

# TMACOG WLEB Water Quality Advisory Group

## Meeting Notes

July 10, 2025, 10:00 am – 11:30 am

TMACOG Boardroom

### **Attendance**

Becky Simpson, Edith Kippenhan, Jerry Bingham, Deanna Bobak, Boden Fisher, Beth Landers, Randy Mahlman, Majorie Mulcahy, Jake Goetz, Sara Guiher

TMACOG Staff: Melissa Hopfer, Tiara Davis, Ann Nair

### **Welcome and Introductions**

Melissa Hopfer, TMACOG, started the meeting with a welcome and asked for roundtable introductions.

### **Staff Update**

Melissa Hopfer discussed:

208 Comprehensive Update- today we will discuss how this group will be involved in the comprehensive update of the nonpoint source chapter of the 208 Plan.

NPS-IS planning – looking at different ways to involve whole region. Looking to create a web mapping tool to bring NPS-IS planning and implementation efforts and water quality data into one place.

Water Quality Advocacy tool – TMACOG is working to create a web-based letter generator to contact state and federal legislators about water quality issues.

The Water Workforce Coalition has completed 3 cohorts. Many have been employed in the area. TMACOG is looking for a way to make this a permanent part of our water quality programming.

Jerry Bingham asked if cuts to H2Ohio affect anything in our area. It will probably reduce the number of projects that are funded. Wetland restoration funding will only be available for projects in the WLEB, not statewide.

### **Roundtable- Non-Point Source Work**

**208 Plan Comprehensive Update-** Non-Point Source Chapter - Melissa Hopfer gave an overview of what the 208 plan is. She stated that the draft of the drinking water chapter is complete. It includes severe weather exposure analysis and emerging contaminants. The public engagement plan that was developed will be used in FY2027. TMACOG is looking to increase public involvement. One of the goals of the comprehensive update is to consolidate information to make it more public-friendly. Planned for FY2026: prescription development, wastewater chapter update, mapping for drinking water service areas, Non-Point Source update. She then shared the current timeline for this work.

The role of the WLEB advisory group for the 208 plan update is to give feedback and recommendations of studies to include in the drinking water chapter. We would also like feedback on data to visualize and include as well as the overall flow of the chapter. We would like to make the recommendation final by April 2026.

The group looked at the chapter together and discussed what works and suggested changes.

The TMDL is more relevant to include than studies from 1978.

Shorten the description of the studies and then put a longer description or link to the report in an appendix. Use a table for plan/study information. Keep the old information to show progression but put the most recent information at the top.

Organize by non-point source categories (ex. Ag, HSTS,). Summary of HABs should be a couple of paragraphs and then see appendix.

Combine history with studies. Present graphs with content. Highlight the dissolved reactive phosphorus. We could use the slide deck that was used at the HABs forecast webinar for graphics and updated information. There are new versions of producer surveys USDA-NRCS. Beth Landers said she would look for this.

General description first – effectiveness second. The OACI survey will be a good source of information. H2Ohio has a dashboard for information. Add links for people to find current information instead of trying to constantly update.

Drainage section – this should come before Agriculture practices.

Federal, State and Local is good – could add advocacy tool here.

Habitat Section- need to explain the difference between sources and causes of impairment. Data is old but the testing is on a 15-year cycle – Portage has not been sampled since 2008.

HUC-12 maps of main impairments- get rid of table completely.

ODA has maps in their regional watershed plan - if we want, we could use this. Prioritize DRP others not things that are the problem. BMP funding – this is written for AG, needs to be updated for non-point source.

What GIS analysis would be useful? NPDES map? Can this be included? Overall map of nutrients in the WLEB. Identifying changes in category – land use change - acres that have been converted. AG to industrial, urban, etc. HSTS to Sewered.

H2Ohio and NPS-IS (9-element plans) need to be added. Maumee AOC – link to their programs and delisting activities. Understanding BUI's and deleting is critical for planners to understand.

Severe weather impacts on NPS? Is it important to talk about this? Yes, it should go in- mention things that are being done to address the issue.

Emerging contaminants – microplastics, PFAS, large data centers, dredge material, beneficial reuse, urban waters.

**HSTS Homeowner Education Content Development** – Tiara Davis, TMACOG, gave an overview of Lake Erie Starts Here (LESH) program and stated that it is primarily a stormwater education program but that the themes are related to the TMDL. TMACOG applied for an OEEF grant to expand the program but was not funded.

TMACOG is still moving forward with adding HSTS as a topic in the LESH program – The group discussed topics related to HSTS that would be good for an education campaign. Health districts supervise HSTS installs and removals so public should contact their local health departments for information on that.

Some ideas the group came up with were:

Maintenance education – have maintenance done every 3 to 5 years. Spend \$300 now save \$20,000 later. Don't Drain your Wallet. Transitioning to Sewers, required if close enough to line. Workshops - Lunch and learn idea – Ask a sanitarian. Include home inspectors and sewer contractors in education and events about HSTS. Regional Realtors Convention as a possible audience.

**Roundtable – Site Visits in 2025**

MARK YOUR CALENDARS: September 11 meeting- Tour an H2Ohio site in Ottawa County- more details to come!

**Partner and staff reports**

None

**Public Comments**

None

**Recommendations to Water Quality Council**

None

**Adjourn** at 11:34 am