

# Urban Waters Federal Partnership Meeting Notes Western Lake Erie Basin (WLEB)

November 19, 2013  
9:30am – 1:20pm, Maumee Branch Library

## Minutes -

MEETING CALLED BY	Urban Waters Federal Partners
TYPE OF MEETING	Kick-off meeting to gather ideas and priorities from local leaders and stakeholders
FACILITATORS	USEPA, USACE and USDA NRCS
ATTENDEES	See attached

## Agenda topics -

### 1) INTRODUCTION TO URBAN WATERS (Peg Donnelly USEPA; Cheryl Rice NRCS; Mike Pniewski USACE)

DISCUSSION	<i>What is Urban Waters? Who is involved? What is the goal of the Urban Waters Initiative?</i>	
Peg discussed the history of the Urban Waters program, how the Western Lake Erie watershed was selected by several interested lead federal agencies, what the federal partners are tasked with accomplishing and why we are meeting. A handout was provided at the sign-in table (2-page backgrounder document, attached or link) with a brief overview of UWFP in WLEB. In addition, another handout was available at the sign-in table with the Urban Waters mission, vision, goals and objectives (attached or link). The WLEB UWFP location was announced at a press event in May 2013 in Toledo by Congresswoman Kaptur and other lead federal officials. This is the first official partnership meeting; all are welcome.		
CONCLUSIONS	<i>We are one of 18 watersheds in the U.S. designated as an Urban Waters location.</i>	
The specific geographic boundaries where the group would like to focus our work in WLEB is up to all of the partners to help decide in the coming months, and this can change over time as needed. The Urban Waters designation has and will give us access to program/grant dollars that may not be available to watersheds not designated. It allows sharing of information on priority projects and activities, technical assistance from 13 federal agencies, working together on projects that will restore and protect local waterways, and leveraging of area expertise and funding.		
ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
Provide UWI web address to attendees and interested parties: <a href="http://www.urbanwaters.gov">www.urbanwaters.gov</a>	Federal Partners	Provided at meeting

### 2) FEDERAL PROGRAMS, RESOURCES, AND INITIATIVES (Federal Representatives Present)

DISCUSSION	<i>There are 13 Federal Partner agencies involved in the Urban Waters program nationally.</i>	
The 13 Urban Waters Federal Partner agencies were introduced, and information about some of their programs was shared (gathered from a previous federal partner call in July 2013 and other communications). A list of federal partners' contact information was provided at the sign-in table (attached). A table of federal partners and their authorities / programs was viewed on screen as a powerpoint series of slides. This information has been placed into a draft table (attached).		
CONCLUSIONS	<i>Some very involved federal partners in WLEB; additional federal partners will be engaged.</i>	
We need additional contacts for some federal agencies, as well as a list of programs and projects they regularly work on in their agency and specifically in the WLEB area.		
ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
Federal representatives – please update the information for your agency in the attachment and send back to Cheryl Rice (NRCS) and Peg Donnelly (USEPA). In addition, let's all work on determining appropriate Federal contacts for any of the missing 13 participating agencies.	Federal partners	Ongoing

### 3) STATE PROGRAMS, RESOURCES AND INITIATIVES (AII)

<b>DISCUSSION</b>	<i>Some state agencies working in the WLEB explained their programs and areas of expertise.</i>	
Ohio EPA- Lake Erie Monitoring program; AOC program that includes restoration, planning and distribution of funding information; Division of surface water programs, Maumee RAP support, Water quality improvements, restoration efforts; and drinking water program/source water protection.		
Ohio Lake Erie Commission- Coordinate activities of commission members as they relate to lake efforts, GLRI coordination for WLEB, farmer resources, best practice land use efforts, water quality outcomes, Lake Erie Protection Fund small grants through license plate purchases, and Heidelberg/UT algal research assistance.		
<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>	<i>Some state programs with great expertise. Additional state agencies will be engaged hopefully.</i>	
Would be great to get involvement / partnership with Ohio DNR, Ohio Department of Health, and others that regularly work towards Urban Waters goals in the WLEB. Additional ideas of partners and contacts???		
<b>ACTION ITEMS</b>	<b>PERSON RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>DEADLINE</b>
Please send ideas for additional state partners and contacts to Cheryl Rice.	All	Ongoing

### 4) REGIONAL AND LOCAL PROGRAMS, RESOURCES AND INITIATIVES (AII)

<b>DISCUSSION</b>	<i>Regional and local partners working in the WLEB explained their programs and areas of expertise.</i>	
Ohio/Indiana Soil & Water Conservation Districts – looking to engage the whole watershed in issues of water quality and beyond; Partners in Tristate Watershed Alliance to coordinate efforts higher up in the watershed.		
Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments – Leads regional transportation, environmental, and storm water planning groups and provides technical assistance for MS4s under storm water permits. Examples include retrofit inventories, 208 planning, invasive species and watershed plans.		
Toledo Lucas County Sustainability Commission – Coordinating region-wide sustainability planning that includes livable cities, economic and clean water initiatives. Components include a Green Infrastructure portfolio standard, riverfront revitalization, source water action planning, and greenspace/recreational development.		
Partners for Clean Streams – Coordinates river clean-ups, large scale restoration projects, over 1500 volunteers, volunteer monitoring, throughout the AOC and the region.		
University of Toledo – Lake Erie monitoring working with local commercial fisherman, partnering with larger Millenium group to coordinate monitoring work and data analysis.		
American Rivers – Storm water and green infrastructure focused support for the City of Toledo.		
City of Toledo Division of Environmental Services – focus on CSO solutions (6 year timeline to eliminate) and green infrastructure practices. Engaged in Climate Resiliency planning and sustainability planning with the region. Examples include storm water utility program (credits), working with ACEs on Port issues that include dredging and dredge material re-use, Toledo Waterways Initiative, working on Natural Resources Assessment response, and repurposing vacant urban land.		
Ohio State Extension – Support and leadership for community gardening and local foods council (Food Hub) for northwest Ohio.		
Sandpiper Boat – boat tours of River and the Bay, education and tourism focused enterprise. Focus on developing visitors love of the river.		
Visions of Cullin Park – New boat launch and dredging for recreational use. Looking for grant for retrofitting parking lot and other restoration benefits for the park that including birding, fishing and managed natural habitat.		
Metroparks of the Toledo Area – Land acquisition and restoration at many of their properties. Middlegrounds Park as a focus to establish a park in the downtown area with river access and innovative storm water management practices for bridge runoff. Lake front revitalization efforts that support connectivity for open-space, ecological function, and recreational benefits like kayaking and canoeing. Metroparks has a large volunteer base for stewardship.		
Point Place Economic Development – Cullin Park and the Nautical Village planning that connects lake and river restoration to the economic development for Point Place tourism. Bass fishing tournaments scheduled for next season are an example of their efforts.		
<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>	<i>Great variety of regional and local partners with strong programs and lots of expertise. Others welcome!</i>	
<b>ACTION ITEMS</b>	<b>PERSON RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>DEADLINE</b>
Continue to collect and share information and resources about local and regional efforts in the Urban Waters area.	All	Ongoing
Clarify details about programs, resources and initiatives to share with group.	All	Ongoing

**5) LOCAL PRIORITIES (All)**

<b>DISCUSSION</b>	<i>Several ideas and themes about important local priorities were discussed.</i>	
	Reconnecting people with the water, water efficiency, waterways and economic development, connection to drinking water, dredging in river and bay, lake water levels, climate change impacts.	
	Reconnection of water to wetlands, floodplains and groundwater. Lake features of breakwaters and dunes.	
	Agricultural community engaged in issues, help businesses and community understand the benefit, help clarify and inform the public of what research means and potential impacts. Better relate what the conservation community and lake folks know and put into context. Create pride in our waterways.	
	Adapt/react to climate change and extreme weather. Access technology for the mouth of the river into the bay. Healthy Lake Erie Fund?	
	TMDL for the Bay. How do we communicate the importance of clean healthy water? Can we use basic water quality data to inform and increase understanding of current condition of the river?	
	Address open lake dumping issue as well as the impacts of the longer term storage along river of dredging materials.	
	Increase stakeholder base. Use funds to educate public through PSAs, posters, billboards, etc. to empower people. Ex. Formerly used 'Give Water a Hand' efforts. Do we need a survey to find gaps in current understanding? To find best modes of communication to public?	
	What is the best way to get business involved?	
	Recreation is crucial. Do we need more access points? Better navigation? Maybe a water trail for Lake Erie/Maumee like Lake Superior and Lake Michigan have.	
	Increase efforts for regional interaction and partnerships. Look for technology applications for treatment of algal bloom issue.	
	Education and outreach as a priority. Some potential key components may be in place.	
<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>	<i>The partnership, lead by local input, will help prioritize local issues and projects in coming months.</i>	
<b>ACTION ITEMS</b>	<b>PERSON RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>DEADLINE</b>
This will be an ongoing discussion to determine local priorities.	All	Ongoing

**6) NEXT STEPS (All)**

<b>DISCUSSION</b>	<i>How do we want to continue?</i>	
	Webinars, teleconferences, face-to-face meetings? What frequency do we want to meet? How do other UWFP sites operate? What are our options for action?	
	UWI has the ability to create their own structure that works best for the group. We may want to meet more often initially (perhaps every 6-8 weeks?) to get activities and action going. Following initial planning efforts we may break into smaller groups to tackle projects, then convene as a whole partnership less frequently (maybe quarterly?).	
<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>	<i>Would be good to meet face to face again. Will send meeting notes and arrange for next meeting.</i>	
	Need to work on priority projects and potential solutions at next meeting. There are additional topics we may want to include. We can look at the geographic area over time to see what we choose to include. Perhaps a meeting in late January to mid February would be appropriate (after the holidays). Dates to avoid include Feb 11 (WLEBP meeting), and others...	
<b>ACTION ITEMS</b>	<b>PERSON RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>DEADLINE</b>
Send out group email to share all contacts.	Federal Partners	Nov 22, 2013
Send out minutes to the participants for editing and comments.	Federal Partners	Dec 17, 2013
Send out email to arrange next meeting and meeting type.	Federal Partners	Dec 17, 2013

<b>SPECIAL NOTES</b>	Thank you to all who participated in our first WLEB UWFP meeting!! We are encouraged by your enthusiasm, wide range of expertise, and willingness to share information on all the great things you are already doing in the watershed, as well as the challenges that you are facing! We look forward to meeting with you soon, and encourage you to make additions to these notes so we can share with the group.
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