



Steering Committee Minutes

Time and Date of Meeting: January 4, 2021 1:00 PM

Next Meeting: January 25, 2021 at 1:00 PM

Call to Order: Approximately 1 PM

Steering Committee Members Present: Harry Stone, Chuck Somerville, Sarah Hippensteel Hall, Richard Harrison, Heather Mayfield, Caren Glotfelty, Carey Johnson, John King, Annie Quinn, Jeff Thomas, Craig Butler, Chris Lorentz, Jordan Lubetkin, David Wicks, Mekayle Houghton

Excused: Marty Hettel

Absent: Kari Mackenbach, Robin Peak

Advisors Present: Brandon Brummett, Peter Cinotto, Jim Lazorchak

Staff: Shoshannah Stone

Adoption or Modification of Agenda: Agenda approved by consensus.

Approval Minutes: Minutes of November 23, 2020 were approved by consensus.

Unfinished Business

Support Person Recruitment - Shoshannah Stone has been "hired" as Volunteer Assistant to the Chairperson, Ohio River Basin Alliance. Shoshannah has set up and is populating a Facebook group for ORBA.

Shoshannah requested that the Steering Committee send events, photos, etc. for her to post to Facebook.

ORBA Strategic Planning for 2020-2025 - ORBA Critical Success Factors: Subcommittees

Harry reported that subcommittee recruitment was underway with the following having volunteered and been appointed:

- Governance Subcommittee – Caren Glotfelty, Craig Butler, Chuck Somerville, Richard Harrison, Harry Stone
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Subcommittee – Pam Mullins, Covington Human Rights Commission; Jordan Lubetkin; Sally Gutierrez, Senior Advisor, Center for Environmental Solutions and Emergency Response, Office of Research and Development; Kari Mackenbach; Jim Lazorchak; Harry Stone; Heather Mayfield; John King
- Communication to Elected Officials – Craig Butler, Chair; Harry Stone; Richard Harrison; Jordan Lubetkin; Caren Glotfelty; Annie Quinn; and Mekayle Houghton
- Organizational Communications Subcommittee – Jordan Lubetkin, Harry Stone, Heather Mayfield, Shoshannah Stone, John King
- GIS Subcommittee – Richard Harrison, Chair. Appointed representatives from each Working Group and appropriate agencies. Richard will have slate by the January call.

Approval of Bylaw Changes

- Bylaw changes were approved by consensus representing more than 3/4 of Steering Committee Members required for approval.

ORBA and Working Group Folders and Virtual Meetings

- After discussion, each Working Group Leader was using their own Google docs systems to store documents; ORBA Steering Committee documents remain on the Teams storage set up by Chuck Somerville, although it was noted by Sarah that she could not get into Teams.
- Harry, John, and Shoshannah were assigned to look into coordination of the Google docs, potentially providing links.

How to Engage All Interested Parties

- Harry was reminded to distribute the boiler-plate email from Sara Hippensteel-Hall to connect with and engage persons expressing interest in a specific working group.
- Annie noted that she had put comments in the Google form at the conference, but has not had feedback. David will follow up with the conference leadership to get the comments.
- Follow-up with all conference participants was recommended. Harry noted that there had been follow-up with each participant, that each was added to ORBA's Membership list and had received the most recent ORBA Update that included invitations to get involved.
- KID Working Group and Recreation Working Group, with involvement from Jordan, are planning webinars beginning in February.

New Business

NSF Letter for UC

- A letter of support for the proposal to NSF from Dr. Lilit Yeghiazarian, University of Cincinnati, entitled “SRS RN: The Open Knowledge Network for Regional Systems Under Compounding Stressors” was approved by consensus.
- Chuck noted that NSF grants require an outreach component. For future collaboration in NSF proposals it would be appropriate for ORBA to ask that money be included in the grant for outreach through ORBA.

Purchase Zoom license

- By consensus the Steering Committee approved by consensus a request by Harry, on behalf of the KID and Recreation Working Group Leaders, for the expenditure of up to \$2000 for ORBA to acquire a Zoom Webinar license sufficient for 500 people (about \$1400) and cloud storage for the recordings of events (about \$480). The primary purpose of the license is to enable the Ohio River Discussion Series, but it could also be used for the virtual Summit, by other working groups, etc.
- A request was made of the Working Group Leaders for topics for the Ohio River Discussion Series; topics should have broad audience attraction.
- Who owns and who stores and who has access to the database is an issue that will need to be resolved.
- It was noted that ORSANCO has offered to provide support for the Zoom events; details will need to be finalized.

Reports:

Chairperson:

- See attached report.

Treasurer:

- No report.

Water WG:

- Richard noted that the Sierra Club and other environmental groups organizations petitioned the Environmental Protection Agency water quality standards for nitrogen and phosphorus and total maximum daily loads for the Ohio River and its tributaries.

Ecosystem WG:

- A Working Group call is being planned for January. Additional Working Group Members will be added over time, in particular, members of minority and indigenous communities will be sought.

Flood Risk WG (Sarah Hippensteel Hall):

- No additional Working Group Members are being proposed at this time.
- An invitation for the Working Group meeting will be sent later this month (January).
- Additional Working Group Members are needed from some states. Help recruiting additional Working Group Members would be appreciated.

Knowledge WG (Heather Mayfield):

- See submitted report attached.

Recreation WG (Dr. David Wicks):

- ORRT is working with the National Park Service to secure five Rivertowns along the Ohio River.
- Tennessee Riverline is hosting a conference on Rivertowns on the Tennessee River. The virtual conference will have section on the Ohio River trails.
- It was state that the Working Group is waiting on USACE representative to work on lock houses. Harry indicated that USACE will be working on the lock houses as part of the PAS phase II. [This is in the USACE approval process.]
- 125 water trails have been documented in the Basin.

Transportation WG (Marty Hettel):

- See submitted report attached.

Adjournment: Approximately 2:05 PM

Actions assigned:

Task	Person Responsible	Due
Add Craig Butler to Facebook Administrators	Shoshannah Stone	25 JAN 2020
Send Harry successes for ORBA Update	All	20 JAN 2020
Develop coordination plan for document storage	John, Shoshannah, Harry	TBD
Secure Google comments from the conference	David	ASAP
Share the ORBA Membership List with Richard	Harry	ASAP

Transportation and Commerce Working Group Report

4 JAN 2021

WRDA2020:

Was included as a rider in the Omnibus Legislation, which was combined with the latest COVID19 relief package. The legislation was signed by the President December 27th. With WRDA2020 becoming law there are several provisions that have an effect on the Ohio River Basin.

Kentucky Lock: 902 Cost increase which will allow construction to continue to completion.

IWTF: Cost Share Change to 65% General Revenue and 35% IWTF.

Omnibus FY 2021 Funding:

Energy & Water Development appropriations included:

USACE: \$7.8 Billion, of which \$2.69 Billion for the Corps construction account and \$3.85 Billion for Operations & Maintenance.

With the IWTF deposits of \$113 Million, this would create an inland waterway construction program of \$323 Million.

ORBA Corps Lock Projects:

This \$323 Million, coupled with the remaining balance in the IWTF of \$33 Million, will fund the Chickamauga Lock project to completion at \$230 Million and also fund the Kentucky Lock project at the efficient funding number of \$110 Million.



Minutes

Working Group: Knowledge and Education to Inform Decisions

Time and Date of Meeting: December 14 2020, 1 pm

Working Group Member Attending: Dr. David Wicks (Recreation Workgroup Lead)

Heather Mayfield (FORE)

Lisa Cochran (ORSANCO)

Dr. Chris Lorentz (Thomas More University)

Dr. Chuck Somerville (Marshall University)

Jen Bowman (Ohio State University)

Errin Howard (Riverworks Discovery)

Brandon Brummet (ACOE)

John King (West Virginia DEP)

Autumn Crowe (West Virginia Rivers Coalition)

Dr. Tamara Sluss (University of Louisville)

PJ Donovan (ACOE)

Dr. Harry Stone (ORBA)

Attachments: Matrix

List of Subcommittees and Leads

Agenda:

1. **Introductions**
2. **Ohio River Basin Summit**
3. **Ohio River Discussion Series**
4. **Strategic Actions, Subcommittees and Leads were reviewed.**
See attached document for a finalized list of Subcommittee, Leads and Participants.
5. **The general structure of subcommittees and how they will function was discussed.**
6. **Google folders**
7. **Visioning Statement Discussion**
8. **Other member announcements**

Decisions:

List of subcommittees and leads was finalized; see attached.

Actions assigned:

Task	Person Responsible	Due
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Anyone interested in working on the Ohio River Discussion series please reach out to Heather Mayfield ASAP (ie, today). 	ALL	ASAP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Anyone interested in working on the Ohio River Basin Summit/Symposium, please reach out to Heather by December 18th. 	ALL	December 18
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Leads- Reach out to your co-leads and participants to touch base. 	Subcommittee Leads	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Submit ideas for visioning statement by January 6th. 	ALL	December 6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Optional...</i>Review matrix to see what resources/projects/timelines may already be in place for your subcommittee to work with. <i>You can start thinking</i> about some high-level, big picture items/steps needed for your strategic action to be successful. 		

Additional Items to Report to Steering Committee:

Preparing for the Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Journey- Training Opportunity through Green Umbrella **January 28, 10 am - 12 pm**



Chairperson's Report 29 December 2020

Shoshannah Stone Named Assistant to ORBA Chair

Shoshannah Stone accepted the volunteer position of Assistant to the Chair on 21 DEC 2020. She will be able to volunteer about 10 hours per week through August/September.

Shoshannah has impressive credentials. She is entering her last semester at the University of Pittsburgh with majors in Urban Studies and Communications. In addition to experience as social media chair for the University Student Government board, Shoshannah has been a radio show host and has international experience working as an intern specializing in housing and planning for the Greater London Authority - Mayor of London (England). Shoshannah plans to continue her studies in graduate school in the Fall.

ORBA-USACE Teleconference

ORBA was invited by MG Whittle to participate in a teleconference hosted by the US Army Corps of Engineers leadership on 6 DEC 2020. Participants included:

USACE: MG Robert Whittle, Division Commander; Mr. Steve Durrett, SES, Regional Programs Director; Mr. Joe Savage, SES, Regional Business Director; Chapman, William R III CIV US-ARMY CELRD Operations and Regulatory; District Commanders and Deputy District Engineers, respectively - COL Jason Evers and Michael Keathley, Michael (Huntington); COL Eric Crispino and Linda Murphy (Louisville); LTC Sonny Avichal and Patricia Coffey Deputy District Engineer and Stephanie Hall, incoming Deputy District Engineer (Nashville); COL Andrew Short and Lenna Hawkins (Pittsburgh)

ORBA: Harry Stone, Craig Butler, Richard Harrison, Chuck Somerville

Key outcomes:

- USACE comments were positive with respect to the progress being made by ORBA. Regular coordination meetings will be held between ORBA and USACE leadership.
- Participate in working groups will be coordinated at the Division level by Mr. Durrett, SES, Regional Programs Director.
- Coordination of timing of the ORBA Summit 2021 so that USACE leadership can participate.
- Synchrony of messaging to legislators will be pursued.
- A follow-up meeting was held between Harry Stone and Joe Savage, SES, Regional Business Director and Ms. Cecilia Polanco, LRD outreach coordinator, on 10 DEC to further discuss next steps. Immediate need is messaging for a one-page USACE "leave behind" for legislators. ORBA's Elected Officials Communications Subcommittee is working on this task.

ORSANCO - USACE Planning Assistance to States Doing Even More

The Plan for the Ohio River Basin 2020 - 2025 completed Phase I outlined in the Planning Assistance to States Agreement between ORSANCO (acting as ORBA's fiscal sponsor) and USACE. Funds remaining in the project are being used to advance several studies in Phase II (implementation) of the agreement. The Louisville District anticipates being able to complete three requested studies - each of which will have a separate project manager. This additional work will commence after discussions with ORSANCO/ORBA to reach agreement on the respective scopes of work and approval of the proposed work by Division. The three studies include:

Plan to Establish and Sustain an Ohio River Basin-wide GIS: The deliverable is plan for the establishment and on-going operation of an Ohio River Basin-wide GIS system to meet needs identified in the Plan for the Ohio River Basin - 2020 - 2025. The deliverable will include recommendations for organizational structures, estimates of funding required, and identification of potential funding sources.

A Study of Basin-scale Water Resource Management: Underpinned by previous studies by ORSANCO and USACE, and in coordination and collaboration with ORSANCO's Water Resources Committee, USACE will prepare a report of long-term strategies to address water shortages and other relevant water resource challenges within the Basin related to climate change, population growth and other stressors.

Study and Planning for Ohio River Water Trail: In collaboration with ORBA, USACE will perform a study to advance the strategic action of development of a sustainable comprehensive water trail for the Ohio River and its tributaries. The Mississippi River Water Trail and other river trails developed by USACE will serve as examples of successful approaches. This study deliverable will include identifying the locations of existing operating, abandoned or vacant federal and state lock houses and grounds that could be used or expanded for river access, camping and day use educational activities; recommendations for evaluating, resourcing, and implementing recreational uses at such sites; and a plan for USACE development of an Ohio River water trail inclusive of on-shore amenities such as day-use rest areas, primitive camping, and other facilities to ensure quality recreation.

Communication with Mayors on the Marshall Plan for Middle America

ORBA became aware that mayors of eight Basin cities are endorsing the Marshall Plan for Middle America: Youngstown, OH Mayor Jamael Tito Brown; Dayton, OH Mayor Nan Whaley; Columbus, OH Mayor Andrew Ginther; Cincinnati, OH Mayor John Cranley; Huntington, WV Mayor Steve Williams; Morgantown, WV Mayor Ron Dulaney Jr.; and Louisville, KY Mayor Greg Fischer. The Marshall Plan is focused on catalyzing economic progress through clean energy development. Because there was overlap with the *Plan for the Ohio River Basin*, ORBA wrote the mayors "to see how we can assist in advancing our respective, yet complimentary plans, that will grow the economy, improve quality of life, and protect and restore the ecosystems on which we depend in the Ohio River Basin." Calls with the mayors are being scheduled.

Subcommittees Forming

Craig Butler, coordinating with Richard Harrison (ORSANCO) and Jordan Lubetkin (NWF), is organizing the **Communications to Elected Officials Subcommittee**. Key initial foci include coordinating and executing follow-up communications on the *Plan* with mayors, governors, and legislators. An overarching initial need is development of a consistent message that can be

used by ORBA and other key organizations, including ORSANCO, USACE, NWF and others who routinely communicate with elected officials.

Richard Harrison is organizing the **GIS Subcommittee**.

Jordan Lubetkin and Harry Stone are organizing the **Organizational Communications Subcommittee**. An early action, Shoshannah Stone, Assistant to the Chair, is proposing a plan to set up and populate an ORBA Facebook page. Jordan is working on revising language for various draft communication documents.

Harry Stone, Craig Butler, Chuck Somerville, Richard Harrison, and Caren Glotfelty comprise the **Governance Subcommittee**. An initial key question is, what legal structure should ORBA adopt to protect its membership and to position for the future?

Harry Stone is reaching out to encourage people of color and diverse ethnicities to accept appointment to the **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Subcommittee**.

Plan Accomplishments

The Water Resources Development Act of 2020 (WRDA) was signed into law by President Trump as part of a \$1.4 trillion omnibus package. WRDA accomplishes important strategic actions and objectives from the Plan for the Ohio River Basin. Further review is needed to know the extent to which strategic actions have been accomplished in the omnibus package. This is important for working groups to know in order to appropriately focus their efforts.

Notable inclusions in the omnibus package that, in some cases, represent “mission accomplished”:

Full funding of \$25 million for the Asian Carp National Plan inclusive of the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers.

From Watershed Council Inc.: *WRDA adjusts the cost-share for construction and major rehabilitation of inland waterways projects from 50% Inland Waterways Trust Fund (IWTF)/50% General Revenues to 35% IWTF/65% General Revenues for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 through FY 2031.*

WRDA potentially provides more than \$1 billion in additional construction funds over 10 years that should help significantly reduce the backlog of authorized projects.

The WRDA bill also included a 902 cost-limit increase [that] allows work on Kentucky Lock to continue to completion.

With \$113 million appropriated from the IWTF, a construction program of just under \$323 million will be provided for FY21. This allows funding of Chickamauga Lock to completion and efficient funding for Kentucky Lock.

Rural Development and Infrastructure – The legislation includes responsible investments in infrastructure to help rural areas of the country access basic utilities. This includes \$1.45 billion for rural water and waste program loans, and more than \$620 million in water and waste grants for clean and reliable drinking water systems and sanitary waste disposal systems.

ORBA Encouraging USACE Sustainable River Project

The USACE Institute for Water Resources states, *The Sustainable Rivers Projects is a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and The Nature Conservancy partnership. It represents an ongoing effort to reoperate Corps dams to achieve more ecologically sustainable flows, while maintaining or enhancing project benefits.*

Jordan Lubetkin from the National Wildlife Federation who is leading ORBA's Healthy and Productive Ecosystems Working Group, and Harry Stone, Chair, had a call with John Hickey, USACE lead for the Sustainable Rivers Project (SRP), and Gretchen Benjamin, Large River Specialist for the Midwest Division of The Nature Conservancy. Mr. Hickey and Ms. Benjamin informed ORBA of a Sustainable River Project RFP available for USACE. From the discussion it became apparent that a proposal to study the Ohio River mainstem locks and dams, as a system, for potential pool management to provide ecological flows (as has been done in the Mississippi) would be welcomed.

USACE Chiefs in LRD and the three mainstem divisions of USACE - Pittsburgh, Huntington, and Louisville - were contacted and asked to consider working together on a locks and dams SRP proposal modeled on the Mississippi proposal. Response from USACE has been positive and a planning call is being organized by USACE. ORBA will assist as needed to facilitate collaboration.

ORBA Commits to Participate in NSF Proposal

ORBA Steering Committee approved provision of a letter of commitment in support of a 5-year \$15 million project proposal being led by ORBA Member Dr. Lilit Yeghiazarian, University of Cincinnati. The proposed tool is intended to be useful for informing decisions with respect to flooding and other stressors impacting regional systems. It also provides the opportunity for stakeholders to have relevant projects performed with funding from the National Science Foundation.

Lilit states: *The working title is "The Open Knowledge Network (OKN) for Regional Systems under Compounding Stressors". The idea is to expand the ongoing urban flooding project: move beyond cities to regional systems, and add more stressors like fires, heat/drought, earthquakes, epidemics. The website for that project is <https://ufokn.com>.*