportunity to comment on issues presented. The results of both rounds of public meetings were shared with the Task Force and have formed the development of this plan. Documentation of this activity is available from NEFCO. In addition, during the course of plan development, NOACA and NEFCO staff attended a number of meetings with groups in the area to discuss the Plan.

Public Review of Draft Plan

NEFCO convened public meetings on October 30, November 6, and November 20 to review the Draft Clean Water Plan (CWP). The purpose of these meetings was to obtain opinion from the public about the elements of the CWP. Distribution of the plan was accomplished prior to and during the 60 day public review period. The draft plan was posted on the Summit County information web site and printed copies were placed on reserve in several local libraries. The public meetings, scheduled as conveniently as possible to provide opportunity for citizens to attend, were held at 2:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. at locations in Summit County and Portage County. Opinions and

comments from the public meetings were compiled and reviewed by the NEFCO Environmental Resources Technical Advisory Committee (ERTAC) 208 CWP Subcommittee and were used to make revisions to the Draft CWP. Appendix 9-1 contains a summary of the response to major comments.

Table 9-1
Northeast Ohio 208 Water Quality Management Plan
Development Task Force Roster
(as of November, 1999)

Voting Members:

Cuyahoga County: Hunter Morrison, City of Cleveland Planning Director
Paul Alsenas, Cuyahoga County Planning Director
Tim Horgan, Cuyahoga County Board of Health
Erwin Odeal, NEORSO Executive Director
Hon. Jerry Hruby, Cuyahoga County Mayor

Geauga County: Neil Hofstetter, Geauga County Commissioner
Dave Dietrich, Geauga County Planning Director
Bob Weisdack, Geauga County Board of Health

Lake County: Hon. Mildred Teuscher, Lake County Commissioner
Darrell Webster, Lake County Planning Director
Frank Kellogg, Lake County General Health District
Hon. Daniel DiLiberto, Lake County Mayor

Lorain County: Hon. Betty Blair, Lorain County Commissioner
James Boddy, Lorain County General Health District
Hon. Joseph Koziura, Lorain County Mayor
Hon. Vincent Urbin, Lorain County Mayor

Medina County: Hon. Steve Hambley, Medina County Commissioner
Bruce Freeman, Medina County Planning Director
Ken Hotz, Medina County Sanitary Engineer

Portage County: Hon. Christopher Smeiles, Portage County Commissioner
Harold Huff, Portage County Water Resources Department
Lynne Erickson, Portage County Regional Planning Director
DuWayne Porter, Portage County Health Department

Summit County: Warren Woolford, City of Akron Planning Director
David Crandell, City of Akron Public Utilities Manager
Robert Corlett, Department of Development, Summit County
Boyd Marsh, Health Commissioner, Summit County
Ed Shondel, Environmental Services, Summit County
Susan Truby, City of Cuyahoga Falls

Non-Voting Ex-Officio Members:

Cuyahoga River Remedial Action Plan	Ed Rybka, RAP Chair
Black River Remedial Action Plan	Ken Pearce, RAP Chair
Chagrin River Watershed Partners	Tom Denbow, Director
Grand River Partners	Charles Ashcroft
Cleveland Metro Parks	Steve Coles
Ohio Environmental Protection Agency	Bill Skowronski, Keith Riley
Ohio Department of Natural Resources	Steve Roloson
United States Environmental Protection Agency	Rich Winklehofer, Harlin Hirt
USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service	Jim Storer
Cuyahoga Valley National Park	John Debo

APPENDIX 9-1

Response to Major Comments Summary

Appendix 9-1 Response to Major Comments Summary

The following responds to major comments received on the draft NEFCO Clean Water Plan (CWP).

1. Comment:

What guide should be used to determine sewer feasibility?

Response:

The reader is referred to the local sewer agency for guidance. Sewer feasibility is a factor of environmental and economic conditions. The CWP can provide insight into existing sewer areas and areas where sewers are planned.

2. Comment:

An article in the February 12, 2002 Akron Beacon Journal said that the Draft Plan document has been approved. Is that accurate?

Response:

The article was not accurate. The draft plan was not approved. Mini-updates of portions of some facilities planning areas (FPA) have been accomplished. To facilitate the permit processing for individual dischargers, portions of the CWP were updated and endorsed by NEFCO. The updates used guidance articulated in the CWP. These mini-updates are what the writer of the article was most likely referring to, not the Plan approval.

3. Comment:

Will the Ohio River Basin CWP be a separate report?

Response:

The effort to update the Ohio River Basin CWP is a separate phase of the Plan update. The products of this effort will ultimately be combined with the Lake Erie CWP into a comprehensive document. The Lake Erie CWP will be used as a template for the Ohio River Basin. This will enhance the cohesiveness of the CWP by maintaining consistency with the chapters. NEFCO will complete components of the Ohio River Basin CWP as funding permits.

4. Comment:

Should a sample description of the prescriptions for the JEDD areas be included in the Executive Summary?

Response:

NEFCO acknowledges the comment and will add text to the Executive Summary.

5. Comment:

Discussion is lacking in the Executive Summary about semi-public sewage disposal systems.

Response:

A brief summary of wastewater management from semipublic wastewater treatment was added to the Executive Summary.

6. Comment:

Should a summary of Storm Water Phase II regulations be included in the Executive Summary?

Response:

NEFCO acknowledges the comment and added a brief summary of the Storm Water Phase II regulations.

7. Comment:

Who were the Home Sewage System Recommendations written for and who will implement them?

Response:

The home sewage recommendations were written by a Task Force of local health departments in the NOACA and NEFCO regions. Their recommendations were written for the county and other local health departments, and will be implemented by them as funding permits.

8. Comment:

There is a glaring omission of a current water quality data baseline in the CWP.

Response:

NEFCO felt it was redundant to duplicate what is available in numerous Ohio EPA water quality documents. The 305(b) and TMDL reports are referenced in the CWP and are available from the Ohio EPA District office.

9. Comment:

The stream rankings illustrated on Figure 2-1 should be revised to reflect the current data.

Response:

NEFCO acknowledges that the date is not the most current available information. Text was added to clarify that the figure is using a data analysis process that is no longer applied to streams. It is only good for comparing the relative health of streams in 1996. For more current data the reader is referred to Ohio EPA Water Quality documents. This figure could be updated in a future CWP update.

10. Comment:

Why are there differences on the employment totals on Tables 2-4 and 2-2?

Response:

The differences between the two sets of figures are due to the definitions of the categories. Total Labor Force represents the number of people that are working or seeking work. Employment by Industry are those working in all industries in a specific region or county.

11. Comment:

Has the Ohio Governor’s January 12, 1998 guidance for wastewater pollution loading been applied to the NEFCO region 201s?

Response:

The 1981 CWP listed designated management agencies (DMAs) for facilities planning. The DMAs included municipalities, counties, and sanitary sewer districts authorized under Ohio law to perform these functions. The January 12, 1998 Governor’s letter has been discussed by the ERTAC 208 Review committee and there was no consensus to include it in the CWP. The Lead agencies have been provided the opportunity to revise their wastewater prescriptions for each facilities planning area. NEFCO will make the revisions to the FPAs according to instructions from the lead agencies.

12. Comment:

NEFCO should encourage resolution of differences in the proposed prescriptions for the unincorporated areas in the Kent Facilities Plan.

Response:

NEFCO has encouraged the City of Kent and Portage County to resolve their differences for the unincorporated areas in the Kent Facilities Plan. The CWP review meetings have also served to identify issues and solutions to FPA differences for communities in the Lake Erie basin.

13. Comment:

Is Suffield Township (or part of it) in the Akron FPA?

Response:

The Clean Water Plan shows that a portion of Suffield Township is in the Akron FPA.

14. Comment:

Wording for prescriptions that address failing home sewage treatment systems (HSTSs) (formerly referred to as home sewage disposal systems (HSDS)) should be clarified. The following is suggested.

“Failing HSTSs serving single-family homes shall be abandoned and the home connected to sanitary sewer service in accordance with OAC 3701-29-02(M) unless sewer service is not accessible, in which case the HSTS must be repaired to meet the standards found within OAC 3701-29.”

Response:

The suggested text does promote consistency. Discussion at the review meetings seems to agree that the existing text does encourage replacement of failing HSTSs with a working system if sewer is not available. NEFCO will encourage communities to use the suggested text if they desire to revise their wastewater prescriptions.

15. Comment:

The definition of a Primary DMA should be expanded to include ownership of all or part of the sewers within their jurisdiction.

Response:

The definition of a Primary DMA, established early on in the CWP update study, was the county or municipality that owns or operates the central wastewater treatment plant. The Secondary DMA owns and maintains the sewers. Very often the Primary and Secondary DMA are the same. The lead agencies felt it was necessary to make this distinction.

16. Comment:

The color pink should be added to the FPA maps to represent areas that will remain unsewered.

Response:

Discussion by the review committee indicated that the additional color was not needed. Early drafts of the FPA maps had used the color pink for the unsewered areas. As the maps evolved the use of the color became obsolete as the areas became represented by another color.

17. Comment:

Cooperation is recommended between the Portage SWCD, RPC, Park District, Land Trust, and local jurisdictions to implement the recommendations of Chapter 5 (Management of Nonpoint Source Pollution and Storm Water Runoff).

Response:

NEFCO acknowledges and agrees that cooperation is the most efficient manner to address nonpoint source pollution and storm water. It is mutually beneficial for all stakeholders in the Cuyahoga River basin to cooperate in the effort to achieve water quality standards.

18. Comment:

Combined sewer overflows and sanitary sewer overflows are considered to be nonpoint source pollution and should be discussed in Chapter 5.

Response:

The classification of Sanitary Sewer Overflows and Combined Sewer Overflows as point sources is documented in 40CFR122, section 122.26. Chapter 5 is primarily focused on non-point source pollution. Older references (e.g. 1996 Ohio Water Resources Inventory) by Ohio EPA do lump the CSOs and SSOs as nonpoint source pollution impairment sources. This report considers them as point sources, in agreement with the current regulations.

19. Comment:

According to the Ohio EPA, the Middle Cuyahoga begins at the Munroe Falls Dam. Table 5.1 needs to be revised.

Response:

Ohio EPA (1999) describes the Middle Cuyahoga as extending from the Lake Rockwell Dam to the Little Cuyahoga confluence. In some Ohio EPA water quality reports the Little Cuyahoga is included in the Middle Cuyahoga section of the Cuyahoga River. It would be inappropriate for NEFCO to revise a Table from an Ohio EPA report.

20. Comment:

Headwaters and high quality wetlands of the major watersheds should be added to the discussion in Chapter 6.

Response:

NEFCO agrees that headwaters and wetlands are important to the quality of downstream segments. The lack of funding precluded their inclusion in this update. Early in the CWP Update the identification of wetlands was intended to be part of the update but were found to be too extensive and costly to analyze as part of the current document. NEFCO hopes that in future CWP updates headwaters and wetland resources could be addressed.

21. Comment:

Breakneck Creek should be included as a groundwater recharge area for the City of Kent's wellfield.

Response:

NEFCO acknowledges the importance of these recharge areas. The lack of funding prevented a detailed discussion on these recharge areas other than to address them in a generalized manner. Communities, with the assistance of the Ohio EPA, will need to prepare Source Water Assessment Plans for the protection of the recharge areas. Hopefully in future CWP updates, NEFCO could more adequately document the existence of these plans as part of its regional plan to protect water resources.

22. Comment:

More emphasis is needed on urban stream restoration.

Response:

The CWP presents a discussion (Chapter 7) about identifying realistic urban restoration strategies. The intent is to develop a logical strategy to maximize the available financial resources for higher priority streams.

23. Comment:

Additional public input is needed for the CWP update.

Response:

NEFCO made numerous public and media announcements in an effort to generate public participation. Four public meetings were convened, two (afternoon and evening) in each county. An additional public meeting was convened to further solicit public input. Public meetings were also held during the development of the Plan.

24. Comment:

The definition of Publicly-Owned Treatment Works (POTW) needs to be more explicit.

Response:

The definition of a POTW was revised to be consistent with the Clean Water Act, Section 212.