

TMACOG Agriculture Committee

Kickoff Meeting Notes

August 14, 2019

9:00 a.m.

TMACOG Boardroom

Attendees: Wade Smith, Ohio Farm Bureau; Kris Barnswell, TMACOG; Pat Wright, Lake Erie Waterkeeper; Roger Wise, Ohio Farmers Union; Alan Sundermeier, OSU Extension; Mark Coppeler, Ottawa County Commissioner; David Bench, Lucas County-Jerusalem Township; Laura Page, Hull and Associates; Jenny Carter-Cornell, Hull and Associates; Tahree Lane, Lake Erie Waterkeeper; Jim Carter, Wood SWCD; Wes Spencer, Civil and Environmental Consultants; Chris Delaney, Toledo City Council; Cobi Brough, Sandusky SWCD; Meagan Grammer, Sandusky SWCD; David Thompson, Monroe County Drain Commissioner; Deanna Bobak, Civil and Environmental Consultants; Jerome Cunningham, Sandusky County; Doug Deardorff, USDA-NRCS; Regina Collins, City of Toledo; Beth Diesch, Seneca Conservation District; Joey Sink-Oiler, Lucas SWCD; David Myerholtz, Farmer-Sandusky County; Jake Goetz, City of Toledo; Marj Mulcahy, Lake Erie Waterkeepers; Mary Pat McCarthy, TMACOG; Roberta Streiffert, Ohio RCAP; John Willey, Sandusky County Regional Planning; John Eckel, City of Perrysburg; Andy McCain, MSU/MCCC; Vickie Askins, Ohio Farmers Union/Advocates for Clean Lake Erie; Mike Libben, Ottawa SWCD

Welcome and Introductions

Overview of Agriculture Committee Structure

- Chair and Vice-Chair will lead the committee, develop agendas, and make recommendations to Water Quality Council.
- Voting members will approve policies and resolutions
 - 15 total: five farmers representing five counties (Wood, Lucas, Ottawa, Sandusky, Monroe), soil and water conservation districts of the same five counties, one representative each from the Ohio and Michigan Farm Bureaus, one representative from the Ohio Farmers Union, one representative from a college/university, and one representative from a commodity broker.
 - Need to fill seats for Michigan farmer, Michigan Farm Bureau, and Commodity broker. After the meeting, suggestions were made for the three seats. It was noted that the committee is missing a representative from livestock.
- Participants will be actively engaged, provide recommendations, and identify priority issues.

Overview of Agriculture Committee Annual Work Program (*handout provided*)

- Goal – facilitate communications on water quality, economics, innovations, and operations with agriculture and related industries
- Objectives – several that engage regional organizations, stakeholders, and the public.
 - Need to add an objective that is focused on science and research.
 - Discussion of Ohio and Michigan's Domestic Action Plan and current status of achieving the 40% reduction in phosphorus by 2025. It was noted that topic falls within the last bullet point on the Annual Work Program.
 - After the meeting, it was suggested that all future meetings include an update by federal and state agencies.

Impact of Spring Rain – Prevent Plant

- Background on crop insurance.
- Insurance is based on established yield on your farm. On average most farmers are insured for 80% of their yield.
- Decision making tool for farmers, which they weigh their options.
- Several factors go into its costs: crop yield, use of insurance in the past, what level of coverage.
- 710,000 acres not planted that would've gone to corn, and 810,000 acres that would have gone to soybeans not planted in Ohio.
- Ripple effect, felt in energy industry, livestock producers will pay higher costs, food prices, fuel prices, economies at local farm retail.
- Disaster areas have been declared in 41 Ohio counties. This opens up low interest loans, but does not help with cash flow.
- USDA \$4 million cover crop program. More than 2,000 applications statewide, could've spent over \$10 million.
- Wood County Commissioners established a program to provide \$10 per acre assistance.
- David Myerholtz, Sandusky County farmer, only planted 42% of their crops. Has to manage differently now, weed control, cultural practices of tillage, how to retain nutrients on the land, nutrients might have been applied without a crop, fighting the weeds, what will the crop rotation plan be for next year.

Public Comments - none

Staff Report

- Blanchard River Demonstration Farms Network Bus Tour is scheduled for September 9. The all-day event will tour three family farms in the Findlay area. Participants will see how the implementation of best management practices are improving water quality. Doug Deardorff, USDA-NRCS, provided details about the program. Registration is \$30 per person and is available at <https://bit.ly/2JjqGsm>

Next Steps

- Finalize voting members
- Nominate Chair and Vice-Chair
- Review operating procedures: Watersheds Committee Operating Procedures was provided as an example of what the Ag Committee's may resemble. (*handout provided*). A draft Agriculture Committee Operating Procedures will be prepared and distributed prior to the next meeting.

Next meeting – November 6 at 9 a.m. in TMACOG Boardroom

- Suggested topic – CAFOs.
- Beth Diesch, Seneca Conservation District, will contact ODA for a speaker to discuss regulations on CAFOs.

Adjourn