

# 50000 Water Quality Council

**Purpose:** To protect and improve the water quality of the Lake Erie West region's streams and lakes, for the economy, recreation, and safe, reliable public water supplies by providing technical expertise. The Water Quality Council (WQC) will serve as a regional forum for education, information sharing, and collaboration for our members and stakeholders.

## **51170 Water Quality Committee Coordination**

**Goal:** To facilitate cooperation and build consensus among decision-makers and subject matter experts in the Lake Erie West region to improve and protect water quality and ensure the sustainability of the region's water systems

### **Objectives:**

- Provide administration and staff support for Water Quality Council and its advisory groups. Develop and update operating procedures, rosters, contact lists; create meeting agendas, minutes, and notes; notify stakeholders of meetings; and maintain public records.
- Recruit Lake Erie West members and regional stakeholders to ensure representation of diverse perspectives, interests, and expertise on Water Quality Council and its advisory groups.
- Coordinate and convene Water Quality Council to
  - Provide guidance and regional context to Lake Erie West's water quality programs and planning documents
  - Recommend positions on issues and policies to the Lake Erie West Governing Board to improve and protect water quality in our region and Lake Erie.
  - Set and advance regional water quality priorities (short- and long-term).
  - Educate and advise public officials and decision-makers on current and emerging water quality issues impacting watersheds, wastewater, drinking water, and stormwater systems and the intersection of water quality issues with economic and workforce development.
  - Identify opportunities for regional coordination on water-related projects and programs.
  - Stay current on issues, policies, technologies, pollutants, and regulations related to water quality in the Lake Erie West region.
- Coordinate Water Quality advisory groups to facilitate regional coordination and provide subject matter expertise to Water Quality Council and Lake Erie West's ongoing planning and policy work

#### *Community Water Resources Advisory Group*

- Provide a regional forum for collaboration and information-sharing on drinking water, wastewater, and home sewage treatment systems (HSTS).
  - Share best practices for project planning, water and wastewater capital improvements, treatment processes, and infrastructure funding and rate structures
  - Identify opportunities to advance cost-saving regional cooperation (joint purchasing; shared equipment, staff, and technology).
  - Promote redundancy and emergency management planning.
-

- Collaborate with regional partners to address source water protection and drinking water system resiliency.
- Recommend ways to avoid unnecessary/duplicative public expenditures.
- Provide input on relevant state policies, programs, and initiatives.
- Promote public awareness of drinking water, wastewater treatment, and proper septic system management.
- Support the Water Workforce Coalition’s (51510) efforts to recruit, train, and employ new water and wastewater operators by providing feedback and sharing program information

*WLEB Water Quality Advisory Group*

- Build cross-sector communication and cooperation on WLEB watershed restoration, non-point source pollution, and other water quality priorities.
- Set project and policy priorities to meet TMDL targets and water quality standards.
- Inform development of 9-Element NPS Implementation Strategies (NPS-IS).
- Coordinate funding opportunities and regional efforts to protect and improve water quality and recreation.
- Increase public awareness and promote stewardship of the Lake Erie watershed.
- Partner public water utilities and watershed partners to protect drinking water source water.
- Share and stay current on restoration projects, nutrient reduction practices, and research across the Great Lakes region.
- Provide feedback on state policies, programs, and funding for watershed restoration and nonpoint source pollution.

**51200 Water Quality Planning and Programming**

**Goal:** To develop, manage, implement and secure funding for planning programs that support the water quality priorities of the Lake Erie West region, specifically in the areas of – wastewater, drinking water, home sewage treatment systems, watershed restoration, non-point sources, stormwater management, and drainage

**Objectives:**

- Develop scopes of work and budgets for Lake Erie West’s water quality programs
- Monitor legislation and rules related to Lake Erie West’s water quality priorities and build consensus around policy recommendations.
- Identify sources for funding for drinking water, wastewater, home sewage treatment systems, stormwater, nonpoint source, and water quality education projects
- Provide staff support and coordination of regional water quality planning activities to address current and emerging issues
- Seek opportunities to improve community outreach and equity in Lake Erie West’s water quality planning
- Convene regional forums to share updates and facilitate coordination among stakeholders
- Pursue grant opportunities to fund projects and programs that support the goals and recommendations of:

1. *The Lake Erie West Regional Council Areawide Water Quality Management Plan*
-

2. *The Agenda for Lake Erie and Lake Erie West Policy Agenda*
3. The Water Quality Council and water quality advisory groups
4. The Great Lake Water Quality Agreement, Annex 4
5. Regionally recognized watershed plans developed through an inclusive process
6. *Maumee Area of Concern Stage 2 Watershed Restoration Plan*
7. Balanced Growth principles

### **51300      208 Plan Update and Maintenance**

**Goal:** To provide regional wastewater planning and facilitate consensus building on wastewater policy in the Lake Erie West planning area

**Objectives:**

- Develop and update the Areawide Water Quality Management Plan (also known as the 208 Plan), seek board approval, and submit to Ohio EPA and Michigan EGLE for certification.
- Coordinate with designated management agencies (DMAs) to update wastewater capital improvements needs and other relevant information for each facility planning area (FPA)
- Assist unsewered communities with wastewater infrastructure planning to address water quality and public health issues
- Maintain and update GIS data for FPAs, wastewater prescriptions, sewerage and critical sewage areas, and other data relevant to regional wastewater planning in both ArcGIS desktop and ArcGIS online.
- Update the AWQMP to include timely topics, address drinking and source water, and develop updated planning tools and mapping.
- Visit wastewater treatment facilities to collect information as needed to update the AWQMP
- Share the AWQMP and related data on the Lake Erie West Regional Council website
- Provide opportunities for public outreach and participation and provide public notice of changes impacting communities.
- Facilitate wastewater boundary discussions and conduct dispute negotiations as needed
- Coordinate with Ohio EPA and DMAs to review wastewater permits to install for compliance with the adopted 208 Plan.
- Provide professional development opportunities for water and wastewater operators and provide documented contact hours.
- Coordinate with other Ohio water quality planning programs through the Ohio Association of Regional Councils Water Quality Committee.

### **51305      Mapping Assistance to County Health Departments**

**Goal:** To assist county health departments within the Lake Erie West region to map the locations of the home sewage treatment systems.

**Objectives:**

- Support county health departments in mapping HSTS data, prioritizing counties that do not have the resources for mapping.
  - Update and maintain HSTS database in ArcGIS with new data provided by health departments.
  - Provide access to ArcGIS Online HSTS maps for counties in the 208-planning area.
-

## **51510**      **Water Workforce Coalition Planning**

**Goal:** To ensure that utilities of all sizes in the Lake Erie West region have access to well-trained entry level workforce, resources to advance operators, and plans for succession.

### **Objectives:**

- Create formal structure for a coalition of utilities, educational institutions, and community partners that will work collaboratively to –
  - Raise awareness and enthusiasm for water sector careers and recruit new workers into water sector careers
  - Advise the implementation of the entry level Water Treatment Professions Certificate Program at Owens Community College
  - Advise the development of courses and training opportunities for advanced licenses
  - Coordinate with state and regional professional associations to ensure access to training opportunities
  - Identify opportunities for regional cooperation in standardizing operator pay, succession planning, and developing shared employment resources
  - Identify opportunities to improve collaboration with water workforce partners in Ohio and the Great Lakes Region
  - Maintain the Water Workforce Coalition website to share resources and job openings

## **52132**      **TMDL and NPS-IS Coordination**

**Goal:** To increase stakeholder and public awareness of nonpoint source implementation strategies (NPS-IS) and total maximum daily loads (TMDL) in the Western Lake Erie Basin.

### **Objectives:**

- Support regional updates and development of 9-Element NPS-IS:
  - Facilitate discussions with regional and state NPS-IS partners to determine how Lake Erie West can be of assistance.
  - Offer support to NPS-IS and TMDL efforts as needed.
  - Begin the development of a GIS-based non-point source implementation mapping tool to support regional efforts to identify sources of nutrient pollution, develop NPS-IS plans, and prioritize projects for implementation. Initial work includes:
    - Identify data needs and compile data and data sources to be included in the tool.
    - Build a mapping tool prototype in GIS.
- TMDL Stakeholder Outreach:
  - Assist in distribution of outreach materials developed by Ohio EPA as requested.
  - Engage local stakeholders about the TMDL development process for watersheds in the Lake Erie West planning region.
  - Communicate TMDL status and opportunities for public input to Lake Erie West members and stakeholders within the WLEB.
  - Inform stakeholders of TMDL development schedule for watersheds in the WLEB.

## **52200**      **Student Watershed Watch**

**Goal:** Coordinate the Student Watershed Watch (SWW) program working with all interested middle and high schools in the Lake Erie West region.

---

**Objectives:**

- Review training needs of teachers and provide targeted training, including opportunities to become Ohio EPA qualified.
- Help teachers and participants incorporate new state education standards as requested.
- Provide necessary materials to participating schools for use in the program and identify new materials as needed.
- Provide sampling assistance, present to students, and connect classrooms to community water quality partners
- Compile testing data from all participating schools and upload it to Water Reporter.
- Coordinate the SWW Summit for students to compare their findings and learn more about water quality issues and water careers.
- Promote the program and encourage additional participation throughout the Lake Erie West planning area.
- Maintain or increase sponsorships to support the SWW.
- Participate in the Lake Erie Volunteer Science Network to improve and expand volunteer water quality monitoring in northwest Ohio and southeast Michigan.
- Continue a collaborative partnership with GLOBE Mission Earth to support common goals and cooperation across the region.

**52202 PCB Sampling**

**Goal:** Using Lucas County PCB Settlement funds, incorporate testing and education for polychlorinated biphenyls, commonly known as PCBs, in coordination with community gardens in Lucas County.

**Objectives:**

- Identify and provide testing materials for PCBs testing, including any lab processing.
- Coordinate with local community garden organizations to implement PCB testing and education.
- Develop educational materials for gardeners on the sources and impacts of PCBs and what they can do if there are high concentrations of PCBs in their soil.
- Compile testing data from all participating organizations
- Provide reports to Lucas County.

**54100 Stormwater Coalition (SWC)**

**Goal:** Address stormwater flooding, drainage, and water quality issues on a watershed basis through regional cooperation, coordination, and education in the development and implementation of long-range stormwater management plans.

**Objectives:**

- Convene regular and ad hoc meetings of the Stormwater Coalition to:
    - Share information and resources to meet requirements of National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) stormwater permits and to solve stormwater management problems.
    - Develop and approve SWC budgets, scopes of work, and recommend stormwater policy positions.
  - Convene regular and ad hoc meetings of the Stormwater Action Group to:
-

- Provide guidance to staff to align the Lake Erie West Stormwater Program with member needs.
  - Make technical and programmatic recommendations to the Stormwater Coalition
  - Provide feedback to state-level policies, programs, and initiatives related to stormwater management and the Ohio NPDES MS4 permit.
  - Review and provide feedback on transportation-related stormwater issues through coordination with Lake Erie West’s Transportation Department planning work.
- To support the Stormwater Coalition, staff will:
    - Coordinate Stormwater Coalition and Stormwater Action Group meetings.
    - Provide at least one professional development opportunity for members and the development community (completed under 54500).
    - Provide permit management and compliance resource materials via the Lake Erie West Stormwater Resources Webpage.
    - Provide individualized stormwater program evaluations as requested by dues paying SWC members, based on available workload capacity.
    - Stay current with stormwater regulations and inform members of upcoming regulatory changes and compliance deadlines.
    - Reach out to newly regulated MS4 communities in the Lake Erie West membership area.
    - Coordinate with Ohio stormwater practitioners and professional associations to build partnerships for stormwater education and program implementation.
    - Participate in professional development opportunities that support the work of the Stormwater Coalition.
    - Share the work of the Stormwater Coalition at relevant conferences and professional associations.

**54400      Stormwater Public Education**

**Goal:** Administer regional stormwater education and outreach programs to engage residents in northwest Ohio in support of SWC members’ Ohio EPA stormwater permit requirements for public involvement, participation, and education.

**Objectives:**

- Support and administer the Lake Erie Starts Here program and invoice members for their cost share.
- Develop content and graphics for use on websites, social media, and print.
- Operate, update, and maintain the Lake Erie Starts Here website and social media
- Coordinate with local media to develop and implement mass media content for the program and collect performance metrics for each outreach mechanism.
- Identify and attend community events to represent and promote SWC’s public education efforts.
- Coordinate a Lake Erie Starts Here mini-exhibit at the National Museum of the Great Lakes.
- Distribute data reports to SWC members quarterly and annually for inclusion in members’ required reports to Ohio EPA.
- Investigate options and pricing for outreach mechanisms to expand the reach of the SWC Public Education Program.
- Coordinate applications for funding to support the expansion of the SWC Public Education Program

**54500      Stormwater Training**

---

**Goal:** Address stormwater flooding, drainage, water quality, and stormwater permit compliance through continuing education and training.

**Objectives:**

- Plan and coordinate training event(s) by scheduling a site, reaching out to potential speakers, designing and publishing outreach materials, and providing other necessary support.
  - Collaborate with Lake Erie West Stormwater Coalition members and other stormwater professionals to provide training presentations and resources for the identified audience.
  - Identify training and professional development needs of the development community and other audiences in coordination with Stormwater Action Group.
  - Provide continuing education credit for relevant professional certifications.
-