

Two Dam Mitigation Projects with Two Different Approaches

Two waterways in the Toledo area had old dams that were safety hazards and which impeded the movement of fish. Two very different projects have reduced the safety hazard and resulted in the free movement of fish upstream.

In the Ottawa River, an old 5-foot high cement dam near Secor Road was demolished and a new streambed resulted. TMACOG and its contractors used the rubble from the demolition of the dam and brought in additional large stones to stabilize the stream bank and to create naturalistic riffles on the stream bed. Improvements made to the area have made the river safer, provide natural access to the water, and will prevent erosion.

Swan Creek at Highland Park is a popular urban fishing spot. However a low head dam was an impediment to fish especially at low water, and a safety hazard in a park where children play. In this case, the dam could not be removed because it is a concrete-encased sewer pipe. Partners for Clean Streams, the Joyce Foundation, TMACOG, and other partners cooperated in a project that has created new attractive access to the river at Highland Park, with native planting areas. In the river itself, small and large stones were used to create stepdowns from the dam. The two steps lower the velocity of the water while adding oxygen as the water flows over the stones. The project also created pools where fish can rest as they work their way upstream at spawning time.

Project partners will be monitoring the two sites to see how the river acts during periods of high water, drought, and flood. To provide feedback on the projects or to learn more, contact Maumee River Coordinator Matt Horvat at 419.241.9155 ext. 123 or Horvat@tmacog.org.

Mark Your Calendar

Student Watershed Watch – Student Summit

Wednesday, November 19, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Toledo Zoo, Nairobi Pavilion

Request for Crisis Funding for Public Transit

Governor Strickland has asked Ohio's metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) including TMACOG to reallocate some federal funding to relieve immediate shortfalls in local public transit systems. The need for transit service is growing, as is the cost of providing it. At public meetings held as part of the 21st Century Transportation Priorities Task Force, a need for more and better public transportation was the most commonly heard concern. Also, the Ohio Public Transit Association issued a report which projected an \$18.5 million shortfall in 2008 largely due to increased fuel cost. Because of public requests for service and the projected shortfall, TMACOG and the other planning agencies have been asked to examine their Transportation Improvement Programs (the TIP) to determine how funds within these programs could be used to support the needs of public transit.

While the resources of the TMACOG FY2008-2011 TIP are already fully committed to other projects, the TIP Committee was able to respond to this immediate crisis. In August the committee approved a plan to shift funding for some transportation related projects in order to provide short term assistance to public transit in Toledo and Bowling Green. In taking this step, members of the TIP Committee and the Transportation Council have emphasized that this short term aid is no solution. The TIP Committee and Transportation Council urge the State of Ohio to develop new, secure funding sources to address underfunding of public transit. The motion to allocate funds was approved by the TMACOG Executive Committee in September.

Fulton County Member Reception

Elected officials and community and business leaders in Fulton County are invited to a reception Thursday, November 13, 5-7 p.m. at North Star Bluescope Steel in Delta. For more information or to register, contact Greg Gettum at gettum@tmacog.org or 419.241.9155, ext 132



Final Public Meeting for Swan Creek Watershed Pilot Project

Local officials from the 23-jurisdiction Swan Creek watershed area are invited to attend a meeting Wednesday October 22, at 7 p.m. at the Springfield Township Hall. The meeting will sum up the status of the balanced growth initiative that has been in development in the watershed since February, 2006, and ask for endorsement. TMACOG staffers who have been helping jurisdictions develop the plan will present the work of the committee. Dr. Dan Johnson, UT president emeritus, will talk about why a regional approach to development is effective. Sean Logan, director of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, and representatives of the Ohio Lake Erie Commission will describe the state incentives and policies that will apply when the plan is implemented.

There will be opportunities for questions and endorsement will be requested. While about half of jurisdictions have endorsed the project, 75% agreement is required in order to implement the plan and make communities eligible for incentives. Jurisdictions will have later opportunities to endorse the plan but the project will conclude at the end of the 2008 calendar year. This is the final public meeting that will lay out the complete balanced growth initiative and all of the benefits. For more information on balanced growth programs in Ohio see www.epa.state.oh.us/oleo/bg1/index.html. For details on the process in the Swan Creek watershed, see www.tmacog.org/Environment/swanpilot.htm.

“Transportation Matters” Coalition

Several of Ohio’s regional councils of government including TMACOG are part of a group working to establish a broad-based, statewide coalition that will be an active advocate in Washington D.C. for improving and expanding Ohio’s transportation system. Organizers of the Ohio coalition have stated that the purpose of the Transportation Matters Coalition is to

educate rather than lobby federal legislators and policy makers. TMACOG is not making a direct contribution to the coalition but is supporting the initiative through the Ohio Association of Regional Councils (OARC) which is contributing \$5,000. Based on the most current information, MPOs representing the Columbus, Dayton, and Cincinnati areas have or intend to make direct contributions to form the new coalition.

Portage River Watershed Action Plan to Protect Water Quality

A watershed action plan now under development in the Portage River watershed will outline problems in the watershed, identify solutions and best management practices, and when approved will be a tool for jurisdictions to apply for funds for protection of water quality in their communities and in the region. The Portage River watershed includes large portions of Hancock, Ottawa, Sandusky, and Wood counties and part of Seneca County. All together, the waters of the Portage and its tributaries provide drinking water for 100,000 residents.

The plan is being coordinated by Elaine Moebius, the Portage River Coordinator at TMACOG, who is actively soliciting information and input from communities in the watershed. She is scheduling presentations at township and village meetings in the area to explain the goals of a watershed action plan and to ask for local knowledge. Specifically, she is looking for information about local erosion areas, floodplains, areas that local communities are seeking to protect, and all opportunities to improve water quality. As Ms. Moebius develops the plan, she is working with the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR). A draft of the entire plan should be complete by the end of the calendar year. For more information contact Elaine moebius at 419.241.9155 ext. 139 or moebius@tmacog.org.

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