



Black River Advisory Committee
Lorain County Conservation District | Facilitating Organization
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BLACK RIVER ADVISORY COMMITTEE (BRAC) QUARTERLY MEETING

Wednesday, October 22, 2025

Location: Lorain County Public Health – Community Room & online via Zoom

MINUTES

❖ **Welcome / Call to Order:** 2:01 PM by BRAC Chair Don Romancak

- Attendees: **Kate Golden** (City of Lorain Stormwater Manager); **Don Romancak** (LC Stormwater District); **Hannah Boesinger & Kris Patterson** (Ohio Lake Erie Commission); **Duane Cribley** (LC Public Health); **Mike Jindra** (LCPH); **Shane Derricotte** (City of Elyria Wastewater Program Manager); **Chip Wendt, Lauren Corrigan, & Kristen Risch** (Coldwater Consulting); **Jennifer Scott-Wasilk** (Amherst City Council/Sandstone Environmental Health Services); **Lexi Rohrbaugh** (Lorain County Metro Parks – Sr. Recreation Specialist); **John Timmons** (ODA Watershed Manager); **Julie Mackey** (Lorain County OSU Ext.); **John Sabo** (LC resident); **Steve Holland** (ODNR - Ohio Coastal Management Program); **Patti Donnellan** (LC Conservation District) ONLINE: **Pam Davis** (NOACA); **Kim Brewster-Shefelton, Kevin Saracino** (Chagrin River Watershed Partners Inc.); **Jennifer Reeves** (City of Oberlin); **Amber Bellamy** (US Fish & Wildlife Service); **guest: Christy Prouty** (Mississippi River & Chesapeake Bay Watersheds)

❖ **Fiscal Report – Q6 (July 1 – September 30, 2025):** \$5156.14

- Grant total: \$64,600. Balance remaining: \$30,164.85
- Motion to accept: Julie M. / Second: Jen W.

❖ **Old Business**

- Approval of meeting minutes from July 2025 by John S./ Second by Julie M.
- Kate re: Lorain High School – Group of ~20 educators from Teaching Lorain Institute got a tour of the Rec Site & dredge facility on October 4th.

❖ **New Business**

- September 18, 2025: 2 BUIs removed: “Degradation of Fish & Wildlife Populations” & “Loss of Fish & Wildlife Habitat”
 - 1 BUI remains: “Degradation of Benthos” – currently under review.
 - Evening happy hour to celebrate & share the news. Trent’s Joint is open to the idea. Preferably in the next few weeks before Thanksgiving. **Kate & Hannah to help secure time/date**
- Ads in Chronicle Telegram ongoing & Morning Journal renewed for October. Quarter page ad in Lorain El Centro Gala program taking place 11/1 at the Shipyards (see agenda). Radio interview at WOBL/WDLW on October 2nd with Don R., Patti D., & Heather Elmer (CRWP)
- Kim Brewster-Shefelton & Kevin Saracino from Chagrin River Watershed Partners, Inc. provided update re: planning meetings for Black River HUC-12, Lower West Branch Black River HUC-12, Jackson Ditch-East Branch Black River HUC-12.
 - Low in-person turnout (3 people)/online response (8 responses)
 - [Link to public survey](#)
 - One more public meeting on Monday, October 27th at the Grafton-Midview Public Library

❖ Black River Watershed Project Updates

- **County:** Don Romancak
 - Gerber-Beckett project: \$1 million H2Ohio award, \$1 million Save Our Great Lakes award, \$1 million from Beckett Industries, & \$1 million from the County for the 60-acre Gerber wetland project. Converts previous ag land into 23 acres of wetlands and more than 1000 linear feet of stream restoration in the Willow Creek watershed.
 - Tour of property with LC Commissioners, Rep. Gayle Manning, Beckett family, & other stakeholders on October 17th.
 - Lorain Port Authority now owns the property.
 - Topsoil & planting to occur remainder of October, as weather permits.
 - Foster Ditch H2Ohio Project – in LaGrange, south of the village. Pre-construction meeting this week. Garza Dirtworks provided a good bid of \$640,000 & will have the site done by the end of the year.
 - Kelner Ditch in Lagrange: some areas regraded & seeded. Garza Dirtworks also involved in this project, which is over 5 miles long. This is more of a traditional “ditch project” that is being performed in sections.
- **City:** Kate Golden
 - Geopools did not accept dredge materials this year due to USACE budget constraints. Agreement with City will be revised for the city to use dredged materials up to 60,000 cubic yards. The four geopools that were damaged have been replaced. Liners still need to be installed.
 - Waterfront redevelopment & brownfield nearly done. Road is paved; electricity, railings, bollards coming soon.
 - ODNR grant for fish cleaning station – timeline TBD
 - Hot Waters: surveyors this week. KMU is the contractor. The in-water work was significantly cut due to budget. Anticipate a spring 2026 start.
 - USFWS grant: contract with Great Lakes Demolition Co. for mound construction & tree planting at Rec Site in the next month. This will create habitat & provide a windbreak for the dredge facility.
 - St. Joe’s & Stoveworks sites are on hold temporarily. The Stoveworks site has lead contamination. A binder mix in soil from the dredge materials to bind to lead & can then be disposed of in a regular landfill. St. Joe’s site has asbestos contamination & may receive some soil from the Stoveworks site.
 - The City of Lorain public survey has received over 1000 responses.

❖ Ohio AOC Program Updates & Announcements: Hannah Boesinger

- Ohio Lake Erie Commission (OLEC) is working with USFWS on BUI 6 (Degradation of Benthos) assessment of the validity of the target across AOC as well as non-AOC lacustraries. This will likely delay final delisting but will provide stronger justification in the removal of the BUI. Sampling took place this field season by EnviroScience in the Black, Huron, & Vermilion Rivers.
- OLEC compiling information to prepare for eventual delisting. Needs additional information from the Committee.
 - Hannah requests pictures pre- & post- projects from the Management Action List:
 - Address historic & current sources of pollution; acknowledge all partners in the AOC work.
- AOC Cross Agency Partnership Summit (ACAPS) was held September 16-18 in Toledo, OH. Committee members shared their thoughts – well organized, great networking. Lots of spotted lanternflies.

- A brief video ([Ashtabula example](#)) needs to be made highlighting the Black River's progress. John S. agreed to assist. Drone footage might be done by Coldwater Consulting.
 - Reach out to Sea Grant – Gay Eyerman did the last video. Hannah has contact info.

Black River AOC Management Action Project List (revised June 2024)		
Management Action	Description	Date Completed
River Miles 4.7 to 5.0 Remediation and Restoration of Seep Site	Remediation system installation and subsequent restoration.	2018
River Mile 0.3 Fish Shelf Site	Implementation of fish shelves and macroinvertebrate habitat panels on bulkheads at River Mile 0.3	2018
River Miles 2.8 to 4.7 Remediation and Restoration of Reclamation Site	Assessment of City-owned property for feasibility study and alternatives analysis. Potential for design and construction of natural or engineered treatment systems for surface water and groundwater and cover/capping of areas with the greatest impact to water quality/Black River BUIs.	2024
Fortune Ditch Restoration at Margaret Peak Nature Preserve	Restoration of stream and floodplain excavation/wetland restoration	2019
Willow Creek Restoration at Eaton Township Park and Wetland Enhancement at Margaret Peak Nature Preserve	Restoration of stream channel, floodplain wetland, and natural riparian corridor (Eaton Township Park). Native planting and invasive removal at Margaret Peak Nature Preserve (7.7 acres of Category 3 wetland and 2.2 acres of Category 2 wetland).	2017
French Creek Fish Toxicity Study	Determine cause to fish toxicity issues.	2019

❖ Federal AOC Program Updates & Announcements

- Most federal employees are currently furloughed.
- BUI & de-listing events get reported to Congress. As of now, 8 AOCs have been de-listed, with Muskegon Lake in Michigan being the most recent.

❖ Other Agencies | Announcements | Other Business

- [Lake Erie Community Grant Program](#): CRWP has some funding that could support assistance with developing proposals; please let them (or Patti D.) know ASAP if you'd like assistance. One large grant up to \$750,000 available. There may be 2-3 more rounds of this grant coming.
- [Initiative for Resilient Great Lakes Coasts](#) – supports Great Lakes coastal communities to develop nature-based projects that address coastal challenges like erosion and flooding.
- Steve H. reports that Dina Barnhouse is the new chief of the Division of Water Resources with ODNR Coastal Management Program.

❖ Trainings/Conferences

- [Water Management Association of Ohio annual meeting](#) is “Flowing Forward: Ohio's Water in Motion.” November 12 & 13 in Dublin, OH
- [Ohio Department of Higher Education Harmful Algal Bloom Research Initiative](#) Ohio Sea Grant must receive a PDF version for PRE-PROPOSAL DEADLINE BY 5:00pm **Thursday, October 23, 2025**
- [Ohio Stormwater Conference](#) May 6-8, 2026 in Sandusky, OH. Abstracts due Oct. 31, 2025.

❖ Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn by Julie M., second by Kate at 3:31pm, October 22nd, 2025
- Next meeting: Tuesday, February 17th, 2026, 2:00pm at Lorain County Public Health