

**OKI GROUNDWATER COMMITTEE MEETING
SUMMARY
JUNE
19, 2025
OKI Commonwealth
Conference Room
10:00 a.m.**

<i>Committee Members in Attendance (in person)</i>	<i>Institution</i>
Elmer Dudas	City of Springboro
Mike Ekberg	Miami Conservancy District
Rick Fueston	Retired
Valerie Howell	Molson Coors
Mike Long	Clermont County Water Resources Department
Tim McClelland	Hamilton to New Baltimore Groundwater Consortium
Travis Menezes	Butler County Water & Sewer Department
Rachel Moore	Clermont County Public Health
Terry Morris	Retired
Tim Neyer	Clermont County Water Resources Department
Darren Owens	City of Lebanon
Kelsey Richards	City of Loveland
Clifford A. Shrive	Shrive Solutions
Richard Stuck	Greater Cincinnati Water Works
Chris Wojnicz	City of Loveland
<i>Committee Members in Attendance (Online)</i>	
Ashlee Widner	Butler County Soil & Water Conservation District
<i>Guests</i>	
Seth Buchholz	Clermont County Water Resources Department
Madeline Volker	Molson Coors
Derrick Ward	City of Hamilton
<i>OKI Staff</i>	
David Rutter	OKI
Taylor O'Rourke	OKI
Travis Miller	OKI
Noel Baker	OKI
Jacob Matson	OKI

Welcome/Introductions

- Rich Stuck, chair, opened the meeting and made introductions.

OKI Staff Updates

David Rutter, OKI

- June meeting will be on Wednesday, September 17, 2025.
- David gave updates on the Ohio EPA Southwest Ohio Water Quality Study.
 - OEPA will be conducting a 20-county study in southwest Ohio to get an idea on water resources. OEPA held a meeting the previous week to understand how water is being used. They recently updated a new dashboard about water resources.
 - Ohio is fourth in the nation on new data centers, which require a lot of water.
- Travis Miller: OEPA wants OKI and MVRPC's help with this study. OKI is hoping to be under contract soon and will update with any news.

Local Groundwater Management Updates

Ashlee Sullivan, *Butler County Soil and Water Conservation District*

- BCSWCD completes two workshops: one for septic systems and the other for HOAs
 - The HOA workshop was met with great feedback. There are approximately 19 HOAs in the county
 - Currently working on scheduling two homeowners' workshops dedicated to streams and ponds/private stormwater infrastructure
 - Received OEPA Ohio Environmental Education Fund (OEEF) grant to develop stream maintenance guide for the county that will be available soon
- Volunteer Events: Completed invasive species removal/cleanups and willow tree live stake collection
- Did a Citizens Qualitative Habitat Assessment Tool (cQHEI) workshop in May and a stream bugs workshop
- Partnering with Sarah Meadows (Hamilton County Conservation District) for fish shocking demonstration
- H2Ohio Program:
 - 2600 ac enrolled. Will begin verification soon
 - 5 CRP contracts for grass waterways
 - 14 new approved contract
 - Received a \$1.5 million grant from Ohio River's Program for dam removal, fish barrier removal, and stream restoration for Four-Mile Creek (City of Oxford)
 - One WPA low head dam from the 1950s will be completely removed
 - An armored sewer line downstream will be assessed for maintenance to protect drinking water and fish passage barriers
 - Cannot be removed or buried further
 - Another low head dam downstream will be assessed for solutions
- Installed a rain garden in Morgan Township in a community park to ease stormwater runoff from nearby parking lot
- Completed Dix Creek NPS-IS Plan with Warren County Soil & Water
 - Will be holding stakeholder meeting to identify projects
- Upcoming workshops:
 - Cover Crop Field Day
 - Homeowners

- Dog event with the City of Hamilton (August 7)

Chris Wojnicz, *City of Loveland*

- Loveland has three wells along the western bank of the Little Miami River (Symmes Township)
 - All 80' – 85' deep
 - Each has 1350 GPM capacity
 - Similar water to rest of the region: very hard and they do not soften it
 - Did not detect manganese or iron
 - Will be adding PFAS infrastructure
 - Specifically targeting PFOS in treatment process
 - Five pressure zones
 - Treats raw water supply with chlorine gas and fluorosilicic acid before sending it to distribution center
 - Max capacity: 5 MGD (Approved capacity, 3.74 MGD)
 - Averages 1.2 MGD (Max day: 2.2 MGD)
 - Has emergency interconnects with Clermont County and Greater Cincinnati Water Works
 - Will be upgrading pressure reducing valve with Clermont County
- Water Usage
 - 5000 customers between Loveland and Symmes Township
 - Customer base has been increasing but the city believes these numbers will remain stable and have no significant changes in the future unless commercial development changes
 - Customer usage is generally decreasing
 - Largest user: an apartment complex
 - Averages 1.2 MGD (Max 2.2 MGD)
 - 2024: 18 watermain breaks
 - 3% increase to water rates, including a \$7.5/bill increase to pay for watermain replacements
- Current and future upgrades and replacements
 - Replacing watermains as sidewalk replacements occur
 - Received grant to replace 3,000 linear feet of 8' watermain
 - Conducting upgrades to security systems at plant, PVR, and hydraulic model
- PFAS infrastructure
 - Perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) detected
 - Funded study using WSRLA PF and completed in June 2024
 - Identified granular activated carbon (GAC) as most viable option
 - Will need to build a new facility
 - Estimated costs: \$17 million
 - Selected AECOM after RFQs and Parallel General Plan submittals
 - Expected to sign funding documents for WSRLA PF funding in July
 - Continuing to look for more funding avenues
 - Do not believe they will need to conduct full-scale pilot testing

Darren Owens, *City of Lebanon*

- Lebanon no longer operates their own wells

- Purchases water from Greater Cincinnati Water Works (GCWW) since 2012
- Some public discussion from citizens about removing fluoride
 - Lebanon has no control over the matter and GCWW follows what is legally required
- Water infrastructure
 - 122 miles of water lines
 - 1600 fire hydrants
 - 3.5 MGD above ground storage
 - Average 2.2 MGD usage
 - Water tower
 - Will be upgrading paint for aesthetics
 - Two booster stations
 - Wastewater Treatment Plant
 - Spent \$12 million on new pump station to reduce overflows
 - Reached max capacity this year during winter storms
 - Won National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) Platinum Peak Performance Award
- Future development
 - Large development currently on west side of the city
 - 1000 new units expected, resulting in population growth spurt
 - Expected 4,000 new residents (conservative estimate)
 - Currently replacing AMI system (halfway done)
 - In process of beautifying Turtle Creek (downtown area)
 - Have removed invasive honeysuckle, resulting in exposed stream banks and erosion
 - Working with Stantec on streambank stabilization

Other Discussion

- Rich Stuck:
 - US EPA has new changes about PFAS MCLs
 - Andy Eddy (formerly City of Oxford) has retired but has not officially stepped down as Vice Chair
 - Committee will be looking for replacement by the next meeting
- Clermont County: Clermont County has restructured some offices and disbanded the Office of Environmental Quality
 - Added Source Water Protection Coordinator (Seth Buchholz)
 - Utilities Director (Lyle Bloom) is transferring to a different department, so the county is looking for a new sanitation engineer to fulfill his position

Presentations

“Ohio EPA’s Source Water Protection Program” Ruthy Rutherford, *Ohio EPA*

Source water and Assessment Protection (SWAP) Program requires protection plans for wells/groundwater and surface water. SWAP’s goal is to protect drinking water sources from future contamination because prevent costs less than restoration and mitigation. SWAP includes assessment reports and protection plans. Assessment reports include a susceptibility analysis, delineation of target areas, and a potential contaminant source inventory. Protection plans are created after assessment report and provide lists of protective strategies. Assessment reports are required to be reviewed annually and should be evaluated every five years to make adjustments. Protection plans must be in place within two years of approval of a new well or intake system.

OEPA has adopted a new protection plan template for system operators benefit. Operators can meet with OEPA for creating protection plans. Protection plans must include partnerships and protection teams (governments, community groups, etc), source control strategies (priorities, potential sources, responsibilities, etc), education and outreach (for customers, businesses, etc), future planning goals and source water sustainability practices (water demands, future needs, capacity, etc), source water monitoring avenues (trends, effectiveness, etc), and periodic reviews and implementation strategies.

OEPA tracks information and data about protection plans using the Safe Drinking Water Information System (SDWIS). They do this on a three-year cycle and only to community systems. Systems with endorsed protection plans get a unique survey. All systems must be implementing 75 percent of the strategies in their survey, regardless of population. OEPA will then score the system based on their survey answers. After the 2022 – 2024 survey cycle, OEPA found that 40 percent of substantially implementing plans had no endorsed protection plan and 66 percent had an endorsed protection plan they were substantially implemented. Out of 838 surveys sent, 629 responded. Nonmunicipal systems had the lowest response rates and surface water had the highest response rates. Overall, 51 percent of community systems are implementing, representing 80 percent of the population. OEPA found that 80 percent of systems spend less than \$10,000 per year on source water protection. 50 percent of systems spend less than \$1,000 per year on source water protection.

OEPA will have grants opening in November with plans on awarding funds in March. These grants include a Protective Strategies Grant to support the implementation of specific and measurable protective strategies. The other grant, the Well Abandonment Grant, is for properly managing and closing abandoned drinking water wells.

Closing Remarks

- Next meeting will be September 17, 2025, from 10 AM to 12 PM at OKI.