

Lake Erie West Regional Council WLEB Water Quality Advisory Group Meeting
Thursday, April 9, 2026
10:00 am – 11:30 am
TMACOG Boardroom
300 Martin Luther King Jr Drive, Suite 300
Toledo, Ohio 43604

Virtual Attendees: Joey Warner, Sandra Kosek-Sills, Lorie Haslinger, Mike Libben, Remegio Confessor Jr., Sally Gladwell, Becky Simpson.

In-person Attendees: Alexis McCarter, Rick Johnson, Bodie Fisher, Jennifer Mayer, Jake Goetz, Marge Mucalhy, Kris Patterson, Tahree Lane, Mark Wolford, Brandon Tester.

Lake Erie West Staff: Melissa Hopfer, Tiara Gonzalez, Annsley Mann.

Welcome and Introductions

Roundtable introductions

- **Melissa Hopfer asked for roundtable introductions.**

Staff Update

208 Plan Update Nonpoint Source Chapter

- **Melissa gave an overview of the comprehensive update Lake Erie West Regional Council is undertaking on the areawide 208 plan. She then reviewed the draft non-point source chapter that was developed with previous feedback obtained from the group. This is still in development, but a complete first draft is on track to be completed within the next three weeks.**
- **Dr. Confesor from Heidelberg University shared a paper about classifying extreme water flows and the corresponding NPS loads that can be helpful for the severe weather vulnerability analysis.**
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2026.181760>
- **Please be on the lookout in the next month for Melissa to reach out with the draft and ask for feedback.**

WLEB Implementation Mapping Planning Tool

- **Melissa gave an update on the Western Lake Erie Basin Implementation Mapping Tool. This tool will be a map database that can be used as a decision-making tool for non-point source related projects. An application was submitted for funding to the Lake Erie Protection Fund but was not selected. Despite this, Lake Erie West Regional Council will continue work on developing this tool, but stakeholder feedback and refinement will be pushed to FY2028.**

Policy Agenda Discussion

- Melissa invited Annsley to discuss the new agency-wide policy agenda that will combine all Lake Erie West Regional Council policy recommendations. The purpose of this document is to be an advocacy tool for use with legislatures. Lake Erie West member units should have received a survey link to gauge legislative priorities.
- Melissa reviewed the priorities relevant to non-point source including ongoing funding for nutrient reduction, industrial animal production permitting, and protecting waterways and wetlands.
- Melissa asked for feedback on whether these statements fit with the priorities of this advisory group. There were several comments that Melissa will incorporate into the policy statements. Melissa will share with the group and ask for additional feedback.
- These statements will be reviewed by a policy ad hoc group put together by Lake Erie West leadership before being presented to Water Quality Council for recommendation to the Governing Board.

Regional Messaging Discussion

- Melissa asked the group if there is a need or desire for regional messaging around the organizations, projects, and common goals across the basin.
- It was recommended that the group consider social marketing (values-based messaging) and apply it to the regional messaging. It was also recommended that we take a look at other campaigns in the region.

Partner Updates

- Lake Erie Commission just awarded Lake Erie Protection Fund grants. Wood SWCD was awarded a grant to complete a NPS-IS plan. There are also a photo competition that is currently open with submittals due in June: <https://lakeerie.ohio.gov/about/photo+contest> .
- Lake Erie Commission's Lake Erie Community Grant Program is currently open for applications, due April 30: <https://lakeerie.ohio.gov/funding-opportunities/protection-fund/lake+erie+community+grant>
- The Nature Conservancy has several projects going on all over the basin. A major project is happening in Sandusky Bay with some very well received public meetings.

Public Comments

- No members of the public were present.

Recommendations to Water Quality Council

- No recommendations were made.

Adjourn

- **Melissa called to adjourn the meeting at 11:35am.**

2026 WLEB Advisory Group Meeting Dates: Jan 8, Apr 9, Jul 9, Oct 8

2026 Water Quality Council Meeting Dates: Feb 9, May 11, Aug 10, Nov 9