

Stormwater Coalition Meeting Minutes

Thursday, April 16, 2025

Submitted for approval on July 16, 2026

Members and Alternates Present: Eric Barnes, Andrea Beard, Josh Belnap, David Bench, Amanda Gamby, Mike Hill, Andy Hohlbein, Doug Holland, Kelly Moore, David Myerholtz, Rob Nash, Kylie Nissen, Melissa Petrea, Rachel Sizer; **Partners:** Isaac Bailey, Lynette Hablitzel, Archie Lunsey; **Lake Erie West Regional Council Staff:** Tiara Gonzalez, Kari Gerwin, Melissa Hopfer, Jennifer Allen

Call to Order/Welcome – The Stormwater Coalition met on Thursday, April 16, 2026, at 1 p.m. in the Lake Erie West Boardroom. Chair Andrea Beard called the meeting to order, noting a quorum had been reached. Introductions were made around the room.

Approval of Minutes – A ***motion*** was made by Kelly Moore and ***seconded*** by Rachel Sizer to approve minutes from the January 15, 2026, meeting. ***The motion passed unanimously.***

Stormwater Coalition FY 2027 Annual Work Program – Tiara Gonzalez, Lake Erie West's environmental education coordinator, presented an update to the Stormwater Coalition's FY 2027 Annual Work Program (AWP), Section: 54500 Stormwater Supplemental projects. Lake Erie West had planned to use 604(b) funds for stormwater training. Staff proposed that this training be paid for with SWC dues. This shift in funding will not impact SWC dues. A ***motion*** was made by Eric Barnes and ***seconded*** by Amanda Gamby to accept the proposed update to the Stormwater Coalition FY 2027 Annual Work Program. ***The motion passed unanimously.***

2026 MS4 Permit Renewal Update – Lynette Hablitzel, OEPA, gave an update on the status of the MS4 permit and answered questions from SWC members. There are not many newly registered entities from our region, and initial notifications have already been made. OEPA will determine which permittees will be eligible for waivers. A draft of the permit will be issued for a 45-day public comment period starting in the next weeks. After the public comment period has ended, the draft permit will go through a sign-off process to determine if any additional changes are needed. The release date for the final permit has not been announced.

Ms. Hablitzel invited coalition members to join her at OEPA's regulatory update session during the Ohio Stormwater Conference. More information regarding the new MS4 permit will follow in the coming weeks. SWC members were welcomed to reach out to Kari Gerwin or Tiara Gonzalez if they should have any questions on how staff can support them.

Action Items: *Lynette Hablitzel will send Lake Erie West staff a list of new permittees.*

Tiara Gonzalez plans to attend the hearing virtually and will submit comments on behalf of SWAG.

Regional Policy Agenda – Melissa Hopfer, Lake Erie West environment program manager, gave an update on Lake Erie West efforts to produce a Regional Policy Agenda that highlights all of the region's priorities. This document will include the goals and objectives outlined in the Agenda for Lake Erie, which can be found on the Lake Erie West website. The Policy Agenda will focus on five core areas: Infrastructure, Community Development, Economic Development & Workforce, Water Quality & The Environment, and Schools/Education. Staff encouraged SWC members to complete the Lake Erie West Regional Policy Agenda survey.

Mrs. Hopfer reviewed and sought comments from the Coalition on SWC policy statements. Coalition members concurred that the statements should be both actionable and enactable by the state legislature. It was recommended that Lake Erie West establish working relationships with state legislators and encourage them to champion the priorities in the Regional Policy Agenda. Lake Erie West plans to visit Columbus next spring to advocate for the policy agenda. It was suggested that Lake Erie West seek advocacy from its various committees as well.

Action Items: *Lynette Hablitzel will provide Melissa Hopfer with a list of organizations who should review the policy statements.*

Tiara Gonzalez will send link to SWC members regarding the Lake Erie West's Regional Policy Agenda survey.

Lake Erie West Staff Report

- LESH: The first quarter report will be released soon. Staff just wrapped up on the second LESH campaign: Storm Drain Awareness. Pet Waste will be featured in May. Staff is working on a banner that will be on display from May to June 2026 at the National Museum of the Great Lakes.
- Annual Stormwater Training – This training was held in March. Approximately 30 people attended the training and were eligible for professional development hours.
- Water and Wastewater Operator Training – This training is scheduled on June 11. More information will follow as details are confirmed. SWC members interested in registering for this training were asked contact Mrs. Gonzales.
- 208 Plan – At its last meeting, SWAG discussed stormwater chapter updates. Staff is in the process of drafting updates. SWC will be asked to vote on the updates at a future meeting.

Ohio EPA Update – Lynette Hablitzel invited coalition members to join her on May 6 at the Ohio Stormwater Conference for MS4 bootcamp. The conference is scheduled to take place at Kalahari Resort in Sandusky from May 6-8.

Member Updates – Mike Hill, Village of Whitehouse, noted that his colleague attended the annual stormwater training in March and provided positive feedback about the information that was shared during the workshop.

Action Items: *Tiara Gonzalez will contact the stormwater training presenters to get permission to share their PowerPoint presentations.*

Public Comment Period – There were no representatives from the public present for comments.

Any and All Other Business – There was no other business discussed.

Next Meeting/Adjourn – The next Stormwater Coalition meeting will take place on Thursday, July 16th, at 1 p.m. in the Lake Erie West Boardroom. A ***motion*** was made by Amanda Gamby and seconded by Rachel Sizer to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned.

Andrea Beard, Chair, Stormwater Coalition
Lake Erie West Regional Council

Tiara Gonzalez, Environmental Education Coordinator
Lake Erie West Regional Council