Environmental Protection Agency — Ohio

Lake Erie Commission — Ohio

A Framework for Implementing Ohio's Area of Concern Program

Supporting Ohio's Areas of Concern

Mike DeWine, Governor
Anne Vogel, Director, Ohio EPA
Joy Mulinex, Executive Director, Ohio Lake Erie Commission

December 2023
Version 5.0

<u>Preface</u>

This updated framework explains Ohio's current Areas of Concern Program structure and responsibilities in working with Ohio's AOC Advisory Committees and their designated Facilitating Organizations. This document was originally created in response to a recognized need to re-align activities of local "RAP" groups and Ohio AOC Program staff in order to accelerate the implementation of restoration projects within Ohio's four Areas of Concern.

Introduction

The Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA) is an agreement between the U.S. and Canada to address key environmental health issues in the Great Lakes. The most recent Agreement (September 7, 2012) reaffirms actions necessary to restore and delist Areas of Concern (AOCs). The Great Lakes Water Quality Protocol of 2012 specifically addresses Areas of Concern in Annex 1 (the 1987 GLWQA addressed AOCs in Annex 2). The GLWQA identifies 14 different beneficial use impairments (BUIs) which are defined as a reduction in the chemical, physical or biological integrity of the Waters of the Great Lakes. The GLWQA requires development of Remedial Action Plans (RAPs) to identify the BUIs and causes, development of criteria for restoration of the beneficial uses, implementation of remedial measures, monitoring of the effectiveness of remedial measures, and confirmation that restoration of beneficial uses is being achieved. Each of the 43 AOCs contains at least one BUI that represents an extraordinary problem that is measurably worse than most waters in the Great Lakes. The 2012 GLWQA requires progress reporting every three years on the status of BUIs in each AOC, the actions completed or initiated in each AOC during the reporting period, and the remaining actions required in each AOC for removal of the BUIs.

There are four AOCs in Ohio: the lower two miles of the Ashtabula River (Delisted in 2021); the lower portion of the Black River; the lower 46.5 miles of the Cuyahoga River, including all tributaries and the adjacent shoreline; and the lower 22 miles of the Maumee River, including several adjacent watersheds that discharge directly to Maumee Bay and Lake Erie. Figure 1 shows the location of Ohio's AOCs.
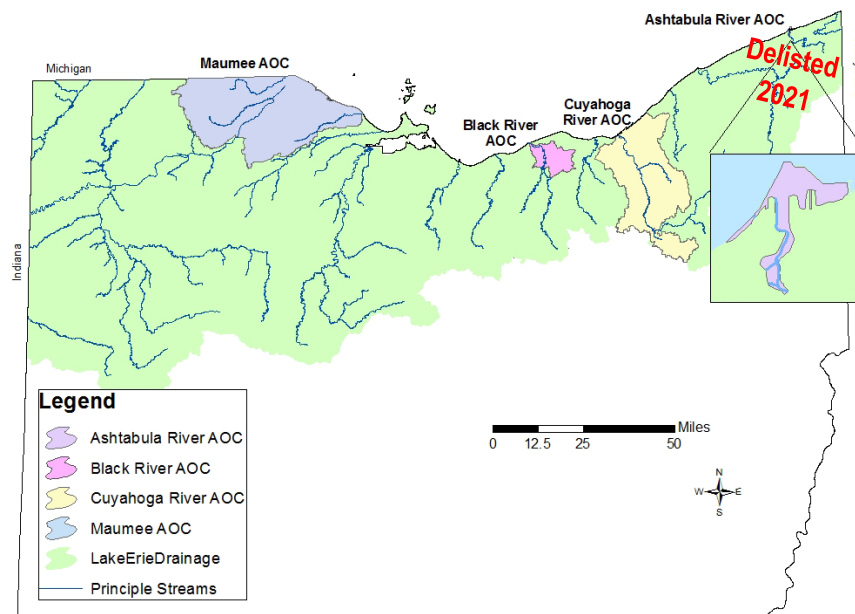
Figure 1 – Location of Ohio Areas of Concern (AOCs)

In Support of Ohio's Areas of Concern

A Framework for implementing
Ohio's Area of Concern Program

Ohio's Area of Concern Program Framework

Restoring Ohio's four Areas of Concern (AOC) involves collaboration among U.S. EPA's Great Lakes National Program Office (GLNPO), other federal agencies (e.g., U.S. FWS, U.S. ACE), Ohio EPA, Ohio Lake Erie Commission (OLEC), Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), and local governments, park districts and others. However, the heart of Ohio's Program lies with the local individuals who have come together from public and private sectors to help "steer" the restoration process of the rivers that flow through their communities by developing a Remedial Action Plan (RAP). AOC Advisory Committees (as these groups will be referenced henceforth) also serve as liaisons with their specific communities and most importantly with the residents of the AOCs.

Established more than 35 years ago, the Remedial Action Planning Process in Ohio has transitioned from active planning to varying levels of implementation. In recent years, the establishment of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) provides unprecedented opportunities to increase implementation of needed management actions. Restoring AOCs is a binational commitment in the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement with Canada and restoration of AOCs has been a highlighted priority.

While Ohio's four AOCs provide unique opportunities, they also provide substantial challenges. The Ashtabula AOC was delisted in 2021 as a result of showing considerable improvement following completion of several dredging and restoration projects. Efforts to restore the Cuyahoga River AOC have focused on habitat restoration, restoring fish passage,

Ohio's Areas of Concern

• • •

Ashtabula River (Delisted)

Black River

Cuyahoga River

Maumee River

Ohio's AOC Program Staff

• • •

Lake Erie Program Administrator, OLEC

AOC Coordinator, NE Ohio, OLEC

AOC Coordinator, NWDO, Ohio EPA

and dredging while the city of Lorain has completed several Management Action projects within the Black River AOC. Finally, the Maumee AOC continues to evaluate and remediate contaminated sediments and restore habitats while continuing to address other challenges across this complex AOC. One commonality shared across the state is the presence of dedicated local communities who understand the economic and environmental benefits of vibrant and healthy riverfronts and harbors.

Ohio recognized the ability to accelerate progress in the AOCs with a thorough review and revision of Ohio's BUI Restoration Targets. Ohio EPA worked with technical experts within and outside of the Agency to develop updated targets that are measurable and aligned with the AOC program objectives. Local AOC Advisory Committees were provided an opportunity to review and comment on the draft document. There have been several minor updates/corrections to the *Delisting Guidance and Restoration Targets for Ohio Areas of Concern* since the major revision was released in May 2014.

Following the revision of the restoration targets, reinvigorating the AOC Program was identified as the next strategic priority for the Ohio EPA. It was recognized that Ohio's AOC Program needed to evolve and become more effective and efficient. The reorganization was structured to take advantage of the opportunities presented through the GLRI. To realize additional programmatic efficiencies, AOC Program coordination was again shifted in late 2018 to the Ohio Lake Erie Commission, with staff support from Ohio EPA. Since 2018, the Ohio Lake Erie Commission has administered the Ohio Area of Concern Program with support by and in partnership with Ohio EPA. To reflect this partnership, the Ohio AOC Program will be used in this document. This framework document was created to help the AOC Program to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the many partners involved in AOC restoration. This framework document provides clarity and guidance for local AOC Facilitating Organizations, the local AOC Advisory Committees and Ohio EPA/OLEC AOC Program personnel. It also provides other AOC partners with a clear understanding of the AOC Program roles and responsibilities in Ohio. The roles are further defined with minimum performance expectations to establish consistency within the program and lay the foundation for effective interaction between the groups. This framework also identifies the roles and responsibilities of Ohio's AOC Coordinators and Lake Erie Program Administrator.

It should be noted that this framework will be applied to all of Ohio's AOCs except for the Ashtabula River AOC where delisting was accomplished in 2021. The Ashtabula AOC Advisory Committee was dissolved in 2022 based on a decision made by the Advisory Committee.

Local AOC Advisory Committee

At the heart of any successful watershed restoration initiative is a body of local people who are invested and passionate about the health and welfare of their watershed. In Ohio's AOCs, this type of local group is the AOC Advisory Committee (or Coordinating Committee). Ohio's AOC Advisory Committees were extremely important during the early days of Ohio EPA's Lake Erie Program, serving as the groups who worked with others throughout their AOC to draft the initial RAPs.

Under the current AOC Program, the local AOC Advisory Committee performs the crucial task of advising state and federal partners on which management actions are needed to restore their AOCs. The Advisory Committees are also an important liaison with the local AOC Community. Their roles may vary from time to time, but their engagement is critical for successful implementation of recommended management action projects, and especially for ensuring that the public has a voice in the AOC process.

The Ohio AOC Program requires a minimum of eight highly active and engaged Advisory Committee members. In some AOCs, the local Advisory Committee may be as large as 30 people or more. Regardless of overall size, the committee should maintain approximately equal representation across the member categories (local government, business/industry, academic institutions/non-profit organizations, and general public). Ohio AOC Coordinators may only serve as ex-officio members of a local AOC Advisory Committee.

Roles and Responsibilities of a Local AOC Advisory Committee

The local AOC Advisory Committee performs the following functions and roles needed to successfully restore an AOC:

- Develops rules of order, bylaws, and other processes by which the AOC Advisory Committee will conduct AOC-related business. Establishes quarterly meeting schedules as well as creating any AOC committees and/or subcommittees that may be necessary to conduct appropriate AOC-related business. The AOC Program recommends the use of temporary project teams rather than standing committees or subcommittees. Upon the removal of all management actions within an AOC, an Advisory Committee may choose to meet semi-annually until its . Additional frequent coordination with the Committee may occur during the delisting process.

- Identifies, compiles, and recommends to the Ohio AOC Program a list of management action projects that are strategically prioritized within critical areas that will lead to BUI removal and AOC delisting. This is conducted in coordination with the Ohio AOC Coordinators and Lake Erie Program Administrator. As of 2023, all Management Actions for the remaining three Ohio AOCs have been identified.

- Establishes and approves annual goals, objectives, and work plans for the subcommittees and coordinates to align with Facilitating Organization.

- Serves as a local AOC liaison with Ohio EPA, OLEC, U.S. EPA and other state, local and federal partners on program, policy, projects, and financial matters.

- Promotes regional and inter-agency cooperation on management actions being implemented in the AOC.

- Ensures that all persons engaged in the AOC Advisory Committee operates in full compliance with Ohio Ethics Laws.

- The local AOC Advisory Committee represents the voice of the AOC community. The Committee's meetings are to be conducted with transparency consistent with Ohio's sunshine laws, open to the public, announced in advance and provide for significant opportunities for public input, involvement, education, and engagement.

- Examine its future community role upon delisting. As all management actions are completed, all BUIs are removed and delisting begins, Advisory Committee support will be reduced. Upon delisting, AOC program funding support will not be available to Advisory Committees.

The fundamental roles of the local AOC Advisory Committees are to facilitate community involvement and public input, provide input to state and federal agencies on issues of local concern and to encourage the development of management action lists and the implementation of those projects. The AOC Advisory Committee should be comprised of representatives of local governments, land managing conservation organizations with vested interests in the AOC such as environmental and community nonprofit organizations, land trusts, park districts, state agencies (with written authorization from that agency's leadership), local soil and water conservation districts, local watershed organizations, other important stakeholders such as community organizers, and members of the general public with vested interests in the watershed.

Local AOC Advisory Committees should conduct core AOC mission-driven activities in support of a vision that their AOC is a regional asset worthy of restoration, remediation, and protection. Many different entities will be engaged within the AOC; however, the local AOC Advisory Committee will serve as a unified voice for advancing progress toward BUI removal and AOC delisting.

In local AOC Facilitating Organizations that are 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations, the local AOC Advisory Committee may not be that organization's Board of Trustees, Executive Board or other body motivated by the business of the non-profit organization. However, with the exception of the Chair, individuals from the Facilitating Organization's board or staff may participate as members of the AOC

Advisory Committee. A local AOC Advisory Committee must be a stand-alone entity with a focus on restoring environmental health of the watershed within the AOC.

Local AOC Advisory Committee Minimum Performance Expectations

Local involvement and engagement are a crucial piece of Ohio's AOC Program. We expect that a local AOC Advisory Committee will establish locally driven procedures, policies, and programs. However, the following are minimum performance expectations for local AOC Advisory Committees:

Local AOC Advisory Committees shall maintain a minimum of eight active members, with at least two members representing each of the following three categories: (a) **local government** (i.e., counties, cities, special district, and authorities) (b) **business/industry** (i.e., industry, commerce, and other for-profit organizations (c) **academic institutions, non-profit organizations, and general public** (i.e., residents, landowners, and concerned citizens). For groups larger than eight members, there should be approximately proportional representation for each category.

1. The local AOC Advisory Committee shall operate with a functioning chairperson who may not be a board member or staff with the local Facilitating Organization.

2. There should be a minimum of four meetings of the AOC Advisory Committee—at least once quarterly. A quorum must be present at each of the quarterly meetings. In the absence of a quorum at the quarterly meeting, another meeting must be scheduled. Upon removal of all management actions, frequency of meetings and quorum requirements may be reduced to semi-annually.

3. All quarterly meetings of the AOC Advisory Committee must include time where public input is solicited.

4. Minutes will be taken at each quarterly AOC Advisory Committee meeting and posted to the local AOC website within fifteen business days of when they are approved.

5. The Facilitating Organization will provide a quarterly fiscal report to the AOC Advisory Committee at each meeting for any AOC-related grants awarded to that organization.

6. AOC Advisory Committee will be asked to review and comment on any BUI removal and/or AOC delisting recommendations prepared for their AOC. The AOC Advisory Committee may concur with recommendations and/or choose to disagree with the recommendations, but a formal response and explanation of the Advisory Committee will be expected. A letter of support from the AOC Advisory Committee is requested for each BUI removal that is prepared by the Ohio AOC Program.

Local AOC Facilitating Organizations

The local AOC Facilitating Organizations are responsible for three key components of the local AOC Program: 1) Administrative and secretarial support for the AOC Advisory Committee, , 3) Coordination of outreach and information sharing with the local community regarding the AOC Program including its projects, BUI removals, and delisting; and 4) Maintaining a public information resource on the AOC and its associated MAPs , BUIs, Advisory Committee information, and other AOC-related information.

Although a local AOC Facilitating Organization may choose to also be a project implementer, an AOC Facilitating Organization is not typically expected to implement significant or large management action projects. Most management actions in an AOC will usually be implemented by local governments, park districts, and other land holding entities within the AOC with the support of the AOC Advisory Committee. As all BUIs are removed in an AOC and it is delisted, the Advisory Committee will cease to exist as an advisory organization for the Ohio AOC Program. It may choose to remain as an organization but with a different mission upon the delisting of an AOC. Without the existence of an AOC or an Advisory Committee, the Facilitating Organization is also not needed by the AOC Program; therefore, it will no longer receive support funding from the Ohio AOC Program.

Figure 2 - Ohio's AOC Local Facilitating Organizations

Roles and Responsibilities of a Local AOC Facilitating Organization

In fulfilling their core mission of providing direct support to a local AOC Advisory Committee, a local AOC Facilitating Organization typically fulfills the following support roles and responsibilities:

1. Serves as secretariat and facilitator to the local AOC Advisory Committee and its subcommittees within the AOC.

2. Works in partnership with the Ohio AOC Program and the local AOC community to facilitate the implementation of a list of management action projects and other actions, evaluations, studies or plans that will lead to BUI removal. All management action lists have been submitted for all of Ohio's AOCs. Any updated management action lists will be coordinated between the Ohio AOC Program and the local AOC Advisory Committee.

3. Assists local implementers by providing information and access to appropriate technical and financial assistance from local, state, and federal program partners. Assists local implementers with grant writing and/or seeking AOC-specific project funding.

4. Engages the AOC community by providing regular opportunities to solicit public input and to increase public involvement in the activities of the AOC Advisory Committee or AOC projects.

5. Provides public information about the AOC and conducts meaningful public outreach activities to improve community awareness of the AOC Program, management action projects and other activities within the AOC.

6. Administers all AOC grant funding in accordance with local, state, and federal grant rules and guidelines. Ensures that all required reports are submitted to funding organizations in a timely manner and that implementation of management actions are adequately tracked and reported to the Ohio AOC Program and the AOC community.

Any Ohio AOC Program grant support funds that are provided directly to a local AOC Facilitating Organization may only be used for activities directly related to those tasks outlined in the Master List of Grant Deliverables; such as serving as the secretariat to the local AOC Advisory Committee, providing assistance to local entities implementing management actions approved by the state of Ohio and GLNPO, and conducting AOC specific educational and outreach activities. Grant funds are not being provided to help the local organization build their own capacity. Activities such as fundraising, grant writing for non-AOC purposes, and conducting public membership drives or other activities related to the general operations of the nonprofit organization are unallowable with AOC support grant fund funding.

Local AOC Facilitating Organization Minimum Performance Expectations

The local AOC Facilitating Organizations are responsible for providing administrative and secretariat support to the local AOC Advisory Committee. For many years, the Facilitating Organizations have received grant support from the Ohio AOC Program to ensure that assistance to the AOC community and support to the Advisory Committee occur effectively and efficiently. Any subgrant agreements with the Ohio AOC Program will include very specific "deliverables" items and/or activities that the Facilitating Organization is contractually bound to complete.

The following represent minimum performance standards that are expected of any organization serving as AOC's Facilitating Organization:

1. Administer all grant funds provided for Ohio AOC Program support in a manner that is compliant with state and federal grant and accounting requirements.

2. Provide quarterly fiscal reports to the AOC Advisory Committee for any AOC-support grant awarded by the Ohio AOC Program.

3. Work in partnership with the AOC Advisory Committee and the AOC Coordinator on an annual work plan for AOC grant funds.

4. Submit all grant required reports by their identified deadline(s). Failure to do so could result in suspension of grant payments.

5. Update the AOC-specific website as needed (preferably at least once per month) by adding new material or for specific events and milestones and removing all outdated material (unless kept as reference material). Website update frequencies may reduce upon the completion of all management actions.

6. Post to AOC-specific social media accounts as needed (preferably at least one or two times per month depending on events and milestones) by posting about events, projects, meetings, BUI removals, AOC or BUI awareness, etc. Social media posting frequencies may reduce upon the completion of all management actions.

7. Assist AOC Management Action Project implementers with grant applications to implement an approved management action project, as requested.

8. Post minutes from each Local AOC Advisory Committee meeting to the AOC website within fifteen business days of when they are approved.

9. Conduct at least one annual public program that is specifically designed to highlight activities within the AOC and to help inform and engage the public, local governments, and others within the AOC area.

10. Conduct at least one annual AOC outreach activity designed to provide opportunities for the public to directly engage with AOC activities.

Ohio AOC Program Guidelines for AOC Support Grants

Starting July 1, 2014, any AOC Support Grants provided to local AOC Facilitating Organizations will be awarded and administered within the minimum framework of the following general grant policies and procedures, as well as consistent with state and federal grant guidelines, cost principles and any appropriate rules:

1. All AOC Support Grants are a performance-based grant system. AOC Support Grants will be awarded based upon the Master List of Deliverables that the AOC Facilitating Organizations will complete. Grant amounts must be proportionate to the proposed levels of performance.

2. All grant applications and contracts will be prepared using the Master List of Deliverables and in a format that will be provided by the Ohio AOC Program. Activities selected from the Master List of Deliverables *may* be funded using AOC Support Grant funding. Activities (deliverables) not included in the deliverable list must have prior approval to determine if they are grant eligible. The AOC Facilitating Organization will work in partnership with the AOC Advisory Committee and AOC Coordinator for Grant Deliverables.

3. The amount of funding and specific Master List of Deliverables is expected to change with each funding opportunity. Eligible activities and expenses will be outlined in each grant request. These requests should be consulted for details.

4. Membership drives and general organizational fundraising activities may NOT be conducted using AOC Support Grant funding. This is a federal prohibition and is unallowable. However, personnel paid with AOC Support Grant funds are expected to assist local implementers with grant-writing for project development and implementation related to an approved management action projects or other actions, evaluations, studies or plans that will lead to BUI removal.

5. AOC Support Grant funds may not be used to purchase food. This does not include brochures, newsletters or other published items that are designed to inform the public about the activities of the local AOC Advisory Committee.

6. All public outreach materials produced by a Facilitating Organization shall request review and approval by their AOC Coordinator and the Ohio EPA Grants Manager to concur with the Ohio AOC Program as well as federal and state grant requirements.

Table 1 - Ohio AOC Program Support Grants
Example Master List of Grant Deliverables

Objectives		Deliverables	Deliverable Units
A. AOC Coordination, Support and Communication Activities	1.	*General secretariat services to AOC Advisory Committee	ongoing
	2.	*Coordinate scheduling of AOC Advisory Committee meetings	# of Meetings
	3.	*Create/post minutes from AOC Advisory Committee meetings	# Minutes Posted
	4.	*Provide progress and fiscal update to AOC Advisory Committee	# of Updates
	5.	*Assist with BUI Removal/Delisting Process	# of Documents
	6.	Assist with developing/maintaining Management Action Project (MAP) list	# of Assists
	7.	Assist AOC-specific project mgmt. teams, sub-committees, or workgroups	# of Teams
	8.	Prepare grant applications for GLRI-AOC MAPs	# of Applications
	9.	Provide grant writing assistance to Implementers for GLRI-AOC MAP funding	# of Assists
	10.	Prepare grant applications for non-GLRI-AOC MAP funding	# of Applications
	11.	Provide grant writing assistance to Implementers for non-GLRI-AOC MAP funding	# of Assists
	12.	Prepare AOC-specific Habitat Restoration Plans/Concept Plans	# of Plans
	13.	Assist with the preparation of AOC-specific Habitat Restoration Plans	# of Assists
	14.	Provide mapping and other GIS related assistance to AOC Implementers	# of Maps
	15.	Other (Specify):	# of Other
	16.	Other (Specify):	# of Other
B. Grants Administration and Management	1.	*Maintain separate account and grant financial accounting system	ongoing
	2.	*Maintain an AOC Facilitating Organization Time Code & Tracking System	ongoing
	3.	*Prepare and submit an AOC-specific annual report	# of Reports
	4.	*Submit semi-annual progress report	# of Reports
	5.	*Submit quarterly fiscal report	# of Reports
	6.	*Submit final fiscal and project reports at grant closing	# of Reports
C. Public Involvement and Engagement	1.	*Coordinate AOC Advisory Committee application process and recruit new/returning members	# of Members
	2.	*Assist Ohio AOC Program with BUI removal public meeting/public comment period	# of Meetings
	3.	*Assist Ohio AOC Program with AOC delisting public meeting/public comment period	# of Meetings
	4.	Coordinate or assist with AOC-specific Public Information Session(s)	# of Sessions
	5.	Other (Specify):	# of Other
D. AOC Specific Education, Outreach, and Information Management Activities	1.	*Establish/maintain an AOC-specific website	# of Updates
	2.	*Establish/Maintain an AOC-specific Facebook page/other social media(s)	# of Updates
	3.	Coordinate/assist with MAP completion recognition/celebration events	# of Events
	4.	Create/post short AOC-specific videos on social media	# of Videos
	5.	Create/distribute longer AOC-specific videos on DVD (or another media)	# of Videos
	6.	Create/distribute AOC-specific print newsletter/e-newsletter	# of Newsletters
	7.	Develop/distribute AOC-specific press release	# of Releases

Objectives		Deliverables	Deliverable Units
D. AOC-Specific Education, Outreach, Engagement, and Information Management Activities *(continued)*	8.	Develop/distribute AOC-specific brochure or fact sheet	# of Brochures
	9.	Develop/distribute MAP brochure or fact sheet	# of Brochures
	10.	Develop AOC-specific exhibit and/or display	# of Displays
	11.	Use exhibit/display regarding AOC program at festivals/events	# of Events
	12.	Present regarding AOC-specific issues at webinar, workshop, meeting	# of Events
	13.	Attend AOC Program related webinar, workshop, conference	# of Events
	14.	Create/install AOC awareness sign	# of Signs
	15.	Conduct AOC-specific workshop, conference, symposium, summit	# of Workshops
	16.	Conduct AOC-specific technical and/or implementer workshop or training	# of Trainings
	17.	Conduct AOC-specific MAP site visit/field day	# of Events
	18.	Conduct boat, bus and/or walking tour for public, officials, or other audience	# of Events
	19.	Other (Specify):	# of Other
	20.	Other (Specify):	# of Other
E. AOC EJ-DEI Engagement and Participation	1.	Other (Specify):	# of Other
	2.	Other (Specify):	# of Other
	3.	Other (Specify):	# of Other
	4.	Other (Specify):	# of Other
	5.	Other (Specify):	# of Other
F. AOC Supplemental Project Planning and Information Management Activities	1.	Develop bid specification(s), scope of work and/or request for proposals	# of RFPs
	2.	Develop project design(s) and/or plan(s)	# of Designs
	3.	Execute contract for project concept plan(s)	# of Contracts
	4.	Execute contract for project engineering and design	# of Contracts
	5.	Execute contract for graphic design, website, document development, etc.	# of Contracts
	6.	Acquire software for AOC-specific needs	# of Software
	7.	Other (Specify):	# of Other
	8.	Other (Specify):	# of Other

The " " denotes **Core Deliverables** that must be included in the application. If not included, then a rationale must be provided describing how the deliverable will be completed during the project period.*
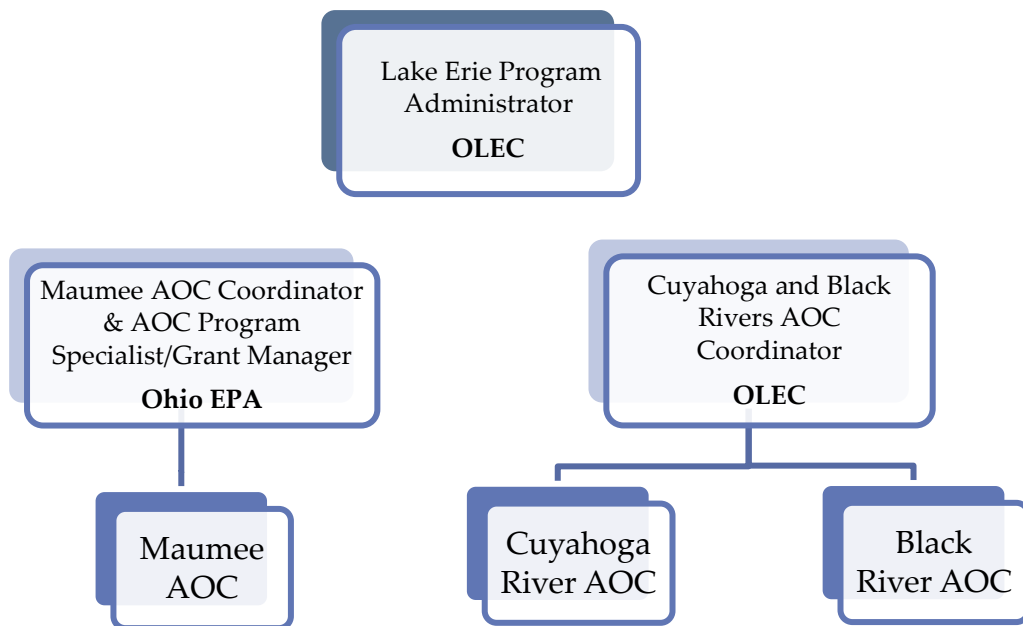
Having a Master List of Deliverables provides for substantial efficiencies during the grant application, review, and contracting processes. Such a list of deliverables is also extremely helpful in improving accountability, streamlining progress reporting, and improving participants understanding of performance expectations. A Master List of Deliverables also provides a general framework that is flexible, and deliverables may be added at any time (when appropriate) should priorities or program directions shift. The master list of deliverables will be updated for each support grant cycle.

Ohio AOC Program Personnel

Ohio's Lake Erie Commission is a state government commission that coordinates with other state agencies on Lake Erie programs in Ohio. This includes involvement in such programs as the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, Areas of Concern, Great Lakes Legacy Act (GLLA), GLWQA, Lake Erie Lakewide Action and Management Plan (LAMP) and monitoring efforts, as well as working with the myriad of other agencies, communities, nonprofit organizations, and other stakeholders within the Lake Erie basin. A key to an effective program is ensuring that communication among all staff working on all aspects of the program is occurring on a frequent and regular basis.

For the purposes of this framework, the focus is on the activities and responsibilities of OLEC's role as they relate to Ohio's AOC Program. The Ohio AOC Program includes the Lake Erie Program Administrator and the AOC Coordinators within OLEC and Ohio EPA. Additional staff support is provided for various technical and administrative tasks for the Ohio AOC Program. These include Ohio EPA staff for monitoring, quality assurance, management action coordination, fiscal administration for grants/subgrants/contracts, program-wide budgets, and communications and outreach. Roles and responsibilities for Ohio AOC Program staff are outlined in this section.

```
                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │ Lake Erie Program   │
                    │   Administrator      │
                    │      OLEC            │
                    └─────────────────────┘
          ┌────────────────────┴────────────────────┐
┌─────────────────────┐                  ┌─────────────────────┐
│ Maumee AOC Coordinator│                 │ Cuyahoga and Black  │
│ & AOC Program        │                  │   Rivers AOC        │
│ Specialist/Grant Manager│                │   Coordinator       │
│     Ohio EPA         │                  │      OLEC           │
└─────────────────────┘                  └─────────────────────┘
          │                          ┌────────────┴────────────┐
┌─────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────┐    ┌─────────────────┐
│    Maumee            │      │   Cuyahoga      │    │     Black       │
│     AOC              │      │   River AOC     │    │   River AOC     │
└─────────────────────┘      └─────────────────┘    └─────────────────┘
```

Lake Erie Program Administrator for Ohio AOC Program

The Ohio Lake Erie Program Administrator provides AOC Program oversight, strategic planning and direction, performance evaluation of the program, and communicates procedures, policies, and priorities for the AOC Program. Housed at OLEC, the Lake Erie Program Administrator is the primary program liaison with Ohio agency leadership, public information, legal and legislative program staff on matters pertaining to Ohio's AOC Program.

Role and Duties of Lake Erie Program Administrator for Ohio AOC Program

- Coordinates the development of program policies, procedures, and annual strategic program priorities. Primary program liaison with Ohio EPA AOC Program staff and provides clear direction on program matters and priorities. Works with Ohio EPA, and OLEC management and AOC staff to insure consistent implementation of AOC Program activities.

- Serves as primary liaison to U.S. EPA for Ohio's AOC Program as applicable or in coordination with Ohio EPA and OLEC program staff and leadership. Represents Ohio's AOC Program on federal AOC workgroups and committees.

- Coordinates Ohio's AOC Program activities with other state and federal agencies including ODNR, U.S. ACE, U.S. FWS, NOAA, USGS, and others.

- Serves as Ohio's information clearinghouse for state and federal agencies on AOC Program activities and priorities.

- Facilitates communication between Ohio AOC Coordinators by leading regularly scheduled Ohio AOC Program calls.

- Oversees and coordinates all BUI removal and Management Actions submittals to U.S. EPA.

- Oversees AOC Program work plans, budgets, and tracking of BUIs and Management Actions with AOC Coordinators.

- Coordinates with OLEC and Ohio EPA management and Communications Division on all AOC public outreach related activities.

- Provides program updates to Ohio EPA and OLEC management.

- Responsible for reporting AOC restoration progress to U.S. EPA.

- Coordinates Ohio AOC Program progress reporting.

- Initiates Delisting process for Ohio AOCs in coordination with Ohio EPA/OLEC management and U.S. EPA.

- Assists with coordination of budgets and project agreements for Great Lakes Legacy Act projects in Ohio AOCs.

- In partnership with other state and federal programs may write applications and apply for GLRI and other types of grants.

Minimum Performance Expectations for Lake Erie Program Administrator for Ohio AOC Program

The minimum performance expectations for the Lake Erie Program Administrator are as follows:

1. Coordinates Ohio AOC reporting associated with Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement documents (LAMP, Annex 1, GLRI, GLEC, as applicable).

2. Prepares annual AOC Program work plan to provide direction for annual program priorities to AOC Coordinators, and in coordination with OLEC and Ohio EPA management and U.S. EPA Great Lakes National Program Office.

3. Serves as Ohio AOC Program representative on U.S. EPA's Federal/State AOC Coordinating Committee (FEDSTACC).

4. Administers (in conjunction with Ohio EPA and OLEC management) the submittal of all AOC Program items to U.S. EPA pertaining to BUI removals, Management Actions, budgets, and associated work plans. Reviews and coordinates with AOC Coordinators regarding materials submitted.

5. Provides project briefings and program updates to Ohio EPA and OLEC management.

6. Serves as the primary Ohio AOC Program contact with GLNPO program staff on all matters of financial and implementation concern. Coordinates closely with Ohio AOC Coordinators on interactions with GLNPO staff.

7. Provides timely responses to all GLNPO program related information requests.

8. Updates AOC Program policies and procedures (with concurrence of Ohio EPA and OLEC management) and prepares other reports detailing any change in AOC Program policies and/or procedures.

9. Works in multi-agency and other partnerships to prepare Lake Erie/GLRI grant applications, as applicable.

10. Provides assistance to Ohio EPA for the Lake Erie Program Capacity Grant and associated subgrants.

11. Organizes and leads regular AOC Program staff meetings.

12. Responds promptly to requests from Ohio EPA and OLEC staff and management.

13. Attends and participates in any scheduled AOC Program meetings.

14. Attends the U.S.AOC conference and other appropriate workshops and conferences.

15. Represents OLEC, Ohio EPA, and the AOC Program in a professional and positive manner.

16. Coordinates information from AOC specific calls with Ohio AOC Coordinators and management.

17. Works with OLEC and Ohio EPA program management and staff to integrate Ohio's AOC and Lake Erie Programs with other Ohio EPA Division of Surface Water programs such as Ecological Assessment, Standards, Nonpoint Source Program and NPDES Permitting, and other Ohio EPA or other State Agency divisions, as applicable.

18. Prepares biennial Ohio AOC Program progress updates.

19. Update the Ohio AOC Program website (as needed) adding new material and removing all outdated material (unless kept as reference material).

20. Post to Ohio AOC Program social media accounts about events, projects, meetings, BUI removals, AOC or BUI awareness, etc. in Ohio's AOCs.

21. Coordinates Ohio's AOC Summit to convene representatives of Ohio's AOC Program Advisory Committee and Facilitating Organization partners to share and plan for Ohio's AOC Program priorities.

Ohio AOC Coordinators

Ohio AOC Coordinators, either through Ohio EPA or OLEC, provide local AOC groups access to technical assistance and potential sources of financial assistance needed to facilitate the implementation of approved management actions. The Ohio AOC Program personnel are housed in the regions within their respective assigned AOCs in order to coordinate directly with the Advisory Committees, assist management action implementers and address pertinent program deliverables.

Role and Duties of Ohio AOC Coordinators

The Ohio AOC Coordinator provides important support to the local AOC Facilitating Organization and local AOC Advisory Committee. They also are valuable sources of information and assistance to local communities, park districts, and other potential project implementers within the AOCs. Recognizing this, the roles, and duties of the Ohio AOC Coordinators are expected to be consistent with the following:

- Serves as the Ohio AOC Program representative as an ex-officio member to the local AOC Advisory Committee and their Subcommittees, as appropriate. The Ohio AOC Coordinator may not participate as a voting member on any local AOC Advisory Committee or as a Board Member to any 501(c)(3) group serving as a local AOC Facilitating Organization. Ohio AOC Coordinators must perform all their duties in the best interest and within the strategic context of their state agency programs, policies, and procedures. Serving as a voting member on a group that potentially receives and/or applies for grant funding (or directly benefits) from a state agency is not appropriate.

- Assists the local AOC Facilitating Organization with preparation and submittal of required information or data (as appropriate) to the Ohio AOC Program by required due dates.

- Coordinates with the local AOC Facilitating Organization to track and report management actions design, implementation, and promotion.

- Helps the local AOC Facilitating Organization to inform the AOC community about environmental and water quality improvements, management action project implementation, and BUI removals that are occurring within the AOC.

- Provides general oversight of the local AOC Facilitating Organization and helps monitor subgrant performance to keep progress moving forward for project deliverables and subgrant schedules.

- Review and update management action lists as applicable in coordination with local AOC Advisory Committee and Lake Erie Program Administrator. Provides access to technical

assistance and highlights funding opportunities (when available) to local implementers such as municipalities, park districts, land managing non-governmental organizations and others within the AOC areas.

- Leads the development of draft BUI removal documents and coordinates with the local AOC Advisory Committee and Lake Erie Program Administrator on review of BUI removal information throughout the BUI removal process outlined in *Delisting Guidance and Restoration Targets for Ohio Areas of Concern.*

- Tracks and provides BUI status updates to local AOC Advisory Committee and Lake Erie Program Administrator.

- Assists with public outreach and educational activities related to the AOC. Coordinates with Ohio AOC Program personnel, through the Lake Erie Program Administrator and Ohio EPA Communications Division to conduct public meetings and issue press releases.

- Provides quarterly AOC progress reports to the Lake Erie Program Administrator.

- Attends national and regional program meetings and conferences and represents the Ohio AOC Program on workgroups and inter-agency initiatives as applicable to their assigned AOC.

Minimum Performance Expectations for the Ohio AOC Coordinators

Ohio's AOC Coordinators are important links between the local AOC Advisory Committee, Facilitating Organization, and state and federal agencies. The minimum performance expectations for Ohio AOC Coordinators are as follows:

1. Coordinates with the Lake Erie Program Administrator when direct communication with U.S. EPA GLNPO personnel occurs. Copies the Lake Erie Program Administrator on AOC-related correspondence to and from GLNPO personnel particular to BUI removal and management actions.

2. Returns phone calls and emails promptly from local AOC participants.

3. Provides AOC related information promptly when requested by local AOC participants and others.

4. Attends meetings of the local AOC Advisory Committee (or equivalent).

5. Coordinates with Lake Erie Program Administrator and Ohio EPA Communications Division for all public outreach related activities in partnership with the local Advisory Committee.

6. Provides an Ohio AOC Program update at each AOC Advisory Committee meeting.

7. Provides AOC progress and activity reports to the Lake Erie Program Administrator on a quarterly schedule established annually by the Lake Erie Program Administrator.

8. Coordinates quarterly with the U.S. EPA AOC Task Force Lead on BUI and Management Action updates.

9. Attends the annual U.S. AOC Conference and other appropriate workshops and conferences.

10. Leads the development of any draft BUI removal documents.

11. Attends and participates in any scheduled Ohio AOC Program meetings or event as advised.

12. Tracks, reviews, and updates BUI status when new monitoring data becomes available.

13. Represents Ohio EPA, OLEC and the Ohio AOC Program in a professional and positive manner.