

MINUTES

1. **Call to Order** – approximately 1:06 PM EDT

2. **Roll Call**

Steering Committee Members Present – Richard Harrison, Marty Hettel, John King, Chris Lorentz, Jordan Lubetkin, Heather Mayfield, Chuck Somerville, Mike Steinmaus, Harry Stone, Jeff Thomas, David Wicks.

Steering Committee Members Absent – Laurel Cornell, Brian Farkas, Sarah Hippensteel-Hall, Carey Johnson, Kari Makenbach, Robin Peak

Advisors Present – Brandon Brummett, Jeff Frey, Charles Goad, Laura Mattingly

3. **Adoption of the Agenda** – CS requested to amend the regular agenda as follows:
- a. complete review and approval of minutes (item 4) as written
 - b. move to item 8f for Steering Committee action on nomination of Sarah Hippensteel-Hall to lead the Flood Control and risk reduction working group
 - c. resume regular agenda (at item 5)

The altered agenda was adopted as described above without comment.

4. **Review and approval of minutes of the 18 May Conference Call** – CS noted that comments on the SWOT analysis made during the last call were included in SWOT table in the minutes. The minutes of the 18 May Steering Committee meeting were adopted as distributed.

5. **Report from the Chairperson** (Chuck Somerville) – Brief statement of thanks to those who have agreed to be nominated and serve as Working Group leaders. Harry Stone (HS) also spoke up in support of the new Working Group leaders.

6. **Regular Reports from Other Committee Members**

- a. Financial Update (Kari Mackenbach) – no report.
- b. Update on Website/Social Media (John King/Heather Mayfield) – JK reported that there was an ORBA-related tweet on 17 May about the report from the Allegheny Front.
- c. Update from the AWI Liaison (Marty Hettel) – The AWI board will meet again between June 24th and July 1st. MH has helped get more information on infrastructure from USACE.

- d. Update from the ORBCRE Liaison (Chris Lorentz) – no report other than planning for the fall meeting (see below).

7. Reports from Working Group Leaders

- a. **Nation's Most Valuable Transportation & Commerce Corridor** (Marty Hettel) – Updates from Washington, DC: Senate has passed the America's Waterways Infrastructure Act, which includes WRDA 2020 legislation. This includes changes in the funding formula for waterways infrastructure projects from 50% general revenue/50% Inland Waterways Trust Fund, to 65% general revenues/35% IWTF. In the House requests for funding under WRDA 2020 were due on May 1st, and Reps Lamb from PA and Badin from TX co-sponsored a letter to Chairman DeFasio that gather 76 signatures of other house members to change the IWTF cost share from 50/50 to 75% general revenue/25% IWTF. Markup on legislation is expected in mid-July. MH reported that the Senate plans to conference with the House prior to bringing the legislation to the floor. On appropriations, House has scheduled 12 appropriation bills in committees between the week of July 1st and July 15th with plans to bring them to the floor before the end of July. There are only 41 legislative days left before the end of the fiscal year (30 Sept), so it seems doubtful that all appropriations will be passed before then. If we go under a continuing resolution, OMB will impose the "least of rule" that would eliminate funding for Inland Waterway locks by referring back to the president's FY 21 budget request, which including no funding for inland waterway projects. So, under a CR, there would be no funding for locks and dams in the ORB or the OR Navigation Study. MH expects a short-term CR until after the election, followed by either separate appropriations or an omnibus appropriations bill during the lame-duck session of congress. MH asked if working group members were approved by the Steering Committee or only by selection of the leader. CS deferred to HS, who responded that all working group members are appointed by the Steering Committee. HS asked MH, and other working group leaders to let us know the nominees for the working groups so that they could be confirmed by the SC.

- b. **Healthy & Productive Ecosystems** (Jordan Lubetkin) – H&PE group is working on creating a list of nominees for their working group. The group has a two-part plan; to get a strong restoration plan for the basin with individual goals spelled-out, and to seek funding for implementation. Work is going on within the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) to seek ecosystem expertise together for the crafting of the restoration plan. NWF also wants to bring in other NGOs, because support will be needed to push for funding. Working on a systematic plan to reach out to other NGOs for collaboration/support. JL will probably provide the names of recruits a few at a time rather than all in one submission. The internal goal is to have 100's of participants, not all as working group members, but engaged with the effort. NWF did submit comments to the strategic plan with an emphasis on making sure that

equity and justice issues were included (water affordability, industry siting). The current movement toward equity and justice can help stimulate the engagement of more groups with the restoration plan. JL plans to coordinate closely with the Abundant Clean Water group. Richard and Jordan will coordinate off-line. JL will also be reaching out to other members of the SC for ideas about how to make the H&PE group most effective. JL will also work with John King and Heather Mayfield about how to use the ORBA website as an effective tool for the work of this group. John King volunteered to work on both the website and the environmental justice efforts. JK works with EPA on environmental justice.

- c. **Abundant Clean Water** (Richard Harrison) – several people and organizations have provided comments on the ORB strategy, including comments from US EPA. RH is working toward advancement of the abundant clean water goals, and working with the ecosystem restoration group. At ORSANCO commission meetings, the watershed organizations representatives raised a question about the order of the top-level goals in the strategic plan, and whether or not that order represented a priority listing. RH responded that the order did not indicate priority.

JL indicated that the Healthy & Productive Ecosystems group would definitely coordinate with the Abundant Clean Water group. JL expressed an interest in seeing all of the comments that came in after the circulation of the draft strategic plan, and in particularly the comments received from the EPA. JL also asked about the timeline for the finalization of the document. RH agreed to share the comments that he had received. He mentioned comments from EPRI, NWF, EPA, and drinking water group, and is happy to share those. RH stated that he shied away from putting the development of nutrient criteria in the plan because he did not want the strategic plan to become a standards document. HS added that Laura Mattingly was on the call, and that she might be willing to speak to the comments received and how they were addressed. LM said that she had a document that compiles all of the comments received. LM was willing to share that document. She asked if the ORBA Steering Committee wanted to see the document one final time before it was finalized. CS and RH spoke in favor of having a final review of the document prior to release. LM said that she would share the document including all comments, and mentioned that the strategic plan with all received comments considered/ addressed was in upper level review with Dan Vogler (USACE). ORBA SC review will occur after USACE internal review. No definitive time was given for ORBA final review. LM suggested a 10-day review period after the plan document is provided to ORBA. CS indicated that the deadline seemed reasonable.

- d. **World-Class Nature-Based Recreation** (David Wicks) – DW has participated in a series of webinars, most recently with OKI, announcing a new Ohio River Digital Guide that goes from Portsmouth, OH down to Louisville, KY. DW intends to work on expanding the guide for the entire length of the river. They have reached out to

other river trail groups throughout the basin. On July 23rd, there will be webinar with UT Knoxville with the TN River line and with Dan Foley of the Great Miami Riverway, and also with the National Park Service to talk about planning for river trails and recreational access. In August, there will be another webinar focused on sustainable tourism initiatives in the Ohio River Valley. The goal is to increase the awareness and interest in recreational opportunities in the basin. Webinar attendance has averaged about 150. DW asked if he could use the ORBA logo associated with his webinars and web site. The second initiative is working toward a coordinated safety statement for recreation on rivers (both larger and smaller). Working with USACE and Coast Guard. Anticipated publication of the statement in June 2020. DW also interested in receiving nominations for members of his working group.

[Added to Minutes:

Thursday, July 23, 1:30 to 3 pm: “Rivers as an Engine for Community Growth: A discussion with the Tennessee RiverLine Great Miami Riverway”

Thursday, August 6, 1:30 to 3 pm: The Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail and Sustainable Tourism in the Ohio River Valley]

CS asked for thoughts on the use of the ORBA logo by individual working groups. JL suggested that the ORBA logo could be used when associated with initiatives/ actions that work toward the goals of the strategic plan. JL recommended against the SC taking on approval of individual uses. JK agreed, and suggested that we have a standard logo file (high quality) file that is used by all. CS agreed to share the logo files that he currently has. CS agreed that waiting for the SC to approve logo use would take too long to be functional. Richard Harrison asked if ORBA could be a partner to the Ohio River Recreation Trail (ORRT). DW said yes, and that he would follow up by sending us a brief description of what is entailed in an ORBA-ORRT partnership.

CS asked if there was any objection to free use of the ORBA logo by working groups in their normal duties. There were no objections, and the free use of the logo by working groups was adopted by consensus.

- e. Reliable Flood Control & Risk Reduction (Sarah Hippensteel-Hall) – no report at this time.
- f. Knowledge & Education to Inform Decisions (Heather Mayfield) – At this time most efforts are going toward planning for the ORBCRE Symposium/ORBA Summit this

fall. The events are being planned for hybrid attendance with scientific sessions being virtual and summit meetings, celebration and field trips being held in person.

[We experienced some difficulties with audio at this point in the meeting, and HM offered to email details to anyone who was interested.]

8. Unfinished Business

- a. ORB Strategic Plan (H. Stone/Laura Mattingly) – Original discussion on this topic was conducted during the report from the Abundant Clean Water working group (see notes above).

HS commented that strategic actions suggested during the writing of the plan, which had no owner and no mechanism for getting an owner or funding, were left out of the final draft of the plan. Any proposed action from an organization that could provide leadership on the action, did get included in the plan. Anything that called for regulations or standards, anything that got us into the regulatory world, was not included in the final draft. LM agreed on that assessment. She added that comments which were not targeted at the actions, e.g. changes in language, etc., were generally included.

- b. ORBA Strategic Planning for 2020-2023
 - i. ORBA Vision Statement – provided in the meeting documents
 - ii. ORBA SWOT Analysis – HS reported that the SWOT analysis had been compiled, and that the next piece of work would be to identify a small set of Critical Success Factors, i.e. those things that ORBA must do, and do well, in order for ORBA to succeed in accomplishing its goals. HS asked the SC to provide feedback on what they think are the Critical Success Factors. The SC members were asked to send their thoughts to Chuck at csoverville@orsanco.org.
- c. ORBA Reception/Visits on Capitol Hill
- d. ORBA/ORBCRE Meeting, Fall 2020 – Some discussion of the ORBA/ORBCRE meetings occurred during the report-out on the K&E working group (see notes above). CS asked for additional comment from Chris Lorentz and/or Harry Stone, who are also participating in the planning meetings.

CL complimented Tamara Sluss and David Wicks for their work on the planning of the meetings and the field trips. Scientific meetings and concurrent talks planned to be accessible online with dinners/celebrations and field trips accessible in person. HS commented that plans for the meeting were exciting. He complimented the efforts of David Wicks to plan field trips and to secure the botanical gardens for the ORBA summit meetings. DW commented that the waterfront botanical gardens opened for the first time (since Covid shutdown) this

weekend (June 20, 21) and that they had implemented social-distancing guidelines. DW also said that MSD is working on a natural filtration project on Beargrass Creek, and that they are providing water to a local brewery that will brew a special beer for ORBA/ORBCRE. One dollar from each pint of beer sold will be donated to ORBA/ORBCRE.

CS asked if any abstracts had been received for the meeting. CL said that he did not think that any abstracts had been received, and that the deadline for submission would likely be moved back.

CS asked DW for information on what technical equipment was available at the botanical gardens. DW said it would be possible to hold hybrid meetings at the gardens – complete wifi was available [other comments were lost due to audio issues].

- e. Seeking Partnerships with Mitigation Banks
- f. ORBA working groups and group leaders – action on the nomination of Sarah Hippensteel-Hall to lead the Flood Control & Risk Reduction Working Group. SHH was confirmed by consensus as leader for the Flood Control & Risk Reduction Working Group.

9. New Business

- a. Next SC Call – normally 27 July 2020 at 1:00 PM EDT

10. Adjourn