Location: Ottawa County Fairgrounds | 7870 OH-163 Oak Harbor, OH 43449
Date: Tuesday, May 21, 2019
Time: 7:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Discussion Topics

1. **Portage River Basin Council (PRBC) involvement in the Portage River Water Trail project** – Ottawa County Commissioner Mark Coppeler explained the activities of the council between early 2018 and the present related to the Portage Water Trail.

2. **ODNR Water Trail designation program** – Commissioner Coppeler gave an overview of the Water Trails program and the assistance that ODNR can provide to communities seeking a Water Trail designation.

3. **Work completed towards a Portage Water Trail designation** – Sara Guiher provided an update on the work completed by the PRBC and the timeline for the remaining requirements of a designation. The council has a goal of official designation during summer 2020.

4. **Benefits of Water Trail designation** – During open discussion, benefits to communities/organizations were shared by attendees.
   
   a. Economic benefits to local businesses
   
   b. The ability to share local historical and conservation information
   
   c. Opportunities for programming associated with the river, including paddling and safety instruction
   
   d. Increased ecotourism
   
   e. Community outreach and promotion – for instance, the potential Ottawa County Fairground site could be used to reach community members who do not typically attend the fair
   
   f. Potential grant funding for site improvements, river clean up
   
   g. Cohesiveness between bike trails, Ottawa County Parks, Active Transportation Plan

5. **Attendee concerns** – Multiple concerns were also raised during group discussion.
   
   a. Current landowners’ responsibility to maintain sites
   
   b. Required time commitment to maintain as a water trail as part of terms of reimbursement from ODNR (Sara Guiher will ask about any requirements)
   
   c. Is there any additional liability insurance needed by site owners?
d. Several members of the Ottawa County Fair Board were present, and voiced the following concerns regarding a potential site at the fairgrounds:
   
   (i) Communication with paddlers if the site will not be accessible due to an event such as a wedding, horse show, or other rental by an outside individual/organization
   
   (ii) Funds are not available to pay for additional maintenance that may be associated with increased river access (litter, vandalism, portable toilet maintenance, etc.)
   
   (iii) Liability if someone is injured on site

6. **General comments/questions** –
   
a. Ms. Guiher stated that any maintenance associated with a future water trail would be part of a management agreement (required to be submitted for designation), and all involved parties would have to accept the terms of this agreement.

b. Sponsorship is required to cover the Water Trail expenses, and the sponsor(s) will be reimbursed by ODNR

c. A representative from the Ottawa County Fair Board will be asked to participate in future Portage Water Trail advisory group meetings

7. Commissioner Coppeler thanked attendees for coming, and the meeting was adjourned.