

**Upper Tuscarawas River Technical Advisory Committee Meeting  
Friday, August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2005  
9:30 – 11:30 a.m.**

**Green Community Center  
4224 Massillon Road  
Green, OH 44232-0278**

**Meeting Summary**

**I. Welcome**

**- Meeting Attendees:**

Chrissy Lingenfelter – City of Green; Debby Rolland – Ohio Erie Canalway Coalition; Bill Staiger – Division of Watercraft; Paul Wilkerson – Metro Parks; Mark Swiger – MWCD; George Beckham – Coventry Township; Joan Hug Anderson – Summit SWCD; Mike West – Congressman Sherrod Brown’s Office; David Burdge – City of Akron; Judy Semroc – Cleveland Museum of Natural History; Edith Chase – Citizen; Eric Akin – NEFCO; Andy Burt – ODNR Div. of Wildlife

**- Purpose and Goals:**

**Purpose:** Update the Upper Tuscarawas River Watershed Action Plan so it is more beneficial to local stakeholders in protecting and restoring local water resources. The plan will include up-to-date information, be more user friendly, be locally driven, endorsable by the Ohio EPA and Ohio Department of Natural Resources, and have focused and prioritized actions.

**Meeting Goal:** To determine a clear direction for the Action Plan update.

- Questionnaire:** Eric Akin handed out a questionnaire and asked for the meeting attendees to fill it out for future discussion.

**II. Action Plan Review – Eric Akin**

- Upper Tuscarawas River Action Plan covers a 79 square mile watershed extending from the outlet of Portage Lakes at Long Lake upstream to the headwaters in Hartville, Green and Jackson Township.
- The area is located in Summit, Stark and Portage Counties and includes portions of Akron, Green, Barberton, New Franklin, Hartville, Jackson Township, Springfield Township, Lake Township and Suffield Township.
- The original Action Plan was complete by NEFCO in 2000 to help local protect and restore water resources by providing possible actions and costs estimates to address various water quality problems.

- He said the Action Plan is needed because not one section of the Upper Tuscarawas River was found by the Ohio EPA to be fully meeting Ohio's water quality standards during their last survey of the river. This section of the Tuscarawas River had poor fish and macroinvertebrate (water bugs) scores, high bacteria levels, and/or a fish consumption advisory from PCBs. A summary of Ohio EPA's water quality findings was distributed to the meeting attendees.
- The original Action Plan contains the following six sections:
  - I. Land Use and Land Cover
  - II. Potential Point and Nonpoint Pollution Sources
  - III. Critical Resources
  - IV. Riparian Zone Analysis
  - V. Portage Lakes Task Force
  - VI. Watershed Action Plan
- The first five sections of the report were used by NEFCO and local stakeholders to develop the section VI, the Action Plan.
- Goals, objectives and actions for water quality issues were developed for the Action Plan to address local water quality concerns.
- The seven goals of the Action Plan are:
  - I. Reduce Fecal Contamination
  - II. Decrease Levels of Toxic Substances
  - III. Reduce Sediment and Siltation
  - IV. Protect/Restore Shoreline and Riparian Habitat
  - V. Reduce Fertilizer and Pesticide Runoff
  - VI. Decrease Salinity Impacts
  - VII. Acquire a Stronger Understanding, Cooperation and Participation Regarding Water Quality Issues
- Under each of the goals there are multiple objectives, actions, and costs estimates.
- A review of the Action Plan table showed it to be confusing and not very user friendly for various water quality issues. In total there are seven actions with 21 total objectives and 79 possible actions with estimated costs.
- The Action Plan does not, however, identify any specific projects or estimate the reduction in a pollution source if an action is implemented.
- Despite the Action Plan being a good first step for locals to protect and restore water quality, it needs to be brought up-to-date so the area and its stakeholders can remain competitive for limited outside funding.

- Several programs, initiatives, and guidelines have come about since the completion of the Action Plan in 2000. These include:
  - Summit County's Riparian Setback Ordinance
  - Storm Water National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase 2
  - Summit Metro Parks Wetlands Survey
  - NEFCO's Clean Water Plan Ohio River Basin Update
  - Summit County Health Department's Septic System Program
  - Ohio EPA Water Quality Survey (TMDL)
  - New State Watershed Planning Guidelines
  - Summit County's Natural Resources Inventory
  
- The update needs to incorporate all of this new data into the plan and bring it up to the new State standards for endorsement.

### **III. New Watershed Plan Guidelines – Eric Akin**

- In 1997, the Ohio EPA produced “A Guide to Developing Local Watershed Action Plans in Ohio” to assist local communities with watershed planning. NEFCO used this document in developing the Upper Tuscarawas River Watershed Action Plan.
  
- However, the Ohio EPA and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) found that many of the plans following the Guide still didn't adequately address known water pollution problems. Using the lessons learned from successful projects throughout Ohio, the Guide was updated in 2002 to include all the information that ideally should be contained in a watershed action plan. This update is located in Appendix 8 of the Guide.
  
- Furthermore, the Ohio EPA and ODNR developed an endorsement protocol where plans can be submitted to them for their review. If they meet Appendix 8 guidelines then the plan will receive “State Endorsement”.
  
- A State Endorsement results in a watershed becoming eligible for or receives higher priority for limited outside funding. Funding sources linked to State Endorsement are Ohio EPA Section 319 grants, Water Resource Restoration Sponsorship Program (WRRSP) funds, Ohio EPA's linked deposit program, and Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQUIP) through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).
  
- The key new components of Appendix 8 and State Endorsement standards is that an Action Plan should focus on smaller (subwatershed) areas, identify specific water quality improvement projects, link specific actions to water quality data, and calculate the pollution reduction from recommended management practices.

- The current Upper Tuscarawas River Action does not meet these new standards.

#### **IV. Group Discussion**

- The meeting attendees spent a short time talking about the Kent Dam project as an example of several stakeholders coming together and working towards a common water quality goal. Edith Chase gave a brief recap on what led to the successful modification of the dam.
- The ODNR Division of Wildlife emphasized the need for identifying projects in order to take advantage of funding that comes along. For example, they have been appropriated money for fish passages to be used in Congressman's Regula's district. The money could be used on a fish passage project in the watershed if one had been identified in the original Action Plan.
- The discussion turned to the size of the area included in the Action Plan. Eric Akin pointed out that in order for the Action Plan's boundary to correspond with Ohio EPA's watershed boundaries, the watershed needed to be extended from the Long Lake outlet to the river's confluence with Wolf Creek in the City of Barberton. A slide of the new area to be included was displayed. The committee agreed to extend the watershed boundaries to the confluence with Wolf Creek.
- A question was asked on the exact flow of water between the Tuscarawas River and the Cuyahoga River via the Ohio Erie Canal. The flow is controlled by ODNR through a series of gates in the canal. The exact flow diverted to the Cuyahoga River was not known, but ODNR controls the flow of the canal to minimize the impact to the Tuscarawas River of combined sewer overflows during heavy rain events. Eric Akin suggested that this might be a good topic for a guest speaker at a future meeting.
- Debby Rolland asked what input the public was going to have in this process. Eric Akin said that public will be involved in updating this plan and several members of the public who were known to be interested in these issues were invited to the meeting. He said he would suggest waiting until the committee has a clear idea on what shape the plan is going to take before taking it to the public. Joan Hug Anderson suggested using already established public forums (PIPE) to get more public involvement.
- The Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) study for the Upper Tuscarawas River is currently being conducted by Ohio EPA to determine the sources and causes of water pollution. The report will not be completed until early next year, but initial findings should be known before that time to help direct the actions included in the plan update. The TMDL report should identify the sources and causes of decreased water quality in the area, but it will not tell

the local communities how to fix the problem. Therefore, it is up to the local stakeholders to determine how to fix pollution problems. An incentive for the locals to address water quality problems is that if a section of the Tuscarawas River is not meeting water quality standards, it is difficult to get permission from the Ohio EPA to allow for new or increased discharges into the river. This can impact residential, commercial, and industrial development in an area.

## V. Next Step

- The committee thought the next logical step is to decide which information currently in the Action Plan needs updating, what information not in the plan needs to be added, and to determine a new plan format that makes it more user friendly and will meet the new State Endorsement guidelines.
- Eric said he would email the committee members on these issues, and post the information on the Tuscarawas River website:  
[www.uptuscwatershed.org/tuscarawas\\_tac.htm](http://www.uptuscwatershed.org/tuscarawas_tac.htm)
- Topics of interest for possible future meeting presentations include the Ohio EPA's TMDL study, the Cleveland Museum of Natural History's work at Singer Lake and other areas in the watershed, and the diversion of water from the Tuscarawas River basin to the Cuyahoga River.
- **Next Meeting:** The committee decided to meet as needed. The next meeting will be held after the format is determined and the plan is updated with new information. The next step after that is to start looking at areas for needed projects and to prioritize actions.

Summary Completed by Eric Akin on 9/6/05